

**Regional Autism Assistance Program
Expert Panel Advisory Committee Meeting
October 14, 2020, 10:00 am - 12:00 noon
Via Zoom**

Name	Organization/Role Representing	Present
Alyson Beytien	Life Connections/Family Member	
Josh Cobbs	Family Advisor	X
Kimberly Cooke	Family Advisor	
James Curry	Family Advisor	
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 (Analisa Pearson)	Iowa Department of Public Health	
Aaron Kauer	UI Stead Family Children's Hospital Child & Adolescent Psychiatry	X
Andrea Keith	Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services	
Vanessa Kimm	Family Advisor	
Shawn Kolb	ChildServe	X
Toni Fuller Merfeld	Metro West Learning Center	
Caroline Moniza	Mercy Family Counseling & EAP	
Steve Muller (Evelyn Horton)	Balance Autism	X
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	X
Kristine Steinmetz	Autism Society of Iowa/Family Member	X
Jill Stevenson	Family Advisor	X
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
Guests		
Roxanne Cogil	Epilepsy Foundation Iowa	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

Roxanne Cogil - Executive Director, Epilepsy Foundation Iowa

Des Moines, IA

Slides from Roxanne's presentation are attached.

Brad Zelinger - CEO and Founder of Stride Autism Center

Clive, IA

Brad introduced his staff and gave a brief overview of the services provided:

Ashley Whittington-Barnish, PhD, LCP, BCBA-D, NCSP; Clinical Director

Ryhanna Singleton, BCBA; Lead Board Certified Behavior Analyst

Linda A. LeBlanc, PhD, BCBA-D, Licensed Psychologist; Clinical Advisor

Hedda Meadan-Kaplansky, PhD, BCBA-D; Clinical Advisor

Erin Lansky; Healthcare Industry Advisor

Sam Schwartz; Center Architecture & Design Advisor

Numerous studies have established that 25+ hours of weekly treatment facilitate optimal outcomes for children with autism. As a result, we offer full-day ABA programs for pre-school aged children 2-6 years old.

Each day consists of both structured one-on-one therapy and naturalistic group activities.

One-on-one therapy

Focused on individualized goals related to self-care, communication, problematic behavior reduction, and more.

Naturalistic group activities

Focused on play and social interactions, which are critical for school readiness, adolescent development, and adulthood.

Group activities offer opportunities for children to socialize with their peers and are uniquely possible within a center-based environment.

Every child at Stride has a highly customized program developed by our Board Certified Behavior Analysts and overseen by a PhD in Clinical Psychology.

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Member Updates:

Erika Hertel- Iowa Regional Autism Assistance Program

In September, we offered:

- **Autism Workshop Series Webinar: "When My Worries Get Too Big?" Supporting Kids' Emotional Regulation** with Kari Dunn Buron. This was hosted by RAP, UI Autism Center, and the Iowa City Autism Community. This was not recorded at the request of the speaker.

Upcoming:

- **Transition to Adulthood Webinar Series for Families of Youth With Special Health Care Needs**

Presenters vary depending on session.

October 9 - November 20, 2020

Fridays, 12-1PM and Friday 12/20 7-9 PM

Register at: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/rt/5131915955829810960>

- **Autism Basics Webinar Series**

Presenter: Kelly Peizel, PhD

Tuesday, October 20 - November 10, 2020, 12-1PM

Register at: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6110442817151189772>

Four week webinar series aimed at parents/caregivers of children with a new autism diagnosis. Anyone is welcome to attend. Foster parents earn one hour of group credit for each webinar. Sessions will be recorded. Flyer is attached.

- **Autism Workshop Series: Introduction to Mindfulness for Caregivers**

Presenter: Christine Allen, LISW

Saturday, November 14, 2020 at 1–2 PM

Registration required, cost \$3: <https://www.eventbrite.com/.../mindfulness-for-caregivers...>

Funds generated by this event will help pay for Sensory Kit distribution to students learning at home this year. Scholarships are available if the fee is a hardship. Email Dina: iowadina@yahoo.com

Brought to you by the Iowa City Autism Community, the Iowa Regional Autism Assistance Program, and the UI Stead Family Children's Hospital Autism Center.

CHSC staff updates

ARNPs:

- Deb Bahe, ARNP from the Oelwein and Decorah Regional Centers has retired.
- We are in the process of hiring for her position along with hiring for an ARNP for Spencer which is a new position.

Nurse:

Jennifer Jorgenson was hired as RN-Supervisor to work in the Carroll Regional Center and will soon start training for the STAT to enable her to provide autism screenings there.

Family Navigators:

- Anne Akers, Family Navigator in Creston, will retire at the end of October. Interviews begin next week for this position.
- Amy Kula, Family Navigator from the Iowa City office has left her position due to a family move out of state. We hope to have this position posted soon.

Andrea Keith- Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Andrea was unable to attend the meeting, but sent the update that their new Autism Advisory Team has started to build resources and supports for staff to better serve individuals with Autism.

Wendy Trotter - Iowa Department of Education

Autism Navigator: We are beginning enrollment for Cohort 6 in the Autism Navigator project. Autism Navigator is an online course designed to help early interventionists better recognize the early warning signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and to learn to work collaboratively with families to identify priority outcomes for treatment to help prevent the cascading effect ASD can have on development and learning. The course focuses on the evidence-based practice of coaching caregivers to embed intervention strategies in everyday routines and activities.

For the Iowa Autism Navigator project, we ask cohort participants to agree to a 2-year commitment: Year 1 = Training tier where they complete the online course; Year 2 = Implementation Tier where they work to implement what they've learned into practice.

Additional professional development activities to support learning are provided via a regional *Autism Navigator (AN) Learner Community* within each AEA, as well as 2 additional statewide workshops.

SEE-KS: As a result of an RFP in which the Department of Education sought a vendor to provide a multi-year plan to build capacity to support social emotional engagement across multi-tiered system of supports within the State of Iowa's Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) Framework, a contract was awarded to Emily Rubin with Communication Crossroads her Social-Emotional Engagement – Knowledge and Skills ([SEE-KS](#)) framework.

SEE-KS is a professional learning approach designed to fuel learner engagement, both in the children and young people that we support, as well as their educators and service providers. The focus is on increasing engagement by fostering initiation, independence, and investment within classroom instruction. Current neuroscience is shared as a means to illustrate the importance of positive and healthy social connections as a fuel for learning. Within a universal design for learning framework, instructional design for learner engagement is enhanced by ensuring all learners have access to curriculum and are engaged in their learning regardless of their developmental level of social, language, and executive functioning skills.

At the school level, an internal core team of general and special educational teachers are identified with the idea that they will help mentor and share these strategies with their colleagues. Either onsite or via web-based telehealth, teachers will review video recordings of their classroom lessons to see what they are already doing to foster engagement and identify opportunities to increase student engagement; they will also observe each other's classes in action. These freely accessible tools within the SEE-KS framework enable us to measure engagement, engage in teacher to teacher mentorship, and identify opportunities for further social emotional engagement and growth in their students. Both general and special educators serving diverse learners from preschool through 12th grade will benefit from these instructional practices and mentorship techniques. The pilot of this project was to begin last April with Grant Wood AEA and Washington Elementary School in the Mt. Vernon school district, but was put on hold due to the pandemic. We hope to launch the pilot again this January (of 2021).

SEL Competencies: The Iowa Department of Education announces updated [Iowa Social-Emotional Learning Competencies](#) for fall 2020, and has a new designated webpage for [Social-Emotional Learning](#).

SEL has been demonstrated to increase students' academic performance and create a more positive learning environment. Schools are being asked to consider social-emotional-behavioral health (SEBH) in concert with Iowa's Academic Standards (e.g., literacy and mathematics). To support schools in these efforts, the Department worked closely with a broad group of stakeholders to develop Iowa's Social Emotional Learning Competencies. For Iowa schools, use of these competencies is voluntary and not required.

Based on research and recommendations from stakeholders, the decision was made to use the [CASEL SEL framework](#) as the focus for providing SEL resources in Iowa. The CASEL framework identifies five broad and interrelated competencies that comprise SEL: Self-awareness, Self-management, Social awareness, Relationship skills, and Responsible decision making. The Iowa Social-Emotional Learning Competencies are organized around these five competency areas to include: Learning Targets, Developmental Indicators, Adult Examples for Instruction, and Learner Examples for each competency area across 4 grade bands, K-2nd, 3rd-5th, 6th-8th, and 9th-12th.

<https://www.see-ks.com/>

<https://autismnavigator.com/>

<https://educateiowa.gov/pk-12/learner-supports/social-emotional-learning>

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

Rachell shared an update on the Innovations in Care Coordination Grant the Division of Child and Community Health that has been awarded and has existed for about a year now. Erika and I help support some of the initiatives which were put in place to bolster the Regional Autism Assistance Program. We host the Iowa Autism Learning Community webinar series to help specifically primary care providers around the state that serve children with developmental disabilities, including Autism. Our 6th webinar in the series is coming up November 18 at noon with Mary Roberts and Todd Kopelman speaking on Evaluation and Behavior Management of Severe Self Injurious Behaviors. This series is also appropriate for parents, other providers, and anyone with an interest in DD and ASD.

This grant also provides placing Family Navigators within Primary Care practices to assist families in finding resources and services and most recently we hired Jessica Prins in Storm Lake.

We also recently were awarded an AUCD grant called *Support for Early Childhood State Systems through the Act Early Network to support Recovery and Build Resiliency Skills, Behaviors and Resources of Children, Families, and Communities*. Its main purpose is to encourage parent engaged developmental monitoring to improve early identification and early intervention. Each state Act Early Ambassador is the state lead and specific stakeholders are asked to serve on the team to develop a needs assessment taking into consideration

COVID-19 barriers and solutions. 3 key targeted statewide programs will participate in the initiative, including WIC, Child Care Resource and Referral, and 1st Five, all of which have statewide presence. A big thank you to Kris Steinmetz, Michelle Holst, Erika Hertel, and Tom Scholz for participating and we would welcome any of your input as we know you also have expertise in your agency and knowledge of family needs in your communities.

Kelly Pelzel - University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital Autism Center

Kelly Pelzel announced some staff changes: Jon Goodwin, PhD has left to take a position at the University of California, Santa Barbara; Dr. Peter Daniolos has left since his spouse took a new position in Boston; Dr. Allen Anderson will take over for Dr. Daniolos working on the Child & Adolescent Psychiatry ASD diagnostic team with Todd Kopelman and Jenny Divita; two new Psychologists have joined the staff at the Center for Disabilities and Development: Amanda Berns and Jillian Reiher. There are still 5 diagnostic teams per week. The wait time for an appointment is 1-2 months at this time and they are holding all appointments in person. Clinicians meet quarterly. Kelly is working to create a directory across all UIHC diagnostic and therapy providers.

Todd Kopelman, Mary Roberts, and Kelly held their course for graduate students virtually for the first time. Twenty-five students signed up and almost all are speech pathology students.

PEERS for Adolescents Training has been rescheduled (flyer attached)

Ideal for mental health professionals, medical professionals and educators. This certified training provides a model for an evidence-based social skills treatment for teens in middle school and high school (ages 11-18) with ASD, ADHD, Anxiety, Depression and other social difficulties, particularly with respect to friendships. November 18-20, 2020

Kris Steinmetz – Autism Society of Iowa

The Autism Society of Iowa Fall Conference will be held via Zoom

November 6 @ 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Featuring Keynote Speaker Dr. James Ball, Ed.D., BCBA-D

<https://autismia.com/event/2020-fall-educational-conference/>

Questions and Other Discussion

Next Meeting: January 13, 2021 Noon-1:00.