CIDD Introduces New Hearing and Development Clinic

The advent of newborn hearing screening in North Carolina ten years ago has dramatically decreased the age of identification and intervention for children born with permanent hearing loss. Unfortunately, more than one-third of those children will have additional challenges that range from severe, life threatening conditions at birth, to subtle learning problems that are not apparent until school age. Often there are concerns about cognitive or social-emotional development. Many families report difficulty finding professionals who can address their concerns, and when they do it often requires multiple appointments with a variety of programs and professionals.

The new CIDD Hearing and Development Clinic (HDC) is responding to this need by providing a multidisciplinary diagnostic evaluation for infants and young children with hearing loss. The primary purpose of the clinic is to determine if the child is experiencing developmental deficits, and if so, to provide recommendations for follow-up and treatment. Typical referral concerns include speech and language development, processing difficulties, cognitive delays, or questions regarding socialization, communication, and sensory function. This is the first multidisciplinary team of its kind in North Carolina.

Through an in-depth assessment process the HDC team works to create a comprehensive intervention plan for families and caretakers. The team also communicates with local service providers to assist with locating resources available through the NC Department of Public Instruction and other agencies. The team is coordinated by audiologist Jackson Roush, Ph.D. and team members include Martha Mundy, AuD (Audiology); Jean Mankowski, Ph.D. (Psychology); Kathryn Wilson, M.A., LSLS Cert.-AVT (Speech-Language Pathology); and Donna Yerby, Ph.D.(Education). CIDD Speech-Language Pathologist Margaret DeRamus, M.S., provides consultation when there are concerns related to autism. Other CIDD specialists are available as needed.

An interpretative conference with the family is provided at the conclusion of the multidisciplinary assessment. This is followed by a detailed report that explains the results of the evaluation and strategies for addressing the child’s needs. Regional and statewide resources are also provided, and the team stays in touch with the family to make sure their needs are being met.

An important component of the Hearing and Development Clinic is the education of graduate students involved in CIDD’s Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) program. Students from the LEND disciplines participate in the interdisciplinary team under the mentorship of CIDD clinicians. To learn more about the Hearing and Development Clinic, contact Dr. Roush at jroush@med.unc.edu or telephone 919 966 9467.