LSUHSC Human Development Center
Activities Report, 4th Quarter for July - September 2023

The Human Development Center (HDC) is part of a nationwide network of University Centers of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) and serves as a resource for Louisiana in the areas of education, research, and service relative to the needs of people with developmental disabilities. Below are highlights of the activities that took place last quarter (July - September 2023) in HDC's four initiative areas according to the three main goals for this grant cycle: Enhance Collaboration, Increase Access to Quality Services, and Promote Use of Evidence Based Practice.

Early Childhood Initiatives

Early Childhood Initiatives target children between the ages of 1 and 5 years and include the **Early Head Start Childcare Partnership (EHS-CCP)**, **Inclusive Practices in Early Childhood (IPEC),** and the **LSU Health Sciences Early Learning Center**. These programs provide training, technical assistance, and resources to increase access and equity to quality inclusive early learning environments.

- **Enhance Collaboration**
  - HDC continued collaboration with the New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN) to increase the capacity of the City Seats program to effectively serve children with disabilities in inclusive childcare settings
  - HDC is collaborating with the Archdiocese of New Orleans to improve disability services.
  - HDC is collaborating with Early Head Start and Early Steps to develop a pilot for improving referral, evaluation and access to services.

- **Increase Access to Quality Services**
  - Our Early Head Start partnership is adding 3-4 new childcare center partners in high need areas in New Orleans. All children received developmental screening and sensory screens (hearing and vision). At least 10% of children enrolled will have disabilities.
  - HDC continues to provide disability/inclusion technical assistance visits in early childhood classrooms funded through ECHO grants.
  - HDC contributed to a blog at Exceptional Lives supporting families to understand least restrictive environment.

- **Promote Use of Evidence Based Practice**
  - HDC hosts a quarterly mini-conference for 80 early childhood educators and administrators.
  - HDC participated in the Louisiana Developmental Screening Guidelines review committee that is revising the state guidelines for pediatrics and early childhood providers.
  - HDC was invited to provide support to new Head Start Directors across Region VI by participating in the annual Director Mentorship Program.
  - HDC is working with the Department of Education to develop language and recommendations that would support centers to implement effective inclusion strategies and reduce inappropriate discipline, suspension, and expulsion.

K-12 Initiatives

HDC's K-12 Education Initiatives provide continuing education and technical assistance to families, educators, administrators, and policymakers regarding best practices for evidence-based and inclusive education. These programs **include Louisiana Autism Spectrum and Related Disabilities project (LASARD)** and the **Louisiana DeafBlind Project for Children and Youth (LADBP)**.

Enhance Collaboration

- HDC LASARD staff presented an overview of autism spectrum disorders and LASARD to the Tangipahoa Parish Schools Special Education Advisory Panel.
- HDC LASARD staff presented to the 2023 Governor's Office of Disability Affairs Conference about "Supporting Students with Disabilities across Louisiana."
- Through the addition of two new LEA Facilitators, HDC LASARD has added a disciplinary scope (speech-language pathologist), increased outreach, and improved our ability to meet community needs.
- HDC staff, including representatives from LASARD, Paycheck, WSC WIPA, and LADBP staff, met to discuss ongoing collaborative efforts among the projects.
- Staff from HDC LASARD and LADBP attended the Louisiana Council for Exceptional Children's Teacher Retreat to represent the various project areas.

Increase Access to Quality Services

- HDC LASARD and LADBP facilitators worked together to identify needs and appropriate supports for visually impaired students in St. Charles Parish.
- HDC LASARD staff presented to the Autism Society of Northwest Louisiana on collaboration strategies, "Stronger Together: Multidisciplinary Collaboration Strategies."
- HDC LASARD sends a monthly newsletter to highlight practices and distribute new free resources. From July to September, the monthly newsletter had over 1800 views on the new resources.

Promote Use of Evidence Based Practice

- HDC LASARD staff updated or developed new visual supports and other free resources for their website to support educators or families.
    - This includes hurricane preparedness visual supports for families including social narratives, communication boards, and choice boards.
- HDC LASARD staff presented at Calcasieu Parish School's professional development day in August to over 300 educators on evidence-based practices, inclusive practices, and Autism, "Enhanced Learning to Increase Inclusive Practices for Students with Autism."
- HDC LASARD staff presented to the teaching staff of St. Martin's Episcopal School on Autism Spectrum Disorder and evidence-based practices.
- HDC LASARD hosts a monthly "Lunch and Learn" webinar, open to families and educators on topics related to evidence-based practices for individuals with disabilities. Topics this quarter included:
    - September 2023 – New Teacher Series - Scheduling

Transition, Employment, and Careers (TEC) Initiatives

HDC's TEC initiatives support agencies, programs, service providers and job seekers with disabilities to obtain and maintain community employment outcomes that are competitive and integrated by building knowledge and capacity of secondary and post-secondary educators, community providers, employers, and self-advocates/advocates. Programs include West South Central Work Incentives Planning Assistance (WSC-WIPA), Computing for Youth with Autism (CYA) with FHF NOLA, Employment First Core Training, Customized Employment Training and Postsecondary Apprenticeship for Youth (PAY Check).

- **Enhance Collaboration**
    - Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) and Jefferson Parish Public School System (JPPSS) continue to collaborate with HDC to implement the Postsecondary Apprenticeship for Youth (PAY Check) program. Other school systems are referring exiting students for PAY Check services through their LRS counselor.
    - For Computing for Youth with Autism (CYA), HDC TEC works in partnership with FHF NOLA, LRS, Delgado and Operation SPARK to expand and refine the talent pipeline to technology careers.
    - HDC TEC staff is active on the national APSE Public Policy committee and is also working with the SSA policy updates, national ethical guidelines, and the national job coach certification council for Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP).
    - HDC TEC continues to collaborate with St. Paul's Catholic High School to provide PAY Check services on the north shore and is collaborating with Florida Parish Human Services Authority, Families Helping Families Northshore, and the NS LRS office.
    - HDC TEC Sue Killam has been named to the NEON (National Employment Opportunities Network) as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) to help states work towards the goals and outcomes identified in the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS). Sue is currently working with Tennessee and the New York Alliance on assistance with increasing and enhancing access to Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE).
    - HDC is working with various school parishes who have expressed interest in establishing transition services and supports like the PAY Check program in their parish.

- **Increase Access to Quality Services**
    - The 2023-2024 PAY Check students started at the Community College August 15.
    - Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority, Metropolitan Human Services District and Florida Parish Human Services District are now collaborating to ensure the individuals who have left high school that are within the age range, have access to transition and employment opportunities with PAY Check by funding the PAY Check enrollment fee.
    - HDC's PAY Check program continues to focus on providing participants with in-person, one-on-one pre-ETS units/sessions, two paid internships, Job Shadowing (2) and Work Site Visits (2), and Job Placement as the individual progresses along their 12-month career pathway.
    - PAY Check is expanding the career pathway transition model to other interested parishes through contracts with the school system to create a Transition to Employment Community of Practice including: LRS Regional Office, Regional Human Services District, local Families Helping Families, and the participating school district.
    - HDC West South Central Work Incentives Planning Assistance (WSC-WIPA) continues to receive between 40+ referrals each month. Lighthouse for the Blind provides WIPA services for the other half of the state. HDC WIPA includes twenty-one Texas counties and thirty-three Louisiana parishes.

- **Promote Use of Evidence Based Practice**
    - HDC TEC is promoting professional development, planning, and mentoring and TA to school districts interested in expanding and enhancing their transition services and supports for students in transition. TEC initiatives will engage with interested school districts to plan for targeted activities. HDC TEC would work in concert with school district personnel to plan and implement expansion of best practice models for schools and their communities.
    - HDC TEC provided Customized Employment training sessions beginning in April to 11 LRS Supported Employment vendors.

Interdisciplinary Training Initiatives

HDC's Interdisciplinary Training Initiatives provides training opportunities to graduate students, professionals, families, and self-advocates. HDC's Interdisciplinary Training programs include **Leadership Education in Neurodevelomental and related Disabilities (Louisiana LEND)** (funded by US Department of Health and Human Services- Maternal Child Health Bureau) and **Interprofessional Preparation for Related Services Personnel Serving Children with Disabilities Who Have High Intensity Needs (known as IPP)** (funded by US Office of Special Education Programs) grants. The HDC LEND

program is designed to prepare students for future roles as leaders in supporting families and individuals with developmental delays/disabilities and special health care needs. HDC LEND promotes principles of family and person-centered care (and thinking) as well as interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration. The IPP program is designed to foster collaboration between the related services professionals and special education educators in providing comprehensive services to students receiving special education services as mandated by IDEA. Both programs provide training as well as clinical and field experiences to graduate students and professionals working in a variety of disciplines (e.g., Occupational and Speech Therapy, Psychology, Audiology), as well as self-advocates and parents. HDC's Interdisciplinary Training Initiatives also include the Autism Spectrum Disorder Interdisciplinary Diagnostic Clinic (ASDID) and the Early Learning Center (ELC), which provide opportunities for interdisciplinary experiential learning.

- **Promote Use of Evidence Based Practice**
  - HDC's Interdisciplinary Training programs, **Leadership Education in Neurodevelomental and related Disabilities** (**LEND)** and **Interprofessional Preparation for Related Services Personnel Serving Children with Disabilities Who Have High Intensity Needs,** continue to provide training as well as clinical and field experiences to 23 graduate students, self-advocates, parents, family members and working professionals. Graduate students and professionals in the program represent the following disciplines: applied behavior analysis, audiology, deaf education, dentistry, occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychology, and speech-language pathology. This cohort also includes a Self-Advocate.