## Teachers' Corner

### Sexuality Issues for Students with IDD

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Sexuality, the exploration of ourselves, specifically with our physical bodies, emotions, and relationships with others, is one of the most basic human instincts and a natural part of development, but it is incredibly complicated. Many factors impact personal sexual development, including personal value systems, access to a sexual health curriculum, and factors such as who is raising the individual, where, and when (World Health Organization, 2010). These factors, when combined with developmental aspects beyond biology (social, emotional, and intellectual processing), are often difficult for learners with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to navigate.

### Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Too often sexuality education is approached as a singular task embedded within a secondary education curriculum, but the "language for discussion, when it has not already been established during childhood, is more difficult to introduce when the child is more sexually aware and when silence has already been the established level of communication" (Walker-Hirsh, 2007, p. 77). A comprehensive sexuality curriculum can help balance this information.

### Strategies for students with IDD

Sexual health is not solely conditional on the physical act of sex, but it is balanced by positive relationships and emotional maintenance. Skills that are necessary to have positive relationships include socializing appropriately and safely, and recognizing and maintaining personal happiness. This includes respecting other people's feelings, values, and social boundaries, and understand-

ing and advocating for personal interests and rights. Addressing the emotions that come with sexual development means individuals have an understanding of self-management. This includes understanding the highs and lows of feelings, private versus public behaviors, and maintaining self-awareness and self-regulation. Additionally, the specific needs and desires of the learners must be addressed alongside considerations such as learners functioning levels, religious beliefs, family and personal values, social opportunities, and opportunities for practice.

Special educators are accustomed to collaborating with service providers and families. Much of their job is advocating for the needs, wants, and comfort level of the learner and his/her/their support system. This approach of specialized instruction can also be applied to sexuality education. Special educators can prioritize specific skill deficits within sexuality education, and work with service providers to integrate skill development alongside opportunities for appropriate content and social sexual expression. Speech pathologists for example, can focus on advocacy and communication, and occupational therapists may focus on personal hygiene. School counselors, psychologists, or social workers could help learners achieve goals of appropriate sexual expression, fears, concerns, or needs. Specific attention to elements of *self-determination, social pragmatics,* and *emotional maintenance* will allow learners increased opportunities to explore personal likes and dislikes, strengths and challenges, and skills as related to elements of "social inclusion, sexual safety, and life enjoyment" (Walker-Hirsh, 2007, p. 5).

### Additional Resources

The following section highlights resources stakeholders might utilize to support sexuality education for learners with IDD; they can be used for information gathering and as a springboard for adapting lesson plans and other classroom resources.

### *FoSE (www.futureofsexed.org)*

The Future of Sex Education (FoSE) is a collaborative effort to "create a national dialogue about the future of sex education and to promote the institutionalization of comprehensive sexuality education in public schools" (FoSE, n.d.). An important resource FoSE provides is the National Sexuality Education Standards as well as guidelines for selecting evidence-based and evidence-informed programs for teaching sexuality education.

### *GLSEN (www.glsen.org)*

GLSEN (formerly known as the Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Network) provides information for educators on inclusivity and sexuality and gender diversity related to LGBTQ+ issues.

## President's Message

### Jordan Shurr

Happy New Year and hold on to your seat! The Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities is on the move and I am thrilled for the opportunity to serve as President this year! If the first two months of 2018 are any indication of where our division is headed, it is sure to be another busy and productive year as we work together toward our mission of enhancing the quality of life of individuals with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities.

In January, we wrapped up another successful division conference with a wide array of timely presentations on best practices and current issues in the field as well as abundant opportunity for professional networking. I cannot overstate the benefits of our well run and relevant annual DADD conference, nor the tireless efforts of our conference coordinator, Cindy Perras, and the hundreds (yes, HUNDREDS) of volunteer planners, presenters, and proposal reviewers. If you have not had a chance to join us yet, please consider doing so in years to come- you will not regret it. At the start of February, a mere 3 weeks and 30 miles apart from our division conference, we represented DADD at the Council for Exceptional Children's annual convention in Tampa, Florida. Activities included two relevant showcase sessions on curricular content for students with intellectual disability, a powerful three-session strand on evidence-based practices for students with autism, over 70 presentations, and an informational division booth in the exhibit hall. While we have moved the majority of our business to our division conference, in an effort of financial and organizational efficiency, our presence at CEC was strong and noticeable as our members shared their DADD-related expertise and continued to advocate for the division.

While we continue to keep a watchful eye on the health of the division, I am proud to say that we remain in a position of strength and stability. Membership involvement, innovative leadership, and a sustained focus on our core mission continue to be the trademark of our division. Our current position, which allows us to focus on the future, is a testament to the efforts of our past leaders and boards. On this note, I want to sincerely thank those who have recently completed their terms. This includes David Cihak, our previous past president, and Beth Kavanaugh, our Canadian representative. Both David and Beth have left a lasting impression on the board and organization at large. Additionally, Elizabeth West our former president will be assuming the role of past president and continue to provide her thoughtful contributions to the board. In our tradition of recruiting and electing exceptional new leadership, we welcome our new board members as of January, 2018. Kimberly Maich will be serving for the next three years as our Canadian representative, and Ginevra Courtade will be serving for the next four years in the presidential cycle. I look forward to these new members joining our efforts ahead.

As most of you already know, DADD does not have a physical office nor year round paid staff. Instead, we rely on the ideas and energy of our elected and appointed board members and our membership to not only exist, but to push forward and advance the field. Our DADD members are our authors, our presenters, our policy advocates, our reviewers, our recruiters, our innovators, and our leaders. In reality, you are DADD and we collectively are DADD. For those new to involvement in the division I encourage you to join us in this great work—Join a committee, submit a proposal, share a DADD publication, join a state subdivision, recruit a colleague, run for office, or connect with your fellow DADD members. For those of you who have already logged countless hours of service- we thank you for your effort and example and look forward to working with you again this year.

All the best for a wonderful year of innovation, collaboration, and impact!

## Executive Director's Corner

### Teresa Taber Doughty

Am I the only one who notices that the news media and general public seldom use person-first language? For heaven's sake, it's been more than 25 years since intentionality was brought toward promoting the individual first. Why do I continue to see publications, hear the general public and news broadcasters use phrases such as, "the disabled man" or "the autistic girl"? And then there's the one that makes me regularly cringe . . . the person who is "confined to a wheelchair". Really? "Confined"??

For some time now, I've observed how many people continue to use disability-first language. On March 22, 2017, then Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch was quoted as saying, "If anyone suggests I like an outcome where *an autistic child* happens to lose, that is a heartbreaking outcome to me . . .". A New York Times headline from November 22, 2017 shouted, *"Uber Me to My Airbnb? For Wheelchair Users, Not So Fast"*. And then there's the July 10, 2017 U.S. News and World Report about the GOP health care reform efforts that refers to the ADAPT activists as "the *disabled activists* of ADAPT . . .".

First introduced in the late 1980's, the idea behind person-first language is to emphasize the person rather than his or her disability. It is a way to show respect for individuals rather than focusing on a specific trait. It is often considered a part of "disability etiquette". While it may require writing or speaking a few additional words, for me, the practice of using person-first language is automatic and something I've reinforced with those around me for years. Yet, there are critics of using person-first language.

I've read a few blogs and editorials where an individual with a disability is outright opposed to person-first language. The authors note that "disability" is part of their identity and in not acknowledging it, we are ignoring an important part of their being. For example, Jim Sinclair (1999) wrote a piece called "Why I dislike people first language". He noted that person-first language dismisses an important part of an individual's identity and conveys a message that there is something wrong with that disability. While this is certainly not my intention, it is an interesting point.

Gernsbacher (2017) suggests that using person-first language may actually have the opposite effect from its intention. Rather than focusing on the individual as a person, person-first language may actually accentuate the stigma of a disability. Because person-first language is mostly used, when it is used, to describe an individual with a disability rather than individuals who are typically-developing, the practice may actually place greater emphasis on the disability. Interesting. In other words, if person-first language is to be used, it should be used for everyone regardless of ability status.

As I've thought about the ideals and criticisms regarding the use of "person-first language", I've wondered about the true motivation behind the original practice. Was it *fear* that motivated its original use in the late 1980's . . . fear of speaking about, writing about, or interacting with an individual with a disability to avoid offending someone? While inclusive practices have certainly offered an opportunity for children to know and build relationships with people of all abilities, I know many con-tinue to feel awkward when interacting with someone with autism, intellectual disability, a sensory impairment, or someone who uses a wheelchair out of *fear* of doing or saying something "wrong". Is it a direct *fear* of the disability rather than the person? Honestly, I can't answer this question but I do know that *fear* is often the underlying culprit that makes us uncomfortable and I wonder if this is part of the motivation behind the introduction of person-first language.

So where does this leave us? Conceptually, the use of person-first language is considered appropriate etiquette. However, for some individuals, it is dismissive of their identity. I know that I always want to be respectful of others and never dismiss an important part of a person. I am also fairly certain that when engaged in professional writing, I will continue to use person-first language . . . for everyone . . . regardless of ability status. In the end, I believe that language we use is important for conveying respect for others. I also believe that it is my responsibility to serve as a model for how to speak, write about, and interact with others, sincerely and without fear.

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## 10th Biennial Dolly Gray Award Winners
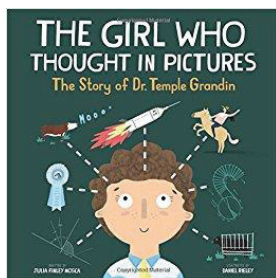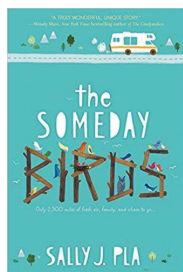




The Dolly Gray Children's Literature Award was presented on January 17, 2018 at the Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD) international conference in Clearwater Beach, Florida. The chapter book award was presented to Sally J. Pla, author of *The Someday Birds,* and the picture book award was presented to Julia Finley Mosca, author, and Daniel Rieley, illustrator, of *The Girl Who Thought in Pictures: The Story of Temple Grandin.*

The Dolly Gray Award recognizes high quality fiction/biographical books for children, adolescents, and young adults that authentically portray individuals with devel-opmental disabilities. Special Needs Project, a worldwide leader in the distribution of books related to disabilities, co-sponsors this award.

The Dolly Gray Children's Literature Award Special Collection at the Harold B. Lee Library on the Brigham Young University campus in Provo, Utah houses all books considered for the award since its inception in 2000, and is likely to be the most complete collection of children's books that include individuals with developmental disabilities. A list of all books eligible for the award, procedures, and submission guidelines are available on the Dolly Gray Children's Literature Award website.

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*Please see the Summer 2018 DADD *Express* for additional awards presented at the 2018 DADD conference!

## Evidence-based Practices for Individuals with Autism, Intellectual Disability, and Related Disabilities

## Using Shared Readings to Promote Literacy: An EBP for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

**Carly A. Roberts, Ph.D.**
*University of Washington*

Literacy skills help students express their wants and needs and can expand opportunities for self-determination and independence (Erickson, Koppenhaver, Yoder, & Nance, 1997; Wehmeyer & Abery, 2013). Unfortunately, many students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) are given insufficient opportunities to engage in meaningful literacy experiences (Ruppar, 2015). This may be due to the fact that students with ID/DD may take longer to develop independent reading skills than their peers without disabilities and thus, conceptualizing literacy instruction may be challenging for teachers (Kliewer, 2008; Ruppar, 2015). One evidence-based practice to help students with ID/DD who have limited independent reading skills access grade and age appropriate text is to situate reading instruction in the context of a shared reading activity (Hudson & Test, 2011).

### What are Shared Reading Activities?

Shared readings (also called shared stories or story-based lessons) are lessons that involve systematic instruction around a shared reading of an adapted, grade-level narrative or expository text (Hudson & Test, 2011). These lessons actively engage students with minimal to no independent reading skills in a structured, systematic reading experience. Shared reading lessons involve adapting grade level text to read aloud with students with ID/DD and embedding opportunities for students to engage with the text and the content throughout the experience. For example, shared reading lessons may include (a) attention-getting activities at the beginning of a text; (b) picture symbols above key vocabulary and explicit instruction of key vocabulary; (c) shortened, summarized text with controlled vocabulary; (d) repeated story lines; and (e) opportunities to respond to comprehension questions.

### What Evidence Supports the Use of Shared Reading?

In a 2011 review of the literature, Hudson and Test found that shared reading lessons can be considered an evidence-based reading practice for promoting the literacy skills of students with extensive support needs. Their review of shared reading interventions found that they were successful at promoting a variety of literacy outcomes for students with moderate to severe ID/DD including (a) emergent literacy skills (e.g., concepts of print;

print awareness); (b) communication; (c) listening comprehension; and (d) engagement. Since 2011, an expanding research base provides additional evidence of the success of shared reading interventions to promote the literacy skills of students with ID/DD (e.g., Hudson, Browder, & Jimenez, 2014; Mims, Hudson, & Browder, 2012). Research has demonstrated that shared reading interventions can be adapted for multiple content and age groups and have been used successfully in literature (e.g., Browder, Trela, & Jimenez, 2007), science (e.g., Hudson et al., 2014), and social studies (e.g., Mims et al., 2012). Shared reading interventions have been successfully implemented by teachers (e.g., Browder et al., 2007), paraprofessionals (e.g., Spooner, Rivera, Browder, Baker, & Salas, 2009), and peers without disabilities (e.g., Hudson et al., 2014).

### How Teachers Can Use Shared Stories in their Classroom

Given the flexibility in content and delivery of shared reading interventions, teachers can use this strategy in their classroom in a variety of ways. To use shared reading interventions teachers need to (a) identify and adapt the text, (b) write a shared reading lesson, and (c) implement the shared reading lesson during daily reading instruction and collect ongoing data.

**Identify and adapt the text.** The first step in a shared reading intervention is to identify the anchor text. The text that is selected should be age appropriate and should provide students with opportunities to access the same grade level content as their peers. Special education teachers should collaborate with general education teachers to identify appropriate content area texts that facilitate access to the general curriculum. Next, teachers should follow the recommendations by Hudson, Browder, and Wakeman (2013) to adapt the text. This includes (a) shorten and summarize the text into several instructional sections; (b) augment the text with picture symbols, explanation of key vocabulary and/or repeated story lines; and (c) embed opportunities for students to demonstrate comprehension of the text. Teachers can individualize the text adaptations to meet the needs of their students.

**Write a shared reading lesson.** Shared reading lessons are implemented within the context of task analytic instruction. Task analytic instruction is also an evidence-based practice for students with ID/DD and involves step-by-step teaching of a chained activity (e.g., a reading lesson with multiple steps; Spooner, Knight, Browder, & Smith, 2012). Task analytic lessons include prompting and feedback procedures for each step of the lesson. Browder et al. (2007) used task analytic lesson plans to train teachers to provide shared reading instruction

to middle school students with ID/DD on grade level literature. Their task analytic lesson plan included sections for (1) an attention-getting opening activity, (2) word study to teach explicit vocabulary, (3) text awareness activities, (4) reading the story aloud, and (5) comprehension measures. Similarly, Browder, Lee, and Mims (2011) used a task analytic lesson plan to promote comprehension and engagement for students with ID/DD and included steps related to student choice, question answering, and sensory experiences connected to the content of the text.

**Implement the lesson and collect ongoing data.** Once teachers identify and adapt the text and write the task analytic lesson plan, they can begin to implement the shared reading lesson in their classroom. Fortunately, task analytic instruction facilitates both instructional fidelity and data collection because it can include check boxes next to each step to help individuals self-monitor their implementation as well as specific sections to record student responses (Spooner et al., 2012). The data collection procedures can be modified and individualized for students based on the elements included in the shared story lesson plan and the number of comprehension questions embedded in the lesson. The data collection process should include opportunities to document the *who, what,* and *when* of the lesson (i.e., student, staff, text/section, and date). The data collection process should also include (1) if each step was implemented with

fidelity and (2) student responses and engagement throughout. Individual student engagement, response form, and prompting procedures can be determined on a student-by-student basis and the data collection process and worksheet can be modified accordingly (see Figure 1 for an example). Once teachers determine who will facilitate the shared reading lesson (e.g., teachers, paraprofessionals, peers) they should train them accordingly. Spooner et al. (2009) used the task analytic lesson plan in their shared reading intervention to train a paraprofessional in lesson plan implementation. This included introducing the lesson plan, modeling how to use it, and providing opportunities for the paraprofessional to practice implementation with feedback. Similar procedures can be followed for training typically developing peers to implement the shared reading lesson.

## Conclusion

Shared reading activities are one way to engage students with ID/DD in meaningful literacy experiences. Furthermore, they have been demonstrated to improve both engagement and a variety of reading outcomes related to emergent literacy skills and comprehension. Given their evidence-base, flexibility, and ability to provide age-appropriate access to the general education curriculum, teachers should consider how shared reading activities can be incorporated into literacy instruction in their classrooms.

| Staff Adapted Text Lesson Checklist | |
|---|---|
| Student Name:  Date: | |
| Staff Implementing Lesson:  Text/Section: | |
| **Step** | **Completed?** |
| 1.  Complete attention-getting opening activity | |
| 2.  Explicitly teach target vocabulary word: _____ | |
| 3.  Have student define target vocabulary word | |
| 4.  Read section 1 of text aloud | |
| 5.  Stop to ask student comprehension question | |
| 6.  Read section 2 of text aloud | |
| 7.  Stop to ask student comprehension question | |
| 8.  Read section 3 of text aloud | |
| 9.  Stop to ask student comprehension question | |
| 10.  Read final repeated story line aloud | |
| 11.  Have student repeat final repeated story line | |
| 12.  Ask student final comprehension question | |
| 13.  Thank student for reading with you. | |

**Figure 1. Sample shared reading lesson self-monitoring and tool for staff.**

## Students' Corner

### Mistakes: You've Got a Friend in Me!

**Autumn Eyre**
*University of Washington*

"*. . . Recognizing mistakes not as an enemy to be vanquished but as a friend with much to teach us*" (Davis, 2016, p. 11)

Stomach churning, panic, and light-headedness are feelings I associate with mistakes. Never have I thought, let's welcome *mistakes* into my home like a familiar friend. Rather my whole life I've been racing to ditch *mistakes* at every corner. As students, it's nearly impossible to avoid errors whether a term paper comes back bleeding red or a diet coke drops in statistics class spraying everyone. In my graduate school world, mistakes happen a lot. According to Schulz (2010), our collective imagination associates error with shame, stupidity, ignorance, and many more bleak feelings of inadequacy. However, she provides evidence that we need to make mistakes to grow. Given this, how can we shift our thinking from the fear of errors to acceptance? Or do we even dare to think fondly of mistakes?

### Fixed vs. Growth Mindsets

An individual's mindset can influence one's outlook on the process of making errors. According to Dweck (2016) people adopt views of themselves which can be summarized into two categories, fixed and growth mindsets. A fixed mindset refers to an inflexible sense of self in which individuals believe they are unable to change. This inflexibility creates a sense of urgency to prove oneself worthy (often worthier than others) and devoid of errors to maintain a sense of intelligence. Dweck (2016) points out how this attitude elevates situations in the classroom from learning opportunities to "Will I succeed or fail? Will I look smart or dumb . . ." (p. 25). In contrast, a growth mindset implies that your personal qualities are flexible based on individual efforts and guidance from others. When encountering a failure, someone adopting a growth mindset would consider next steps to prevent or learn from this mistake without allowing the incident to change self-views. Utilizing a growth mindset, how can we then stop hiding from mistakes and embrace them?

### Making Friends with Mistakes

Here are some suggestions on how to engage in flexible thinking about the process of learning and mistake making.

**Acknowledge what mistakes teach us.** According to Medlock (2014), making errors teaches us what does and doesn't work. We learn about taking responsibility and how to accept ourselves, while sometimes inadvertently inspiring others.

**Positive affirmations.** Rather than use fixed mindset statements such as "I'm so bad at using APA [American Psychology Association] style," I could say, "Learning APA style takes time." Visit WeAreTeachers.com and search for their Growth Mindset Poster which provides several positive affirmations for replacing commonly utilized fixed mindset phrases. While designed for young students, I find these to be true for all learners (Robinson, 2017).

**Goal setting.** Creating goals, tracking with data, and presenting results visually (i.e., graphs) contribute to a growth mindset where the focus is on the point of achievement rather than the missed opportunities or possible mistakes along the way. By focusing on the overall outcome of performance and personal growth, one concentrates on the journey which contains accomplishment as well as errors (Robinson, 2017).

**Quick reads.** Dweck's (2015) *Mindset: The Psychology of Success* and Schulz's (2010) **Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margin of Error** are two must-reads. As a doctoral student, I know the last thing anyone has time for is more reading—so, download these as audiobooks as they're excellent resources!

### Conclusion

During my prospective candidacy, a room full of faculty told me that I need to be okay with making errors. It's been nearly two years since then, and while *mistakes* and I aren't besties, I've become increasingly more comfortable acknowledging and even sharing errors with others. Readers, I would like to introduce you to my acquaintance, *mistakes*. I hope that you will get along nicely and learn from each other.

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## *Editor's Note*

**Ginevra Courtade**

What a busy beginning to the new year! Look to our next issue for pictures of award winners from the 2018 DADD Conference, as well as updates from the 2018 CEC Convention.

Interested in writing for DADD *Express*? We are soliciting articles for: Teachers' Corner, and our EBP and Legal Briefs sections. If you would like to contribute, please contact me with ideas or questions (g.courtade@louisville.edu).

Happy Early Spring!

Again, this resource is not modified for learners with IDD but provides needed information and resources for both learners and educators.

### SIECUS (*www.siecus.org*)

The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) advocates for the "right of all people to accurate information, comprehensive education about sexuality, and the full spectrum of sexual and reproductive health services" (SIECUS, n.d.). SIECUS provides information on a variety of curriculums as well as on policy. The SexEd Library provides hundreds of lesson plans.

### Team Finch (*www.teamfinchconsultants.com*)

Team Finch provides resources on gender and sexuality diversity for schools as well as in-person consultation for schools and districts. While the focus of Team Finch is not on learners with IDD, it provides a basis for a curriculum in sexuality and gender diversity that can be utilized by parents/guardians, educators, and other related service providers.

### Conclusion

Sexual health education programs that successfully contribute to personal psychosocial development emphasize the combination of *social pragmatics, self-determination,* and *emotional maintenance* and are collaborative between home, school, and the community. Stakeholders can get started with the following checklist:

1. Identify resouces in the school, family, and community;
2. Determine who will conduct a needs assessment;
   a. Evaluate the history of the learner, including needs and preferences;
   b. Identify stakeholders' expectations and concerns;
   c. Determine skill deficits and strengths in *social pragmatics, self-determination,* and *emotional maintenance*;
3. Gather support and research solutions;
4. Develop a plan that includes various opportunities for generalization; and
5. Create or modify a curriculum (Planned Parenthood, 2017).

Please also see the following article for more information about individuals with ASD and sexual education: Travers, J., & Tincani, M. (2010). Sexuality education for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Critical issues and decision making guidelines. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities, 45,* 284–293.

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# DADD Membership Committee Updates

**Leah Wood,** *Chair*

For this update I am disappointed to report our membership has dipped from this time last year. Currently, DADD is comprised of 2,314 members (down about 150 from 10/16). Offsetting this dip, we have also seen the highest number of new members join in October, 2017 compared to any other month in the past calendar year (with 113 new members or old members rejoining in 10/17). One way to invest in the vitality and longevity of our Division is through the development and maintenance of strong state/providence subdivisions. It is my hope that we will continue forming or revitalizing these subdivisions in order to provide resources and community to a broader scope of individuals with an interest in supporting the needs of individuals with autism or other developmental disabilities. In an effort to highlight the good work of one of our active subdivisions and spread awareness about how to organize and manage a subdivision, it is my pleasure to share a featured update with you from Ruth Eyres, President of Arkansas DADD. As always, you can reach me (Leah Wood) directly at **awood17@calpoly.edu**. I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at conferences in the upcoming year.

# Subdivision News

**Ruth M. Eyres**
*Arkansas DADD President*

Arkansas DADD strives to offer opportunities to help membership meet the goal of enhancing the quality of life of individuals, especially children and youth, with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities. During the Arkansas CEC Annual Conference in October 2017, Arkansas DADD was successful in making connections to over 150 practitioners. Activities at the conference included:

- *Seamless Transition for All Youth with Disabilities*—A preconference co-sponsored with AR-DCDT.
- *Visualize This: Creating and Using Visuals that Work:* Make and Take session offered with through the support of receiving a DADD mini grant which funded the supplies so practitioners left with visuals they could use the next day!
- A strand of sessions led by board members of special interest to membership—sessions were open to anyone attending the conference with topics including practitioner use of online learning modules to ensure success of evidence-based practice implementation, teaching students with significant intellectual disability by using functional story-based instruction, and the importance of sexuality education as a part of self-determination.
- Getting the word out about Arkansas DADD through an exhibit booth—at least 2 new members signed up during the conference. Undergrad students from the University of Arkansas Inclusive Educational and Clinical programs worked the booth and our subdivision helped provide some financial support to make sure they could attend the conference to present their research.

- Subdivision meeting with a virtual attendance option.

Arkansas DADD plans to continue to work to get the word out and explore ways to keep membership active throughout the year. We conduct one face-to-face meeting per year and the other meetings are held electronically. This meeting option has increased attendance and been key to involving membership throughout the state. Plans are in place to increase participation during the coming months by recruiting students to become DADD members, participate in multiple statewide activities through speaking engagements by board members, and sponsor a booth at several upcoming conferences.

On a personal note, I would like to encourage readers to consider starting the process of creating a DADD subdivision in your area. Membership and leadership in the Arkansas subdivision has been one of the most valuable professional development decisions in my career. Meeting DADD members at national meetings has not only helped build my network professionally, but has expanded options for Arkansas DADD to provide relevant resources to practitioners throughout our state. Please feel free to contact me to discuss ways to become involved and/or start a subdivision. In the meantime, here are some tips on how to get started in establishing a state subdivision: (1) gather a core group of individuals who have a passion for enhancing the quality of life of individuals with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities; (2) contact Leah Wood, DADD membership chair to request a list of information required to submit to DADD to start a new subdivision; (3) develop a constitution and by-laws to guide work (feel free to email me to get a copy of ours); (4) develop a working budget; and (5) reach out, make connections, and build relationships with DADD members.

I look forward to hearing from you!

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