

NISONGER NEWS

OSU Nisonger Center

Volume 1, Issue 4



Daniel Coury, LEND Director; Jeffrey Siegel, Social Work Trainee; Helen Alexander, Physical Therapy Faculty; Rebecca Baum, Developmental-Behavioral Pediatric Fellow; and an aide to Rep. Deborah Pryce

LEND faculty and trainees attend Disability Policy seminar in March

Faculty and trainees from the Nisonger LEND program attended the 2007 Disability Policy Seminar sponsored by The Arc of the United States, United Cerebral Palsy, AAIDD, the Association of University Centers on Disability, and the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities. The event brought together state and local affiliates, self-advocates, families, providers and others for two days of in-depth policy discussions and meetings focused on issues affecting people with disabilities and their families.

On the third day, LEND faculty and trainees visited Capitol Hill to deliver a unified message that Congress and the Administration cannot continue dismantling the benefits and services important to the disability community.

Training in legislative advocacy is a key component of the Leadership Education Excellence in Neurodevelopmental & Related Disabilities (LEND) program at the Nisonger Center. LEND is an interdisciplinary leadership training program funded by the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau to train future leaders in the field of developmental disabilities. The LEND program at the Nisonger Center is one of 35 programs throughout the country.

Each year faculty from 12 disciplines across the University recruit graduate and post-graduate students to participate in LEND. The curriculum consists of academic courses, clinical training and service learning opportunities that promote leadership development in the field of developmental disabilities. (LEND faculty and disciplines are listed below.)

Trainees are selected based on their leadership potential and dedication to the field of developmental disabilities. Opportunities exist for exceptional trainees to participate in additional years of advanced training. This year the faculty selected Erin Enright, a physical therapy candidate, for a second year of LEND training.

For more information on the LEND program at the Nisonger Center, please visit the website at <http://medicine.osu.edu/LEND> or contact Paula Rabidoux, a physical therapy candidate, for a second year of LEND training.

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Nisonger Center LEND faculty represent multiple disciplines

The 15 members of the LEND faculty represent a variety of disciplines:

- Helen Alexander, PT, MHS, PCS – Physical Therapy
- Jane Case-Smith, PhD – Occupational Therapy
- Patricia Cloppert, BSFS – Family Advocacy
- Daniel Coury, MD – Behavioral/Developmental Pediatrics

- Sherry Feinstein, MS – Early Childhood Development
- Thomas Fish, PhD – Social Work
- Maureen Geraghty, PhD – Medical Dietetics
- Mary Gottesman, PhD – Nursing
- David Hammer, PhD – Clinical Psychology
- Margo Izzo, PhD – Special Education

- Paula Rabidoux, PhD – Speech Language Pathology
- Karen Ratliff-Schaub, MD – Behavioral Developmental Pediatrics
- Edward Sterling, DDS – Pediatric Dentistry
- Sandra Tanenbaum, PhD – Health Services Management and Policy
- Gail Whitelaw, PhD – Audiology

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The Ohio State University **Nisonger Center**

A University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

“The mission of The Nisonger Center is to provide a comprehensive, integrated approach of training, service, technical assistance, applied research and dissemination of information in the field of mental retardation and developmental disabilities.”

The Nisonger Center was founded in 1966 as an interdisciplinary program of the Ohio State University. The United States Administration on Developmental Disabilities has designated Nisonger Center a "University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)." Steven Reiss, PhD, Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry, has served as Director since 1991. For more information about The Nisonger Center, contact Maureen Meck at meck.1@osu.edu.

nisonger.osu.edu



The Nisonger Center clinics have been a hallmark program for which the center is known both statewide and nationally. Faculty and trainees have received recognition for many projects, presentations and awards. The success of the clinical activities has focused on providing training for students and services to families — our two most important constituents.

For more information, contact Sherry Feinstein at feinstein.17@osu.edu.

Nisonger clinics provide comprehensive diagnostic services

The Nisonger Center provides comprehensive interdisciplinary evaluations for clients with developmental concerns from birth through age 18. The clinics address the training goals and objectives of our Leadership Excellence Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) grant. The mission is to offer graduate students from multiple disciplines opportunities in a clinical setting and teach the fundamentals of interdisciplinary team function.

Clinics focus on determining the medical diagnosis, including functional analysis and developmental status, for parents and service providers. Both the Autism Spectrum and Family-Directed Clinics are composed of a team of Nisonger faculty members. A primary function of the diag-

nostic team is to provide direction and recommendations for families that may include educational, medical and therapeutic suggestions.

The **Autism Spectrum Clinic** team includes a clinical psychologist (David Hammer, PhD), a speech pathologist (Paula Ravidoux, PhD) and a developmental pediatrician (Karen Ratliff-Schaub, MD).

The **Family-Directed Clinic** team includes developmental pediatrics (Karen Ratliff-Schaub, MD), audiology (Gail Whitelaw, PhD), speech pathology (Paula Ravidoux, PhD), physical therapy (Helen Alexander, MS, PT) and occupational therapy (Jane Case-Smith, PhD). Both clinic teams include a parent-faculty advocate (Patricia Cloppert) and a clinical coordinator (Sherry Feinstein, MS).

The newest clinical project is **The Nisonger Center Developmental Disabilities Clinic**. It began just over a year ago as a collaborative effort with Columbus Children's Hospital. In order to reduce the lengthy wait lists for young children ages birth to 6 seeking diagnostic assessments, Nisonger Center and Children's Hospital have created an interdisciplinary team. This unique developmental team combines clinical psychology, speech pathology and clinic coordination from Nisonger with developmental pediatrics, occupational therapy, physical therapy and nursing from Children's. Maintaining the Nisonger interdisciplinary approach, this team evaluates children and provides the families with a diagnosis and a full scope of recommendations. **NN**

Elsie Helsel Toy and Technology Library (TTL) is a vital resource

Play is a primary means by which children learn; however, many children with disabilities are unable to operate commonly available toys. For these children, toys may need to be modified for play skills to develop. The few adaptable toys available commercially may be too expensive for many families. The Elsie Helsel Toy and Technology Library at the Nisonger Center, open since 1990, includes more than 1,500 items available for loan at no cost. This allows children with motor, cognitive, communicative or sensory impairments greater access to play.

Toys are carefully selected and categorized by their developmental and functional levels:

- Infant toys
- Fine motor and manipulative toys
- Musical toys
- Language-based toys
- Games
- Puzzles
- Sensory & Perceptual toys
- Switches & Switch-activated toys
- Simple communication devices

Some generic toys, such as the

pounding toy, may be found in local toy stores, but have been selected for specific developmental characteristics. The pounding toy helps a child work on fine motor skills such as eye-hand coordination, grasping and beginning tool use. However, another child may not be able to access and manipulate this toy and may need extra help to support his or her interest and successful play. The TTL has pounding toys to support the needs of both of these children.

Over 200 switches and switch-activated toys are available for loan, including both standard and less common switches that allow modified access to a toy. The library also houses a variety of "low-tech" voice output devices and a computer lab. The computer lab consists of four computers and a variety of alternate access devices such as touch windows, switches, expanded keyboards, mouse/trackball devices and modified keyboards. Although these items are not for loan, visitors may preview and trial various devices and software programs prior to purchase.

Environmental Control Units (ECUs) are another adaptive

toy category. These units allow users to activate simple electrical devices through single switches and provide a bridge to more complex ECUs a child may need later in life.

Mary Jo Wendling, OTR/L, an occupational therapist with 27 years of experience in the evaluation and treatment of children with disabilities, manages the TTL. Ms. Wendling teaches family members about computer access, software options and optimal uses of equipment (low- and high-tech). She says, "I attend both local and national conferences and participate in professional groups to keep current so that I can share the most up-to-date assistive technology information and resources with central Ohio families and professionals."

Funding for the TTL comes from contributions and the Nisonger Center. The library serves approximately 300 families per year. Many professionals access the Library to preview devices, toys and switches prior to making purchases for their programs. Please contact the Library by phone at 614-688-3431 or email at wendling.3@osu.edu. **NN**



Madison is playing with a Classical Stacker by Fisher Price, using a Button Switch with Locator Light, both from Enabling Devices. Also shown is a Green Vibrating Plate Switch from Flaghouse.



Madison and Stephen enjoy Boohbah Get Up and Dance by Playskool from Enabling Devices. All toys have been modified to be switch activated by Enabling Devices.

Story and photos courtesy of Mary Jo Wendling, Paula Rabidoux and Sue Willis; excerpted from *DD Quarterly*, Winter 2007.

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events

Nisonger new hires since May 2005 need to sign up for two mandated generic safety training programs:

- EOEP (Emergency Operations & Evacuation Plan)
- HAZCOM

Current Nisonger employees only need to take HAZCOM.

Don't forget to designate one of these Nisonger Center programs to receive your donation to the [OSU Campus Campaign](#):

- 302755 – Nisonger MR/DD fund
- 302785 – ECE Adaptive Equipment fund
- 305132 – Toy & Technology Library fund
- 311909 – Next Chapter Book Club
- 312259 – Adult Sibling fund

Be sure to attend one of the **Attendance Policy Open Forums** in June, per email from Maureen Meck May 31. The new policy takes effect July 1, 2007.

See other news and events lists online at OneSource; you need your OSU Medical Center ID to log on. **NN**



Send notices of upcoming events to NISONGERNEWS editor Vicki Graff by email at graff.42@osu.edu. Each quarterly issue will appear approximately 4-6 weeks from the end of the calendar quarter (May, August, November and February).

NISONGERNEWS

Transition Weekend: "My Life, My Future" draws 135 attendees



As a Transition Leader, Chuck Dillard provided assistance throughout the weekend events.



Transition Weekend: My Life, My Future is an opportunity for students with disabilities, their families and the students' interdisciplinary transition team to learn about the transition process, to attend job training sessions and to brainstorm the next steps in each student's life after high school. A total of 29 families from all over Ohio attended the event March 16–17 at the Airport Marriot Hotel and Resort.

The 135 participants included students, family members, transition staff and volunteer

facilitators. Each student had an opportunity to explore four job site experiences, interact with self-advocates and share their experiences with team members to guide their transition plan.

On Friday night family members shared with one another and made valuable contacts while students enjoyed social activities with volunteer OSU students. Transition team members and families also learned more about each student's goals and received input about resources such as bene-

fits and program services.

Fifty volunteer facilitators and team members attended a pre-conference training session on how to facilitate groups, understanding each family's situation, family involvement issues and designing best practices in transition.

Both events received strong, positive evaluations from parents and students. For more information, contact Margo Izzo at izzo.1@osu.edu or Tom Fish at fish.1@osu.edu. **NN**

Welcome new hire! (January, February, March)



Jill McQuaid started on March 21 as the Access Tomorrow Project Coordinator in the Special Education and Transition Program. She earned an MA with distinction and honors in Early Childhood Special Education and a BA in Early Childhood Development, both from OSU.

As the mother of four sons, the oldest with complex multiple disabilities, Jill is a strong advocate for children with

disabilities and their families. She was an instructor for OSU's Master of Education in Special Education and family coordinator of a federal Department of Special Education grant in OSU's Department of Allied Medicine.

Jill grew up on a tomato farm in west-central Ohio, was a member of the OSU marching Band and still participates in the OSU alumni marching band. She's been actively involved in

recreational programs adapted for people with disabilities, such as Special Olympics. The inclusion of individuals with disabilities at home, at school and in the community has become Jill's passion.

Other staff news...



Dr. Anthony Lordo in Dental Services and his wife had a baby girl born December 1, 2006. She weighed 6 lbs., 15 oz. and is named Lucia.

Vanessa Martin in Behavior Support Services, her husband Jason, and daughter Gabby welcomed baby girl Grace Emmily to their family. She was born at OSU Hospitals on February 1, 2007, weighing 6 lbs., 1 oz.

Leigh Bookwalter was promoted on March 26 from part-time Office Assistant to full-time Research Coordinator on the EnvisionIT and E-mentoring projects in the Special Education and Transition Program.

Bianca McArrell was promoted on March 26 from part-time Office Associate to full-time Program Assistant in the Special Education and Transition Program.