

AAIDD Interest Network Annual Plan & Yearly Report

Planning and reporting on Interest Network activities designed to fulfil their purpose.
(See the AAIDD *Interest Networks Leadership Manual* for the purpose of the Interest Networks.

Interest Network: Direct Support Professionals

FY26 Lead Contact Person(s): Jessica Neely, Peg Gould (Co-Chairs), Maya Gillett (Secretary)

Next Scheduled Election & Leadership Position(s) that will be Open for Nomination:

2024-2025 Report [Karen Lee, Jessica Neely Co-Chairs]

For the year that **just ended** (July 1-June 30), indicate objectives met, activities completed, and funds used. In addition, please note if/how any activities enhanced diversity, equity, inclusion, or justice.

Goal 1. The DSP IN will meet monthly to share best practice information, be it an article, current research, or public policy

Outcome: Met. The DSP IN met monthly, with the exception of June (month of AAIDD Annual Conference) and December (holidays). Topics included: DSP holistic health/life balance; Ohio's model economic assistance program for DSPs; AI and Technology in DSP Training; specialized training/career advancement opportunities for DS workforce; Georgia's DSP I, DSP II credentialing program; policy and advocacy—AAIDD's position on policy and advocacy (advocacy with a little 'a'), among other topics.

Goal 2. The DSP IN will seek opportunities for greater research, literature and best practice forums within AAIDD. [Strategies included a best practices webinar, ongoing recruitment, and conversations with AAIDD publications re DSP best practices]

Outcome: Partially met. We continued to recruit new members and invite participants to share on current research and practices; however, we did not coordinate a webinar or formally engage with AAIDD publications.

Goal 3. Expand Early Career interest in DSP topics.

Outcome: Met. We were successful in offering a scholarship to Shannon Eshman, who will be presenting to the IN in fall 2025. We did outreach to the Early Career Professionals Network. We have a moderate attendance by Early Career Professionals at present.

FY25 Note: Karen Lee and Jessica Neely (Co-Chairs in FY25) noted a downtrend in attendance over the third and fourth quarters of the year. Regularly attending members identified political and fiscal concerns, statewide and federal legislation and accompanying demands as factors.

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2025-2026 Plan: Goals, Objectives, Activities, and Strategies

For the **coming year** (July 1-June 30), describe the planned objectives, activities, and proposed expenditure of funds. In addition, please note if/how any activities will address diversity, equity, inclusion, or justice.

Goal 1: The DSP Interest Network will meet monthly to offer a number of high interest topics and speakers. Caveat—we will aim for monthly meetings unless attendance suggests that a bimonthly format would be more impactful

Strategy 1: We will build upon our FY25 goals and meeting successes by planning out meeting topics/speakers several months in advance and presenting/advertising a multi-month agenda to our IN members. The IN already has a list of potential topics suggested across FY25.

Strategy 2: We will pursue focused outreach and invitation to other IN for speakers, to share research or best practices.

Strategy 3: Use of social media for communication and information about our meetings and work.

Goal 2: The DSP Interest Network will continue to recruit early career professionals but also establish conversation and inquiry space for mid-career professionals.

Strategy 1: Collaborate with current IN members to identify key topics of importance to mid-career professionals, research, practice, professional development, and navigating the unique challenges associated with this stage in their careers. Such topics may include Research and practice advancements, Technology integration, interdisciplinary collaboration, leadership and mentoring, funding and grants, career advancement and promotion, ethical considerations in research and practice, demographic considerations, and addressing ongoing workforce challenges.

Strategy 2: Call for research and presentations on mid-career topics.