

**Regional Autism Assistance Program  
Expert Panel Advisory Committee Meeting  
January 13 2021, 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm  
Via Zoom**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization/Role Representing</b>	<b>Present</b>
Alyson Beytien	Life Connections/Family Member	X
Josh Cobbs	Family Advisor	X
Kimberly Cooke	Family Advisor	
James Curry	Family Advisor	X
Connie Fanselow	Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Mental Health and Disability Services Commission	X
Kathy Francois	CHSC Administrative Support	X
Brianna Harvey	Tanager Place	X
Erika Hertel	Iowa Regional Autism Assistance Program/Family Member	X
Michelle Holst	Iowa Department of Public Health- 1st Five	X
Leann Hotchkiss	Family Advisor	
Marcus Johnson-Miller (Bridget Konz)	Iowa Department of Public Health	
Aaron Kauer	UI Stead Family Children's Hospital Child & Adolescent Psychiatry	X
Andrea Keith	Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services	X
Vanessa Kimm	Family Advisor	
Shawn Kolb	ChildServe	X
Toni Fuller Merfeld	Metro West Learning Center	X
Caroline Moniza	Mercy Family Counseling & EAP	X
Steve Muller (Evelyn Horton)	Balance Autism	
Nathan Noble	Blank Children's Hospital	
Michelle Nuehring	Grant Wood AEA	
Kelly Pelzel	UI Stead Family Children's Hospital Autism Center	X
Mary Roberts	Family Advisor	X
Leslie Rogers	ChildServe	X
Thomas Scholz	Division of Child & Community Health	
Kristine Steinmetz	Autism Society of Iowa/Family Member	X
Jill Stevenson	Family Advisor	
Rachell Swanson-Holm	Learn the Signs. Act Early., Regional Autism Assistance Program	X
Wendy Trotter	Iowa Department of Education	X
Maria Valdovinos	Drake University	X
<b>Guests</b>		
Matthew O'Brien	UI Stead Family Children's Hospital Autism Center	X
Brad Zelinger	Stride Autism Centers	X
Lisa Kemmerer	Iowa Department of Education	X
Candice Fedeler	Metro West Learning Center	X

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Facilitator: Erika Hertel

- Roll call was taken and introductions were made.

## **Guest Speakers**

### **Maria Valdovinos**

Drake University Applied Behavior Analysis Program  
Des Moines, IA

Drake University is in its 4<sup>th</sup> year of the master's program in ABA therapy and also a certification program. They coordinate and provide supervision practicums. The practicum required 1600 hours in a clinical setting and 10% of that time with a BCBA. Drake faculty provides supervision. They are now accepting applications for the fall 2021 cohort. They are strictly a cohort model of 8-12 with the current cohort of 10. Classes are held in the evenings and weekends to accommodate a day job or practicum.

Drake is currently hiring for a position to develop an online certification program.

We have two practicum sites. One is at Blank Children's Hospital and one is with Dr. Nate Noble. The students get experience treating challenging behaviors along with program writing and program development for skill acquisitions.

Drake University Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis program and certificate program

<https://www.drake.edu/aba/>

### **Matthew O'Brien**

University of Iowa Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis  
Iowa City, IA

The University of Iowa has recently added a certification program for ABA. This is NOT a master's or PhD program. Those applicants that already have a degree in Education or Psychology are given preferred status on the list. Admission requirements are a 3.0 GPA and a GRE score of 300. Coursework is open to anyone. This program is not a cohort model and also offers classes in the evenings. Students started this fall. Supervised experiences are in schools. We have 7 faculty members with 5 faculty in Special Education.

Allison Bruhn is the PI for a new training grant that will offer 18 scholarships for clinical and school focused on intensive intervention. The scholarships will cover course work towards a Master's degree, a yearly stipend, and funds for professional development.

- How many BCBA faculty does U of IA have? 3
- How long does certification take? U of IA is 2 years; Drake is 5 semesters. The University also allows for specific training. For example, if a student states they will work in schools rather than clinical, then that student can do practicums in schools only. Below are links to the U of IA programs:

University of Iowa College of Education Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis

<https://education.uiowa.edu/academic-programs/special-education/certificate-applied-behavior-analysis>

Interdisciplinary Training Project in Special Education and School Psychology (SP2) Training Grant:

<https://education.uiowa.edu/interdisciplinary-training-project-special-education-and-school-psychology-sp2>

## **Member Updates:**

### **Alyson Beytien- Life Connections**

Life Connections has hired two more BCBA's and is currently offering ABA in Dubuque, Clinton, Bettendorf,

and Muscatine. They will be expanding the clinic in Clinton by late 2021 and in 3-4 months, they will be opening a clinic in Cedar Rapids. They are also looking to add a clinic in Waterloo this year.

### **Josh Cobbs- Autism Speaks and Lee Container Workforce Development**

The Centerville workforce is now trained and seeking applicants, with or without disabilities. Josh will be sending info to be distributed to the local IVRS in Ottumwa. Andrea added that she will share contact information for the office.

Josh said by the end of January regarding the release of training geared towards manufacturing and distribution centers for autistic applicants.

### **Erika Hertel- Iowa Regional Autism Assistance Program**

In Expert Panel meetings last year, we discussed resources for families in crisis. One idea was how to prep families with tools or prevention methods. Marc Hines from the University of Iowa is a trainer for the "Safety Care for Families" program and is willing to travel to CHSC regional centers to train families. The course has four modules and since the first 2 modules do not require a lot work with people in close proximity to each other, we are moving forward with plans to hold a training in February in Fort Dodge.

Leslie said ChildServe uses Safety Care and Alyson said Life Connections does also. CPI and Mandt are other trainings commonly used.

In June, 2020, Kelly Pelzel, Todd Kopelman, Erika Hertel, and Kris Steinmetz offered a training for case managers entitled, "ASD Primer for Case Managers," with Kelly and Todd as presenters. It was very well received and when we passed along other trainings to this group, they have responded positively. Ex: for an upcoming training with Laura Fuller, 19 Case Managers from the Iowa Department of Human Services have enrolled.

### **Connie Fanselow – Autism Support Program (ASP)**

Applications are back up to normal again as there are more providers aware of the program. ASP spent less money this fiscal year and are hopeful to get a reasonable allocation again this year.

Some groups are advocating to broaden the requirements to include those that have insurance, but have high deductible or co-pay.

Connie is working on an updated list of providers, along with reviewing other documents and will share them in the near future.

### **Shawn Kolb – ChildServe**

Childserve is now offering ABA therapy in their Ames location in addition to the Johnston location.

They are also expanding the day health programing Ames for preschool aged children.

They are offering two sessions of PEERS group per year. Parents will meet at the same time as the children. The social skills group meets in Johnston only and they work on how to make and keep friends and other skills.

Kelly shared the U.I. is thinking of how to implement PEERS. Dr. Boldt, a post doc fellow, has accepted a faculty position with the University of Iowa and now offers services of her own.

- Are there any AEA or school based personnel that took the PEERS training? Kelly will find out.
- How do you bill the PEERS training? It is covered under Speech therapy.
- If ChildServe has no ABA openings, do you refer? ChildServe is making internal referrals only at this time. However, the wait list opens and shuts due to demand, so if a referral comes in when waitlist is closed, they will refer to another agency.

ChildServe is also adding a pre-driving program to add to the existing OT therapy. They will work with Drake driving simulators and this will be open to all children, not just ASD. To be clear, they will NOT be teaching

driving.

### **Brad Zelinger – STRIDE**

There is a webinar coming up that our Chicago office is running about strategies to continue development of young kids while we are stuck at home. Asked if anyone has received any concerns or questions about EBD? (in regards to CDAC/electronic verification process). None.

### **Kris Steinmetz – Autism Speaks**

The date for the Autism Day on the Hill has been set for February 4, 2021. They are working with the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) to create a town hall style meeting via virtual platform. That's all the information Kris has at this time. Registration is set up on the Autism Society of Iowa website and more information will be shared as it becomes available.

### **Rachell Swanson-Holm - Child Health Specialty Clinics (CHSC)**

We have one newer grant in September 2020. An Early Childhood systems grant that confronts the COVID-19 crisis by using 3 high reach agencies WIC Nutrition Program - Women, Infants, and Children, Iowa Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R), and 1<sup>st</sup> Five to distribute *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* materials and information in novel ways. Rachell recently completed a rapid needs assessment with the funders, Association of University Centers on Disability (AUCD) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The Iowa Autism webinar series continues and recently featured Matt O'Brien giving a talk on TIC disorders in ASD. As always, Rachell is open to webinar ideas.

Erika added that two new Family Navigators have been hired: Amanda Woods in Creston and Joy Kim in Iowa City. They are both trained and have begun serving families.

### **Questions and Other Discussion**

One purpose of this panel is to identify gaps or concerns. Erika opened up the discussions.

- Alyson Beytien- We need to increase the number of providers able to give diagnostic assessments of ASD. Alyson reported that she has been receiving reports for Psychologists that are based on parent reports. Medicaid has been rejecting these reports and Alyson tends to agree.

The wait list for a diagnosis remains at 6-12 months. Western Iowa is particularly lacking providers for both evaluations and ABA. Another question was raised regarding using telehealth as a diagnostic tool.

- Caroline Moniza jumped into the conversation stating she has been using telehealth as a preliminary tool. However, she always follows up with direct testing as the nuances can be so subtle.
- Kelly Pelzel added that the Young Child Team has been exploring using a Vanderbilt product. It is not completely ready for widespread use, but they will be coming to Iowa in the spring of 2021 to offer a training.

Also, Judy Miller with CHOP developed a telehealth model that is a possible consideration for the future. The Autism Center at the U of IA currently uses ADOS, but it can't be used right now with masks. You can use ADOS type activities for a preliminary look, but you cannot report the score. Erika will send a link regarding these restrictions by WPS.

- Toni Merfeld shared that Metro West has a diagnostic team
- Michelle Holst shared that the wait for a diagnosis has been on her mind as well. Michelle asks, if it isn't autism but it is a challenging behavioral/developmental issue, where is that family supposed to go?
- Aaron Kauer stated that it really comes down to resources and people power. I think as we all are, continue to be advocates for resources for patients and families.

- Lisa Kemmerer stated: We need more highly trained BCBA's working at the LEA (Local Educational Agency level). I'm excited about Drake and UI's programs but worried we won't get many to work in Iowa schools. Thinking about ways to change that
- Mary Roberts agreed.

### **Updates/Resources Shared Following Meeting**

- **ADOS During COVID:** Western Psychological Services (WPS) states "Administration of the ADOS-2 involves close contact and the use of shared materials. The focus of the assessment is on the social interaction between examiner and examinee, and maintaining an unusual physical distance for a social interaction and/or wearing a face mask/plastic face shield may change the nature of that social interaction in a variety of ways, such as by interfering with establishing rapport and obscuring facial expressions and spoken language. Data supporting the validity of the ADOS-2 are all based on administrations in which examiners engage with examinees without physical barriers and with a variety of physical distance depending on the specific activities being administered. Because of the unknown, yet likely, impact on validity, our recommendation is that ADOS-2 administrations be delayed until close in-person contact, without physical barriers, can be resumed." Further information is available at <https://pages.wpspublish.com/telepractice-101>.
- **Ottumwa IVRS**  
Address: 15260 Truman St Ste 4, Ottumwa, IA 52501  
Hours: Open · Closes 4:30PM  
Phone: (641) 682-7569
- **TELE-ASD-PEDS Virtual Training:** Hosted by Iowa Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) program. LEND will not be able to provide CMEs/CEUs for free for people outside of UI, but it will be a very minimal amount and I'll have more info on that soon. Anyone who wants to join but not receive CMEs or CEUs can still do so for free.



Tele\_ASD\_PEDS\_training\_flyer.pdf

**Next Meeting:** April 14, 2021 10:00-12:00. We don't anticipate being able to meet in person for our full day as planned due to COVID and will instead have a shorter meeting held via Zoom.