

LSUHNO Human Development Center

Activities Report, 3rd Quarter for July - September 2025

The Human Development Center (HDC) is part of a nationwide network of 68 University Centers of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs) and serves as a resource for Louisiana in the areas of education, research, and service relative to the needs of people with developmental disabilities. HDC is organized in the following initiative areas: Early Childhood; Education Transition, & Community; and Long-Term Training. See the organization chart on the HDC website www.hdc.lsuhsu.edu. Each of HDC's initiative areas is described below including the highlights of their activities that took place during last quarter (July – September 2025).

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) 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.

- Provided one week of professional development for 56 teachers and 11 administrators. Topics included developmental surveillance and screening, understanding challenging child behaviors, curriculum, assessment, teacher wellness, and others.
- Developed new partnerships with four childcare centers in Jefferson Parish and opened eight Early Head Start classrooms serving 64 children, eight of whom have disabilities.
- Enrolled 136 children (17 with disabilities) in 17 classrooms in Orleans Parish.
- Completed developmental screening for 175 infants and toddlers using ASQ-3.
- Provided pediatric field experiences to 35 graduate students in occupational therapy.
- Participated in Sensory Night at the Louisiana Children's Museum, providing information about early intervention and the Tigers and Tots indoor playground at LSU Health.

Education, Transition, & Community Initiatives

HDC's Education, Transition, and Community Initiatives provides continuing education and technical assistance to families, educators, administrators, and policymakers regarding best practices for evidence-based and inclusive education. Additionally, this initiative area supports agencies, programs, service providers, and job seekers with disabilities in their efforts to obtain and maintain community employment outcomes that are competitive and integrated. This initiative area builds knowledge and capacity of secondary and post-secondary educators, community providers, employers, and self-advocates/advocates. These programs include **Louisiana Autism Spectrum and Related Disabilities project (LASARD)**, **Louisiana Deafblind Project for Children and Youth (LADBP)**, **West South-Central Work Incentives Planning Assistance (WSC-WIPA)**, **Employment First Core Training**, and **Postsecondary Apprenticeship for Youth (PAYCheck)**.

- **LASARD**
 - Announced monthly Lunch + Learn sessions for the 25-26 school year. This year's Lunch + Learns focus on IEP Best Practices and Executive Functioning.

- **LADBP**
 - Shared a new intervener video highlighting Louisiana's first certified DeafBlind intervener: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDFt9x_xP0s.
 - Launching the first ever Career Readiness Mentoring Program for youth with Usher syndrome, in partnership with the Usher Syndrome Coalition, the National Center on DeafBlindness, Ava's Voice, and the Helen Keller National Center. Louisiana was selected to run the pilot of this program!
 - Presented at the REAL South Language First conference in Atlanta, a conference for early intervention providers working with Deaf/hard of hearing children.
- **PAYCheck**
 - Hosted their first Student Orientation Week with new partners: Nunez Community College and St. Bernard Parish Public Schools. Students and families participated in: financial wellness education and opened bank accounts; Pre-ETS work readiness training focusing on Self-Advocacy, Post-Secondary Education Counseling and Job Exploration Counseling; and Nunez Community College class registration and campus tours.
- **WSC WIPA**
 - Worked with 60 active caseloads during the period of April 1st – June 30th.
 - Provided intensive benefits planning services to 20 Social Security beneficiaries during this period.

Long-Term Training Initiatives

HDC's Long-Term Training Initiatives provides training opportunities to graduate students, professionals, families, and self-advocates. HDC's Interdisciplinary Training program is **Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities (Louisiana LEND)**, which is funded by US Department of Health and Human Services- Maternal Child Health Bureau. The HDC LA 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. It promotes principles of family and person-centered care as well as interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration.

LA LEND provides over 300 hours of training as well as clinical and field experiences to graduate students and professionals working in a variety of disciplines, as well as self-advocates and family members. HDC's Interdisciplinary Training Initiatives also includes the **Autism Spectrum Disorder Interdisciplinary Diagnostic Clinic (ASDID)** which provides opportunities for interdisciplinary experiential learning and a new emphasis on **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)**.

- The new 2025-2026 cohort of 14 scholars from various disciplines including Education, Speech Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Counseling, Dentistry, and scholars with lived experience have been off to a great start this year. The scholars attended an Orientation, participated in a 40-hour Maternal Child Health Foundations Week held in August, and attend biweekly seminars. In September, they attended the 2025 National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Impact Week in Washington D.C. where they were able to network with other LEND scholars from around the country, learn about the latest research in FASD, and educate legislators on the impact of FASD in Louisiana.
- FASD had the first two meetings of Louisiana's FASD United chapter, via Zoom, in August and September. In these meeting, members worked together to plan awareness activities that took place in September, which is national FASD Awareness Month, and included an FASD Lunch & Learn, a social media campaign, and a newsletter.