



2014-16 Act Early Ambassadors Biographies

Alabama



Tish MacInnis
Alabama Partnership for Children
Montgomery, AL
334-271-0304
tmacinnis@smartstartalabama.org

Ms. MacInnis earned a BS Education degree from University of South Alabama, with a major in Therapeutic Recreation/Special Education. She is currently employed with Alabama Partnership for Children (APC) as the Coordinator of Family and Community Partnerships. Her main responsibilities are in the area of promoting the Strengthening Families Initiative across the state and the management of the Smart Start Parenting Kit. She has completed the National Center for the Study of Social Policy Strengthening Families online training. It is a researched based national child abuse prevention strategy that focuses on building protective factors in families to keep children safe. Personally, she has close friends that have dealt with identification and diagnosis for their child with autism. They had concerns their child might have a developmental delay, but struggled to find appropriate resources. In light of this experience, and her own difficulties obtaining information relevant to early childhood development, she has a strong interest in helping families identify delays and connect to services. She is passionate about improving statewide and local systems so that families have easy access to resources that can help their child and family become as strong as possible.

Arizona



Ann Mastergeorge
University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ
520-621-6933
amastergeorge@u.arizona.edu

Dr. Mastergeorge is an Associate Professor in the division of Family Studies and Human Development at the University of Arizona. She has a Master's degree from the University of Washington in Communicative Disorders, and a Ph.D. from UCLA in developmental psychology. Before becoming a faculty member at the University of Arizona, Dr. Mastergeorge worked for eight years as a faculty member at the M.I.N.D. Institute at University of California Davis Medical Center in the areas of early detection and early intervention for young children with autism and autism risk. In addition, she was a PI and co-PI on NIH funded grants studying early interventions for young children with autism and was also a collaborator on the National Professional Development Center on Autism. She has authored several publications and recently co-edited a book on educational interventions for children with autism (the first in a 5 part autism series for Jossey-Bass). She is currently a member of the Sonoran UCEDD faculty and has implemented early intervention programs working with First Things First funded programs for young children 'at risk'. In addition, she is on the faculty of the LEND program in Arizona and through AZLEND, works closely with stakeholders throughout the state to improve the services for young children with autism and their families in Arizona.



Arkansas



Peggy Schaefer Whitby
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR
479-575-3302
pschaefe@uark.edu

Peggy J. Schaefer Whitby is an associate professor and program director for the graduate certificate in Autism Spectrum Disorders at the University of Arkansas. Prior to coming to Fayetteville, Dr. Whitby was an assistant professor at the University of Nevada Las Vegas and the director of the Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders. Dr. Whitby is a board certified behavior analyst at the doctoral level. In 2013, Dr. Whitby served as CDC's Arkansas Learn the Signs. Act Early Ambassador. She also serves as the Arkansas Learn the Signs. Act Early team leader. She is the project director for Project Connect – a state systems planning grant and the Arkansas Autism Partnership Quality Assurance program which is funded by a Medicaid Waiver for children with autism. Since coming to Arkansas, Dr. Whitby has seen the issues families with children who have autism face in rural America. In response, Dr. Whitby is currently investigating the differences in autism diagnosis across race and culture in Arkansas, the differences in intervention outcomes based upon urbanicity, and the fidelity of implementation of autism interventions for children with autism in rural settings. She has publications in peer reviewed journals and book chapters on educating children with autism.

California



Debra Sarmento
Family Resource Centers Network of California
Sacramento, CA
916-993-7781
debrasarmento@comcast.net

Debra Sarmento works for the Family Resource Centers Network of California (FRCNCA) as the State Network and Prevention Resource and Referral Services Coordinator. Since joining the FRCNCA in 2004, she has managed multiple grants and projects simultaneously including videoconferencing and webinar training grants from the California Consumer Protection Foundation and the Autistic Spectrum Disorders Resource Project funded by the Department of Developmental Services. She served as Principle Investigator for Family Support Planning Grant and Family Support 2005 Initiative Grant from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities. Responsible for managing the logistics of the 47 member Family Resource Centers Network of California, working closely with the Steering Committee and individual Early Start Family Resource Centers (ESFRC) including access to the knowledge, expertise and relationships that exist in the ESFRCs across the state. Develop and maintain relationships with multiple state agencies and organizations. From 2008 – 2012 she also worked for the California Association of Family Empowerment Centers and provided part time assistance with webinar trainings and meeting planning to Family Voices of California, California's Family to Family Health Information Center. She is an experienced webinar organizer and conference and workshop presenter.



California



Fran Goldfarb
 Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, University of Southern California
 Los Angeles, CA
 323-361-3831
fgoldfarb@chla.usc.edu

Since 1997, Fran Goldfarb, MA, MCHES, CPSP has been the Director of Family Support at the USC UCEDD, serving as the discipline director in their CA-LEND program and project director on programs to support individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. She is also the Community Outreach Director for Children’s Institute, Inc., serving as curriculum/ training lead in the First 5 Los Angeles Parent Support Circles of Los Angeles County project. Ms. Goldfarb holds a BA in Human Development and an MA in Social Science (Family Life Education). She is a Certified Health Education Specialist (1990), a Master Certified Health Education Specialist (2011) and a Certified Parent Support Provider (CPSP). She is also an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Clinical Pediatrics at the USC Keck School of Medicine. She was on the California LTSAC Team at the Region 9 Summit (2009). She founded and co-facilitates the Los Angeles Asperger Parent Support Group since 1996. She has served on numerous boards including: Autism Society of Los Angeles Board, United Advocates for Children and Families and FACT. She chairs the LEND Family Discipline Workgroup. She trains and lectures extensively. Most importantly, she is the parent of a young adult on the autism spectrum.

Colorado



Debra Efird
 JFK Partners, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center
 Denver, CO
 303-519-4765
debbie.efird@ucdenver.edu

Dr. Debra Efird is a pediatrician who has practiced in Denver since 1994. Her past clinical work has included being Medical Director of the Children’s Hospital Colorado Special Care Clinic, a primary care pediatrician and hospitalist at Kaiser Permanente and an Urgent Care Pediatrician at Children’s Hospital Colorado. She was a LEND fellow from 2009-2012 at JFK Partners. While in fellowship she focused her work on issues related to early identification of developmental delays and autism. She participated in the Salt Lake City Act Early Summit in 2009 and served in the recent past as Coordinator of Physician Outreach for Colorado Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD). She has been an active participant the Colorado Act Early Team (Colorado Collaborative for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities Options) and has led efforts in that group to promote screening for autism and developmental delay. She has served as the Colorado Act Early Ambassador for the past two years. In that capacity she has promoted the use of the LTSAE materials and message across Colorado.



Connecticut



Ann Gionet
 Connecticut Department of Public Health
 Hartford, CT
 860-509-8069
ann.gionet@ct.gov

Ann Gionet is staff member of the CT DPH Adolescent and Child Health Unit with a focus on children and youth with special health care needs for 19 years, participate in program design and execution through four major enhancements. Co-coordinate the Health Resources Services Administration, State implementation Grant for Improving Services for Children and Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Other Developmental Disabilities. Designed and authored the Connecticut ASD grant proposal whose primary outcome is to improve access to comprehensive coordinated health care and related services for CT children and youth with ASD and other DD. The project is co-administered by the DPH, and the University of Connecticut A. J. Papanikou Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities and received direction and input from the CT DPH Medical Home Advisory Council, Act Early Summit participants, the Advisory Council to the Division of Autism Spectrum Services and the CT Autism Action Coalition. Represent the DPH Commissioner on several statewide Councils including the CT Family Support Council and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Advisory Council and co-chair of the subcommittee to improve and Expand Access to a Comprehensive Services Resource Guide.

Hawaii



JoAnn Yuen
 Center on Disability Studies, University of Hawaii
 Honolulu, HI
 808-956-5462
joyuen@hawaii.edu

JoAnn Yuen has degrees in Journalism (BS), Communication (MA) and Education Administration (EdD). She discovered her professional passion within Hawaii early intervention (1991-1998) as a child and youth specialist. She became a faculty member at the Center on Disability Studies (CDS), University of Hawaii (1998-Present), and created a pre-K ACE boost camp to develop learning and social skills and prepare incoming kindergarteners and families for school. She was principal investigator on four Native Hawaiian grants and co-principal investigator on a multi-year contract with the Developmental Disabilities Division. She is a governor-appointed member of the Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities (2009-2017) and serves on the Health and Early Education Committee. As the new Associate Director of the CDS, she has access to research facilities, resources, and University and community-based networks; and has the potential to impact policy. She serves on the Autism Society of Hawaii Board and the Board of a local non-profit providing day care and programs to adults with developmental disabilities (DD). She has been actively involved in Hawaii's/AUCDs Collective Impact Initiative/Learning Community and this innovative process is driving the implementation of a statewide system of developmental screening. Within this "Collective" she facilitates the Data Outcomes Subgroup.



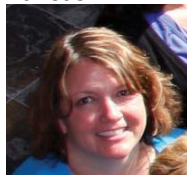
Indiana



Stephan Viehweg
Riley Child Development Center, Indiana LEND Program
Indianapolis, IN
317-944-0361
sviehweg@iu.edu

Stephan Viehweg, ACSW, LCSW, IMH-E" (IV) is Associate Director of the Riley Child Development Center-Indiana LEND. Steve organized local arrangements in partnership with AUCD for the September 2010 ACT Early Region V Summit held in Indianapolis. He organized a follow-up forum for the LEND Great Lakes Region (IN, IL, MN, WI, MN and PR) held in Indianapolis in 2012. States provided updates on their progress and the larger group met in smaller cohorts to tackle identified challenges to provide ideas for participants to take back home. He is a member of the Indiana Interagency Autism Coordinating Council. Steve is also the Interim Director of the IUPUI Center for Translating Research into Practice. He is founding president of Family Voices Indiana, founding chair of the Indiana Association for Infant and Toddler Mental Health and chair elect of Mental Health America of Indiana. He is board member of the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, and past president of the Indiana Chapter, NASW. Steve is tri-lingual (English, Spanish and ASL). His varied background makes him a valuable resource for Indiana's efforts to expand and fully implement Indiana's Autism Plan.

Kansas



Peggy Kemp
University of Kansas Center on Developmental Disabilities
Wamego, KS
785-383-4188
pkemp@ku.edu

Peggy Kemp works as the statewide trainer for Part C for the Kansas In-service Training System (KITS) at the Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities. Peggy has held a variety of local and state leadership positions to include early childhood special education teacher, state Part C coordinator, and state technical assistance provider. These positions afforded her opportunity to work on a number of early childhood initiatives. In her position, Mrs. Kemp has developed relationships with and has the opportunity to interact with state level early childhood partners that represent the target audience for CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign. Peggy has attended an Act Early Regional Summit. In addition, Peggy has worked with a statewide team to develop and implement a program aimed at early diagnosis of autism. This program partners local early intervention teams with staff from KUMC with the goal of reducing the time from concern to diagnosis. Peggy has recently conducted a book study for 80 Part C professionals on the Early Start Denver Model (ESDM). She has worked within a multidisciplinary team to support many families whose infants and toddlers experience autism. Peggy is currently participating in ESDM training.



Louisiana



Maria Blanco
HSC Human Development Center
New Orleans, LA
504-556-7572
mblanc@lsuhsc.edu

In 1994, Ms. Blanco's 2 ½ year-old daughter was diagnosed with autism. After implementing a home behavioral program for 3 years, she was in school full time and Ms. Blanco went back to school and earned a Master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education. She worked as an early interventionist for the state Part C program and for private preschools until 2006 when she was hired as an Early Childhood/ Autism Specialist by the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD). She currently serves as Louisiana's Act Early Ambassador and on the Inclusion Workgroup of our State Early Childhood Advisory Council. At the UCEDD, Ms. Blanco directed a statewide ASD training and technical assistance program for PreK-12 for 3 years and developed an intensive parent behavioral skills coaching model of service delivery that the Part C system adopted statewide for use with families of children with or at risk for ASD. She is currently collaborating with the state Developmental Disabilities Council and the state Title V program to develop trainings on developmental disabilities for healthcare professionals. This includes pediatric resident training on surveillance and screening, and autism screening and diagnosis using the ACT curriculum.

Massachusetts



Elaine Gabovitch
E.K. Shriver Center, UMass Medical School
Charlestown, MA
774-455-6531
Elaine.Gabovitch@umassmed.edu

Elaine Gabovitch is the Director of Family & Community Partnerships for the UMass Medical School-E.K. Shriver Center, Family Faculty in the Shriver Center LEND Program, and an instructor in the UMMS Department of Family Medicine and Community Health. As the mother of a young adult son with ASD, she has met many parents over the years who, like her, struggled to receive a timely and accurate diagnosis for their children due to a lack of awareness and training among parents and professionals of the early warning signs of ASD and other developmental disorders. Thus, she co-founded the nonprofit First Signs in 1999 and served as its vice president from 2000 to 2004. In 2010, she launched the Massachusetts Act Early campaign as its State Team Leader and in 2011 she joined the first cohort of CDC Act Early Ambassadors. She has served in both roles since that time coordinating an interdisciplinary steering committee and three task forces (outreach, training, early identification). As director of the "Considering Culture in Autism Screening" project, she has overseen production of a culturally-competent autism screening guide and kit for pediatricians in 2012, and the development of a companion training module in 2014. She currently serves as project director on the HRSA-MCHB state autism planning project for Massachusetts working with agencies across the state to assess needs and monitor progress. She hopes her state team's efforts will create a new standard of identification and care for children and youth with ASD in Massachusetts and beyond.



Minnesota



Jennifer Hall-Lande
Regents of the University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration
Minneapolis, MN
612-616-3363
Hall0440@umn.edu

Jennifer Hall-Lande, PhD, is a Psychologist and Project Coordinator at the Institute on Community Integration (UCEDD) at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Hall-Lande is also a former LEND (Leadership in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities) Fellow and remains actively connected to the Minnesota LEND program. Dr. Hall-Lande brings a wealth of professional experiences with young children and families including teaching, assessment around neurodevelopmental disabilities, and involvement with families in the Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program. Dr. Hall-Lande's principal research and community outreach activities have been focused on screening, assessment, and interventions for children at risk for neurodevelopmental disabilities. Additional areas of focus have been ASD prevalence rates in diverse populations and policy around children's ASD waivers. She has served as co-lead on state Act Early activities, in which a statewide team of Act Early delegates was developed, as well as Act Early outreach to culturally diverse communities. Dr. Hall-Lande has a specific interest in outreach and training around developmental screening in universal access environments such as statewide ECFE programs. Further, Dr. Hall-Lande has a focus on outreach to culturally diverse communities with an end goal of increasing screening rates and reducing the age of diagnosis for children from culturally diverse communities.

Montana



Ann Garfinkle
University of Montana
Missoula, MT
406-243-5262
ann.garfinkle@mso.umt.edu

Ann Garfinkle earned a Ph.D. in Early Childhood Special Education (University of Washington, 1999). Before arriving at The University of Montana (Missoula) where she serves as Associate Professor, she worked at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill) and as an Assistant Professor at Vanderbilt University. Since arriving in Montana, she has worked on projects focusing on young children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other Developmental Disabilities. Most recently, she has worked to develop, implement, evaluate, provide technical assistance and professional development for Montana's Children's Autism Waiver (CAW). The CAW is a Medicaid waiver program that provides intensive services to young children with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorders. Recent outcome data suggest that approximately half of participants reach a best outcome. She has received recognition for this work by being named Montana's Council for Exceptional Children's Researcher of the Year as well as recognition from Governors Schweitzer and Bullock. Additionally, because of her knowledge of early childhood services in Montana and her experience as a reviewer, she assisted the Governor's office in Montana's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge application. Additionally, she is a frequent speaker at state and national events.



Nebraska



Jennifer Burt
 Munroe-Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center
 Omaha, NE
 402-559-6408
jburt@unmc.edu

Dr. Burt completed a Master’s in Education at the University of Notre Dame and Doctorate in School Psychology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her training included a LEND traineeship (2003-2006), Pediatric Psychology Internship (2007-2008) and Post-Doctoral Fellowship (2008-2009) at the Munroe-Meyer Institute where she is currently an Assistant Professor. Dr. Burt has been involved with the CDC’s “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” initiative since 2008, with Collaborative Research Awards to develop of the Milestone Moments booklet and complete the evaluation of LTSAE materials in child care centers. Through her work on these Collaborative Research Awards and her participation in national Act Early presentations and meetings, she has developed several contacts with potential for future collaborative LTSAE and ACT Curriculum projects. Furthermore, in addition to her teaching and research activities, she provides clinical services for children and adolescents in a network of integrated primary care clinics, a model for statewide behavioral health coordination with primary care physicians and local schools. She is an active member on the Nebraska Act Early State Autism Team and has extensive clinical and research experience in the field of early childhood. Dr. Burt is assuming the role of the previous Nebraska Act Early Ambassador, Torri Smith Tejral.

New Hampshire



Jennifer Doris
 Lakes Region Community Services
 Gilford, NH
 603-581-1559
jenniferd@lracs.org

Ms. Doris has been the LTSAE Ambassador for since 2013. She has currently focused on training child care staff in how to utilize the LTSAE information. She has participated in the statewide TA Advisory committee and remains on multiple other statewide committees. In 2009-2010, she was a NH LEND trainee and completed training in the area of autism through the Leadership in Autism Spectrum Disorder program. In 2010, she opened an Autism Center as part of the Area Agency programs. Through her role as program director for early supports and services, she coordinated the screening of all children using the Ages and Stages Questionnaires and the MCHAT. She also oversees the dissemination of LTSAE information with families that are participants in the Early Supports and Services Program and child care centers throughout the state. Since 2008, Ms. Doris has been a partner in Watch Me Grow, NH's universal developmental screening system using the ASQ, ASQ- SE. She serves as a member of the WMG Steering Committee which oversees the implementation of WMG statewide. Additionally, she oversees the implementation of WMG in her region, including use of the ASQ, ASQ- SE, MCHAT and LTSAE materials. Ms. Doris is an active participant of the Autism Workgroup for Screening and Diagnosis. She is the president of the Early Education and Intervention Network (EEIN) and one of four Routine Based Interview certified trainers in NH. She regularly engages in professional development activities related to early development, including participation in the AUCD conference in 2009-2010. Additionally, she is an adjunct professor at the University of New Hampshire and Plymouth State University and is able to integrate the ACT curriculum into some of the coursework.



New Jersey



Deepa Srinivasavaradan
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network of New Jersey
Swedesboro, NJ
609-665-2696
deepas@spannj.org

Deepa Srinivasavaradan is a Family Resource Specialist for the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, supporting parents and professionals at a county Special Child Health Services Case Management Unit and The Center for Neurological & Neurodevelopmental Health, a Clinical Enhancement Center for children with ASD. She is the multilingual Parent to Parent coordinator for Southern NJ, and a Medical Home Parent Partner, helping pediatricians implement best practices. She provided family-led screening training to FQHCs for NJ’s Act Early State System Grant (2013) using LTSAE materials. As an Outreach & Enrollment Specialist, she helped enroll eligible children into NJ Medicaid and SCHIP. She coordinates SPAN’s project to spread awareness about ACA. She was an AMCHP Family Scholar (2011-2012), is an AMCHP Family Delegate, and is on NJ’s Help Me Grow team. As an immigrant parent of a son with ASD, she understands the cultural barriers that interfere with timely screening, diagnosis, and delivery of services to South Asian and other immigrant families. She is the co-leader of the “Early Screening & Diagnosis” work group of NJ’s Community of Care Consortium. She presented on diverse family leadership to Dr. Lu (MCHB) (2014). Her passion is early ID and early intervention for underserved children.

New Mexico



Nancy Lewis
Center for Development and Disability, University of New Mexico School of Medicine
Albuquerque, NM
505-269-8914
nancylewis@salud.unm.edu

Ms. Lewis is the Education and Outreach Manager for the New Mexico Developmental Screening Initiative at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine Center for Development and Disability and affiliate faculty at the UNM Center for Education Policy and Research. She holds a Master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology from the University of Arizona, completed a post-graduate fellowship in Child Development at the University of Texas Medical Branch and recently earned a MPA degree from the University of Colorado-Denver. She serves as the NM Act Early State Team Lead and is the Project Manager for New Mexico’s recently awarded 2014-2016 AMCHP Act Early State Systems grant. Her work involves partnering with key stakeholders to improve the statewide systems involved in the early identification of young children with developmental delays/disabilities, including autism, with timely and appropriate access to family-centered services. She brings years of experience and a refined expertise in the area of early diagnosis of ASD and other developmental conditions. With over 25 years of experience in New Mexico, she is well-positioned to leverage actions that will lead to enduring system change in order to improve outcomes for families and young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other developmental conditions.



Nevada



Mario Gaspar de Alba
 University of Nevada School of Medicine
 Las Vegas, NV
 915-996-8670
mgaspardealba@medicine.nevada.edu

In 2005, Dr. Gaspar de Alba completed his pediatric training at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine and began working as faculty in the pediatric department of Texas Tech Medical School in El Paso. He soon felt the need to complete subspecialty training in pediatric development and behavior. He completed his fellowship training program at the University of North Carolina Center for Development and Learning/Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities from 2007-2010. As part of his training, he participated in the LEND program all three years. In 2010, he returned to El Paso to resume his role at Texas Tech of becoming more involved in the community and participating with the local early intervention to provide and promote the “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” campaign, targeting local health care providers. He relocated to Las Vegas in 2012 and immediately reached out to the early intervention providers and the LEND program in Reno. In August of 2013, he presented the Act Early campaign at the AAP Nevada Chapter annual meeting. He has become deeply involved with early intervention and LEND, as a faculty member and sub-committee member of the Act Early Team.

North Carolina



Rebecca Edmondson Pretzel
 Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
 Chapel Hill, NC 27599
 919-949-6148
Becky.edmondson@cidd.unc.edu

As a university-based psychologist specializing in early intervention and developmental disabilities, Dr. Edmondson Pretzel’s career has been dedicated to goals clearly compatible with the Act Early campaign; clinical, research and training activities have focused on early identification, screening, assessment, and treatment of young children with I/DD, including ASD. Her efforts have centered on partnering with and educating students, parents, and interdisciplinary early childhood professionals on the early identification and treatment of intellectual/developmental disabilities. Some of her recent activities corresponding to Act Early priorities include: (1) serving as NC’s Act Early Ambassador and completion of related workplan goals, (2) active participation and leadership on NC’s Act Early state team; (3) authorship of Part C guidelines for personnel to identify young children at risk for ASD and other I/DDs, an online course for the National Professional Development Center on ASD, and book chapters/articles on screening and assessing young children with ASD/IDD; (4) extensive statewide trainings for interdisciplinary early intervention, child care and preschool personnel on early identification and evidence-based assessment of children at risk for ASD/related disabilities, and (5) Principal investigator of two AMCHP state systems (LTSAE) grants and co-PI of our recently funded State Implementation grant (HRSA).



Ohio



Stephanie Weber
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center LEND Program, The Kelly O'Leary Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders
Cincinnati, OH
513-550-0354
stephanie.weber@cchmc.org

Stephanie Weber is the Training Director at the LEND Program at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and assistant professor at the University of Cincinnati. She obtained her Doctor of Psychology degree from the University of Indianapolis in 2011. Clinically, she works with young children with autism as well as with children and adolescents with intellectual and developmental disabilities demonstrating severe and challenging behaviors. As a LEND trainee, Stephanie participated in a LEND research project on the gathering of information on the innovative strategies which states across the country have employed to fulfill the goals of the Act Early campaign. Subsequently, she developed a training program to provide knowledge and skills on the signs of developmental delay to early childhood care providers in daycare and preschool settings. Additionally, as the 2012-2013 Virtual Trainee for the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), Stephanie developed national connections through projects and social media correspondence.

Oklahoma

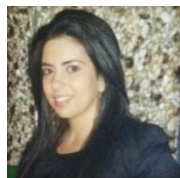


Bonnie McBride
University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
Oklahoma City, OK
405-271-5700
bonnie-mcbride@ouhsc.edu

Bonnie McBride, Ph.D., BCBA-D is an Associate Professor in the Department of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. In addition to her faculty position, she is a LEND core faculty in ASD, teaches ASD content in other graduate programs on campus and provides professional development to educators and other professionals throughout the state. Dr. McBride's research interests have focused on effective interventions for young children with ASD. She is the Principal Investigator of two federally funded multisite efficacy trials for early intensive intervention for toddlers and preschoolers with autism. She serves on several statewide committees to improve early identification and intervention services for children with developmental disabilities including ASD. She was the team leader for the Act Early Regional Summit and chairs the group that was formed as a result of that summit. In this role, she obtained funding for Oklahoma Early Access Autism Project, which focuses on raising awareness regarding ASD by offering Act Early materials, free information seminars and screening for underserved populations. She has served as Oklahoma's Ambassador for the Act Early Campaign in 2012-2014 and has recently been awarded an Act Early State Systems Grant.



Rhode Island



Stacey Aguiar
Rhode Island Department of Health
Providence, RI
401-222-1087
stacey.aguiar@health.ri.gov

Ms. Aguiar has a Bachelor's degree in Health Education and is a Certified Health Education Specialist. She is currently completing a Master's degree in Public Health and plans to continue her education with a Doctorate in Public Health. As an Early Childhood Screening Specialist at the Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH), she supports primary care providers, with on-site technical assistance, to implement developmental screening electronically. She has evaluated the advantages and challenges of implementing screening electronically, and has worked with the state Medicaid and the RI Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (RI AAP) to recommend specific screening systems and tools. She ensures that support to providers incorporates current best practices. She also supports providers to link families with evidence-based programs that would meet their needs. These combined efforts help ensure that Rhode Island (RI) has a comprehensive screening and response system for families with young children. Her work has allowed her to acquire valuable knowledge and understanding about supporting primary care providers to conduct developmental screening and address families' needs as early as possible. Her combination of education and experience makes her an ideal candidate for the Act Early Ambassador role.

Tennessee



Toni Whitaker
University of Tennessee Boling Center for Developmental Disabilities
Memphis, TN
901-488-3043
twhitak1@uthsc.edu

Dr. Whitaker is an Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Developmental Pediatrics with the University of Tennessee Boling Center for Developmental Disabilities (and former Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities program trainee). She is proud to work primarily in interdisciplinary settings and is involved in clinical, academic, research and community service pursuits for a variety of Neurodevelopmental Disabilities. She has clinical expertise in working with children of all ages and their families, with special interests in infants and young children as well as Autism Spectrum Disorders. She maintains an active role in educating physicians, educators, interdisciplinary students, early childhood providers, and community members about Autism Spectrum Disorders and related Neurodevelopmental Disabilities. She has previously served as the Tennessee Act Early Ambassador for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." Program. Her role on the Tennessee Act Early Team is not only as liaison for the Act Early Program, but as a work group chairperson and member of the Planning Council for their diverse and dedicated team. They are working together from across the state to develop a comprehensive, coordinated state plan for systematic sustainable medical, developmental, and educational services for their children and their families.



Texas



Pauline Filipek
 The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
 Houston, TX
 713-500-8321
pauline.a.filipek@uth.tmc.edu

Pauline A. Filipek, MD, is Professor of Pediatrics, Children's Learning Institute and Division of Child/Adolescent Neurology at the UT Medical School, Houston. She is Director of The Autism Center at the Children's Learning Institute (CLI), as well as the LoneStar LEND, the Texas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems, and the Texas Autism State Planning Grant programs (all HRSA-funded). Her clinical and research passions have been focused for many years on identifying the earliest signs of ASDs, initiating the earliest intensive interventions, and on education for all disciplines on these topics. She lectures extensively on these topics to students, trainees and professionals in all related disciplines. She received her MD from Georgetown University School of Medicine followed by pediatric/chief residency at University of Massachusetts, and child neurology fellowship at Massachusetts General Hospital/ Harvard Medical School. She continued on Harvard faculty until her recruitment to UC Irvine in 1994, where she remained until her recruitment to UT in 2009. She chaired the AAN/CNS Committee of 11 professional and 4 family organizations to create Practice Parameters for Screening and Diagnosis of Autism, the first such published guideline. She also served on the National Research Council Committee that authored Educational Interventions for Children with Autism.

Utah



Susan Olsen
 Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University
 Logan, UT
 435-797-7461
sue.olsen@usu.edu

Sue Olsen, M.Ed., directs the Division of Services, Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University. Her areas of expertise include young children youth with ASD and their families, interdisciplinary diagnostic evaluation, clinical assessment, and therapeutic interventions. Programs within the Division serve as training sites for undergraduate and graduate students from multiple disciplines (psychology, speech pathology). She was a co-PI on a Steppingstones of Technology Innovation for Children with Disabilities grant studying the feasibility of using Voice Over IP to increase access to services for children living in rural/frontier areas. Ms. Olsen has presented nationally and co-authored several publications on the feasibility and use of virtual home visits. Olsen has directed a 3 county IDEA, Part C program since 1987. Her early intervention team piloted a child find campaign using the CDC LTSAE materials and embedded ASD query questions into the intake procedures as part on the Utah ASD System Development Project. The pilot project increased identification of ASD concerns at intake by 27%. She is a past member of the ICC, a current member/past chair of the Utah Early Intervention Provider Consortium, a member of the Autism Council of Utah and the Utah Autism Initiative.



Virginia



Deana McGuire Buck
Partnership for People with Disabilities, Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, VA
804-827-0198
dmbuck@vcu.edu

Ms. McGuire Buck's professional education is in special education and she has worked in the field of early childhood development for 25 years. For the past 22 years, she has worked at the Partnership for People with Disabilities, Virginia's UCEDD, and currently serves as the Program Group Leader in Education/Early Childhood. While at the Partnership, she also administered the early intervention system in the city of Richmond for over 15 years. Ms. McGuire Buck currently serves as the Principal Investigator for several statewide initiatives in Virginia designed to provide professional development to providers and administrators to improve supports and services for young children and their families. She has extensive experience in the design and provision of professional development, and regularly designs and provides training for a variety of audiences. She has also worked to develop her skills as a provider of professional development, including participating in training on the design and implementation of successful in-person and web-based instruction. She enjoys designing training content that is engaging for adult learners. She is currently serving her second term as the CDC's Act Early Ambassador to Virginia, and provides administrative/leadership support to Virginia's Act Early Team. This work has been a highlight of her professional career.

Vermont



Janet Kilburn
Vermont Department of Health
Burlington, VT
802-865-1323
Janet.kilburn@state.vt.us

Janet has worked for many years as a Title V Children with Special Health Needs Program medical social worker; she has a clinical role in our Child Development Clinic, on Part C Early Intervention teams, and participates in care planning and conferences in the medical home. Her direct experiences with families have shown her the importance of *acting early* and the difference this can make in the lives of young children. Her systems experience began as a social work graduate assistant on the MCHB grant, Partnerships for Change, with Dr. Kathleen Kirk Bishop at the University of Vermont. Janet participated in the activities of the MCHB State Implementation Grants for Children and Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders and began working to improve our state's cultural competence in early ASD/DD screening and assessment. Her recent Act Early Ambassador role has led to cross-sector partnership building across health, mental health, family support, and early care and education systems for early identification and timely diagnosis of developmental concerns in young children. She has recently become the new Vermont MCH Child Development Coordinator and is working to improve developmental screening, systems integration, and service linkages via implementing the Help Me Grow program. Janet remains active on the Interagency Autism Plan Advisory Council.



Wisconsin



Gail Chodron
 Waisman Center, University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities, University of Wisconsin-Madison
 Madison, WI
 608-890-0145
chodron@wisc.edu

Ms. Chodron is the Interdisciplinary Training Coordinator for the WI LEND training program at the Waisman Center UCEDD, and a doctoral candidate (PhD expected Dec 2014) in Public Health. Early identification is a particular passion of hers, because she has a son diagnosed with autism whose delays were not recognized until age 4½. She began working with the LTSAE campaign in her role as Training and Outreach Coordinator for Wisconsin’s Autism State Implementation Grant (2008-2011), in which they partnered with the CDC to develop the original customizable LTSAE milestones brochure. She has served as CDC’s Act Early Ambassador to Wisconsin since the program began in 2011, and has also served as state lead on two AMCHP Act Early State Systems Grants (2012, 2014-16). In 2013, she joined the leadership team for the Governor’s Early Childhood Advisory Council Screening and Assessment Practice Group.

West Virginia



Susannah Poe
 West Virginia University School of Medicine
 Morgantown, WV
 304-293-4692
spoe@hsc.wvu.edu

Dr. Poe works to improve evidence-based autism diagnostic and treatment services to West Virginians. She is an Associate Professor at the WVU School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics. She serves as Autism Coordinator for the WVUCED LEND program, is the co-PI for the Statewide Parent-Implemented Training for Autism through Teleconsultation (PITA-T) and serves as the PI for the statewide Training and Resources for Autism Insurance Navigation in WV. Dr. Poe is also the primary diagnosing clinician at WVU’s Klingberg Neurodevelopment Clinic, is the Coordinator for the WVUCED LEND/Autism Expansion Grant and is director of the intensive Autism Services Delivery Clinic. In addition, Dr. Poe provides statewide and Medical School trainings on autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders; leads diagnostic experiences for rotating Pediatric, Family Medicine residents; mentors Psychology doctoral students; and teaches LEND students through clinical observations weekly. Dr. Poe attended the Act Early Summit in Philadelphia in March 2010 and is WV’s Act Early State Team leader. She is a founding member of the Mountaineer Autism project, the organization resulting from WV’s Act Early Summit plan. She recently led successful efforts to pass autism legislation and allow BCBA’s to practice under a national organization structure. She also held town hall meetings on autism throughout WV. Dr. Poe is a member of the WV Children with Autism Trust Board, 2011-current (appointed by Governor); Team Autism; WV, Autism Speaks government relations team; and is the WV representative to Autism Speaks to Congress 2013.



Autism Speaks

New York, NY
646-843-6662

For over a year, Autism speaks has supported an organization-wide initiative called "Early Access to Care" (EAC). The goals of EAC are to lower the average age at diagnosis and increase access to early intervention services for all children. In particular, the initiative focuses on reducing socioeconomic as well as racial/ethnic disparities in access to screening, diagnosis and treatment for autism in the United States. These goals, as well as the associated objectives and activities of EAC, are directly aligned with the work of the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign and associated Act Early Ambassador Program.

Amy Daniels



amy.daniels@autismspeaks.org

Jamitha Fields



jfields@autismspeaks.org