AAIDD Student and Young Professionals Newsletter

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Here is the Latest Issue of the AAIDD Student and Young Professional Newsletter!

This newsletter focuses on connecting and sharing information with students and young professionals in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). We hope you find this newsletter to be a useful resource and we invite you to get involved in the many ongoing activities of SECPC committee (formerly SJMRR).

Please contact Committee Co-Chair Loui Lord (lordnelson@raiseinc.com) if you have any questions or are interested in joining this active committee. We look forward to hearing from you!

The SJMRR is now the SECPC

In July the Student and Junior Member Recruitment and Retention Committee asked for input from the AAIDD membership to determine a new name for the committee. With your help, we selected The Student and Early Career Professional Committee. In choosing that name we clearly identify our focus audience and look to draw more students and early career professionals both into our group and into AAIDD.

The tricky part of finding a new name was choosing a title that was appropriate for individuals who recently received their degree. To find that answer, we asked, "What term do you feel best describes those who have recently received their degree?" 26.4% of the respondents chose "young professional". 25% chose "new professional". The largest number of respondents (38.9%) chose "early career professional". By choosing "early career professional" we are acknowledging that many recent graduates are those who returned to graduate school later in their career or changed their careers after years in another field. For this reason, we decided the term "young professional" was not broad enough. We also acknowledge that many recent graduates have been within this field for many years and have had extraordinary experiences. If we were to choose the term "new professionals", the work these individuals had accomplished in previous positions and individual work would semantically be downgraded. Ultimately, the term "early career professional" was confirmed as the selected title.

So, how long should one refer to him or herself as a early career professional? According to our survey 61.1% of you determined that this should only be for those within the first 5 years of their most recent degree. 29.2% thought it should be the individual's choice and 9.7% felt the term should be stretched to 8 years. The Early Career Award which our committee authored and is a part of AAIDD's Awards stipulates that the person has been active in the field for less than 10 years or is within 10 years of post-graduate school. While no strict guidelines came from this question, it is an interesting point of conversation and contemplation as our field continues to promote its current cadre of students and early career professionals and build momentum for the future. If you are interested in demonstrating your desire to be a future leader, consider becoming an active part of The Student and Early Career Professional Committee by contacting either Loui Lord Nelson at lordnelson@raiseinc.com or Camie Neece at cneece@ucla.edu.

Research and Training Opportunities in IDD

For this month's post-doctoral opportunity, we highlight the newly funded Institute of Education Sciences (IES) fellowship in the Department of Special Education at Vanderbilt University. The funding began in September, 2008 and runs through August, 2012. The post-doctoral position at Vanderbilt offers researchers the opportunity to gain excellent methodological and statistical expertise. More specifically, post-doctoral researchers will receive mentorship from appropriate Vanderbilt faculty, work experience in currently funded IES research programs, and participation in an Intervention Research Literacy Reading Group. Additionally, they will receive experience in writing IES grant proposals, writing manuscripts, and presenting at research conferences. Further, the post-doctoral researcher has the opportunity to tailor their training opportunity to their research interests but would need to ensure their research is relevant to one of the IES intervention topical areas (e.g., early intervention/early childhood, autism, transition outcomes). Visit IES to learn about the many IES topical areas (http://ies.ed.gov/ncser/projects/). To learn more about this post-doctoral position, please visit http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/x8470.xml. Dr. Karen Harris is the project director and can be reached at karen.harris@vanderbilt.edu.

The Student/Junior Member Recruitment and Retention Committee of AAIDD does not endorse any particular graduate program or post-doctoral program; we aim to be an informational resource for students searching for graduate programs and post-doctoral opportunities. We advise students to investigate how each program meets their needs in terms of research and career goals and program quality.

SJMRR Teleconference Summary

Topic: Effective Networking Activities and Mentoring Experiences

Speakers: Dr. Ann Turnbull, Distinguished Professor and Director of the Beach Center on Disability, Professor Bill Gaventa, Director of the Community & Congregational Supports at the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities in New Jersey, and Ms. Luchara Sayles Wallace, a Doctoral Student at the University of Kansas Beach Center on Disability.

The three speakers shared their tips, advice, and experiences from the perspectives of both mentor and mentee regarding networking within associations, agencies, and with individuals with disabilities and family members. The first speaker, Dr. Turnbull primarily focused her presentation on the issues of networking by sharing her personal experiences. She first mentioned her considerations in choosing associations by disability focus (e.g., AAIDD and TASH), discipline (e.g., CEC), role of association (e.g., The ARC), and age group (e.g., DEC). She then provided tips about networking in associations: (a) meeting people, (b) starting with committees, (c) progressing through leadership roles, and (d) reaching different audiences. Dr. Turnbull went on to discuss networking with publishers: (a) helping established author with one or more chapters; (b) networking with editors and staff at conferences; and (c) submitting an idea for a book – finding an empty niche; networking with federal agencies: (a) arranging introductions to project officers, (b) participating in project directors' meetings, and (c) seeking opportunities to be a reviewer; networking with families (organizations and individuals): (a) connecting at local/state levels, (b) contributing to organizational agenda, (c) establishing relationships with individual families – offering real help, and (d) inviting families as speakers in classes.

Professor Gaventa focused his remark on networking and mentoring from a mentor's perspective. After a brief description of mentor's and mentee's role, he discussed the relationship between mentor and mentee (e.g., not a "fix it"; not a "do it my way"; and outward and upward bound-to assist as needed) as well as strategies for a positive mentoring experience. These strategies include: (a) put your work out there, (b) offer to help, take a role, and do a job when the invite is open, (c) follow through, and (d) find out where rituals and traditions come from.

From a mentee's perspective, Luchara Wallace discussed the issues of developing natural and guided mentoring experiences and mentoring expectations. She identified the benefits of having a mentor as: receiving supports on the areas of (a) academic advice, (b) professional contacts, (c) recommendations for involvement, and (d) access to professional organizations. She further suggested three mentoring expectations: availability to answer questions, inclusion in professional activities, and exposure to professional opportunities.

Student Research Highlight

By: Cameron L Neece, M.A., University of California, Los Angeles

Siblings of Children with ID: The Role of Child Behavior Problems

It has been previously assumed that having a sibling with an intellectual disability (ID) has a negative impact on other children in the family. Interestingly, recent research has found siblings of people with ID to be well-adjusted (Dyson, 1999, Eisenberg, et al., 1998; Levy-Wasser & Katz, 2004; Stoneman, 2005). However, little research has examined siblings' everyday feelings and experiences, which may be more relevant for siblings of individuals with ID (i.e. extra caregiving responsibilities, shame, reduces parental attention, stress etc.). More specifically, to the extent that there are negative impacts on everyday life for siblings of children with ID, little is known about causal mechanisms.

Previous research has shown child behavior problems do mediate the relationship between child cognitive functioning and parental negative impact (Baker, et al., 2003; Hauser-Cram, et al., 200l; Herring, et al., 2006) in that when child behavior problems are accounted for there is no longer a significant relationship between child intellectual status and parenting stress. The current study examined whether non-ID sibling impact can be similarly predicted.

The present study sought to extend the literature on siblings of children with ID by (1) examining alternative ways in which siblings may be impacted and (2) examining the mechanisms, or variables that explain why some siblings are more or less negatively impacted. We addressed four primary questions: (1) What is the relationship between child intellectual functioning and sibling impact? (2) What is the role of child behavior problems, if any, on sibling impact? (3) Are these relationships stable across time? and (4) What is the direction of these relationships over time?

Methods. Participants were 115 families, drawn from a larger longitudinal study of young children. The present sample was comprised of all families for whom data were available on the primary measures at child age(s) -5, 6, 7 and 8 years and the target child had at least one sibling. Children were classified as having intellectual disability (ID; n = 40, Binet and Vineland <85) or typical development (TD; n = 75, Binet and Vineland ≥85). Child behavior problems were assessed using the Total Behavior Problem scale of the *Child Behavior Checklist* (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001) and sibling impact was assessed in both samples using the Negative Impact on Sibling(s) subscale of Donenberg and Baker's (1993) *Family Impact Questionnaire.*

Results. After controlling for demographic variables, there were significant group differences in sibling impact at all time points in that siblings of children with ID were reported to be more negatively impacted compared to siblings of TD children (F-statistics all p< .05). Additionally, child behavior problems appeared to be a full mediator of the relationship between intellectual functioning and sibling impact in that child intellectual functioning was no longer a significant predictor of sibling impact once behavior problems were entered into the model (Sobel test at each time point was significant at p< .01). With respect to the direction of the relationship between child behavior problems and sibling negative impact, a cross-lagged panel analysis showed a significant cross-lagged effect from early child behavior problems to later sibling negative impact and not from early sibling negative impact to later child behavior problems. This suggests that children's early behavior problems may lead to increased sibling negative impact later on.

Discussion. Results suggest that child behavior problems are a salient predictor of everyday feelings and experiences of siblings of individuals with ID. As children mature, behavior problems may lead to a diagnosable mental disorder and psychopathology may a strong predictor of sibling impact. These findings have encouraging implications for intervention given that there is considerable evidence that behavior problems can be significantly reduced through effective interventions (Chronis et al., 2004; Horner et al., 2002). A reduction in behavior problems may result in a decrease in the heightened negative impact experienced by siblings of children with ID as well as a reduction in the risk for the later development of psychopathology in children with ID as they enter adolescence.

Are you working on a research project? Email a brief description to lordnelson@raiseinc.com for consideration for publication in a future issue of the newsletter.

A Publication of the AAIDD Ad Hoc Committee on Student / Junior Member Recruitment and Retention

Newsletter Committee: Cameron Neece, Loui Lord Nelson, Stella Nwokegi and Karrie Shogren

Ad Hoc Committee Members and Newsletter Contributors

Cameron Neece, Co-Chair; cneece@ucla.edu

Louise Lord Nelson, Co-Chair; lordnelson@raiseinc.com

Meghan Burke: meghanbm@gmail.com

Anna Esbensen; esbensen@waisman.wisc.edu

Judith Gross: jgross@ku.edu

Susan Havercamp; susanmhavercamp@ddcaps.org

Jennifer Jones; jennifer.jones@okstate.edu

Nancy Miodrag; nancy.miodrag@mail.mcgill.ca

Shea Obremski; obremski@ku.edu

Karrie Shogren, Board Liason; shogren@mail.utexas.edu

Mian Wang; mwang@education.ucsb.edu

Luchara Wallace: lsw7@ku.edu

Shelley Watson; shelley.watson@ualberta.ca

Nina Zuna; nzuna@ku.edu

The goal of the AAIDD Ad Hoc Committee on Student / Junior Member (SJMRR) Recruitment and Retention is to develop and implement strategies that foster the involvement and representation of students, recent graduates, and junior faculty / executives within AAIDD. The committee is working on a number of initiatives and meets via teleconference once per month to provide one another with updates and to share ideas. We are always interested in including more students and new members in our activities. Please contact Cameron Neece (cneece@ucla.edu) if you would like to learn more about becoming involved in this active committee.

Visit www.aaidd.org/YP for more information on issues relevant to students and young professionals

Not yet an AAIDD member….   Join Today!

AAIDD offers a number of membership options for students and young professionals.

AAIDD offers a Student Membership program for full time students and a Young Professional Membership program for recent college graduates who are new to the disability field. Student and young professional members receive online access to AAIDD's highly ranked journals: *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities* and the *American Journal on Mental Retardation*. In addition to having access to disability leaders and mentors, student and young professional members receive FYI-the Association's monthly electronic newsletter; discounts at conferences and on books and other publications, and access to AAIDD's Career Connections. Student and Young Professional Members are eligible to vote, hold office, join Action Workgroups, and to have access to the Members Only section of the AAIDD web site.

Student and Young Professional Members will be notified electronically about important events, training institutes, annual meetings, public policy seminars, teleconferences, and new publications.

Young professionals who are beginning to establish their careers can transition to Active Membership status, and continue to receive all the benefits they enjoyed as Student or Young Professional Members.

For more information on the various membership categories and to join AAIDD visit :
http://www.aaidd.org/Membership/form.shtml