

# DADD *Express*

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A publication of the DIVISION ON AUTISM AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, a unit of the Council for Exceptional Children  
*Focusing on individuals with autism, intellectual disability, and related disabilities*

## Teachers' Corner

### Maximizing Learning During Covid-19: Strategies for Working with Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder at Home



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The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented changes to the lives of children and their families. These changes may be especially difficult for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), who frequently rely on consistency, structure, and predictable routines in order to participate successfully in school and other activities. The COVID-19 pandemic has substantially impacted most families' ability to provide needed structure. Moreover, changes in day-to-day life—such as social distancing, virtual learning, face covering, and quarantining—present challenges to many parents and children. For parents of children with ASD and other developmental disabilities, disruptions to established daily routines can lead to realistic fears of meltdowns and possible regression across social, communication, academic, and behavioral domains (Edenbaum, 2020).

Many learners with ASD contend with challenges related to socialization, communication, abstract language, an insistence on routines, sensory issues, and a greater likelihood of anxiety and depression—all of which are intensified in stressful times (Hume et al., 2020). Students with ASD also require specially designed instruction reflecting evidence-based practices to promote their academic, social, and daily functioning (Sam et al., 2019), which is difficult to secure when students are not able to access their schooling and related services in person. In

this article, we describe strategies for children and youth with ASD and their families to help them navigate remote learning at home. Specific strategies are offered to support behavior, promote communication, establish and maintain consistency, and engage with remote learning. These tips embed the evidence-based practice literature for students with ASD (Hume et al., 2020; Wong et al., 2015).

#### Create "Modified" Predictable Routines

Students with ASD have a need for predictability and often derive comfort from routines (Faherty, 2008), which can help ease the stress and uncertainty of everyday life. During the pandemic some changes in schedules are inevitable; yet, routines can be incorporated to support children with ASD. Maintain consistency with the student's prior schedule as much as possible. When developing a schedule, it is useful to consider the family's "pre-Covid" routine and then select two or three practices each day that the child and family will maintain. These general aspects of the family schedule could include continuing the child's bedtime schedule (see <https://www.autismspeaks.org/sleep>), ensuring mealtimes occur at approximately the same time daily, and continuing typical evening and weekend activities.

#### Enhance Routines with Student-friendly Visual Supports

Students with ASD often have visual processing strengths, making the addition of visual supports to routines a logical and recommended practice for the most effective instruction. Visual cues are physical representations of content with concrete characteristics such as pictures, words, labels, or objects that show which activities will occur and in what sequence. They help students maintain attention to the task, clarify expectations, and encourage participation (Hart & Whalon, 2008). Incorporating visual supports within predictable routines can benefit students with ASD as they navigate remote learning. Once parents organize their routine, a student-friendly visual schedule helps children know what to expect during the day, and can assist them with managing transitions between activities. For more details, see <https://www.autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/Visual%20Supports%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>

*(continued on page 6)*

## President's Message

### Rob Pennington



Greetings, DADD members,

I appreciate the opportunity to serve as your new president and to further DADD's mission towards advancing positive educational and life outcomes for people with autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, and/or other developmental disabilities. I know this has been a difficult year for many of you. As a community, we have been affected by a confluence of existing and unprecedented challenges that will undoubtedly have a long-term impact on the way we view and interact with the world around us. I encourage you to find hope in these difficult times, seek support from your existing communities, find new allies, and continue the work needed to make this world a safer place, especially for those who have continually faced injustice and inequity of opportunity.

Our DADD community has been busy this year in fulfilling our mission. We hope that you attended the 22nd Annual International Conference on Autism, Intellectual Disability, and Developmental Disabilities virtually or in Clearwater, Florida. This year's schedule was packed with thought-provoking sessions and opportunities to connect with colleagues. I am thank-

ful for my co-chair and conference coordinator Cindy Perras, the DADD board, and the adaptability of our membership in making our first hybrid event a success. We look forward to seeing you at our sessions during the CEC 2021 virtual conference. Be sure to check out the DADD showcase session *Communicative Competence for Students with Autism and Developmental Disabilities: Strategies, Supports, and Preparation*. I would also like to remind you to take advantage of the myriad of resources available at our DADD website ([www.daddcec.com](http://www.daddcec.com)), YouTube channel (<https://bit.ly/35d2YK4>), and Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/groups/daddcec](http://www.facebook.com/groups/daddcec)). Finally, remember to check our Facebook page often to learn about upcoming events, including our virtual DADD chats.

I would like to thank recent presidents Ginevra Courtade and Mike Wehmeyer, and our executive director Emily Bouck, for their mentorship and steady hands on the grand DADD wheel. I also would like to welcome our new vice president Leah Wood and Canadian representative Jordan Shurr. Finally, I look forward to working with president-elect Peggy Schaefer Whitby and the rest of the amazing DADD board to make sure 2021 is absolutely DADDtastic! ■

Rob Pennington

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## Executive Director's Corner

### Emily Bouck



As I write this on November 30, 2020, I cannot help but reflect on yesterday. November 29, 2020 was the 45th anniversary of the signing of PL 94-142—the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA)—into law by President Ford. When I teach my special education law class every fall to special education undergraduates at my institution (Michigan State University), it is one of the bits of trivia I like to raise (another being that in Michigan, students with disabilities are guaranteed a free appropriate public education until the age of 26). Being from Michigan, I cannot help but highlight that President Ford signed the law—he being the only president never elected to the office of president or vice president. And then not being the biggest President Ford fan (I mean he played football at the University of Michigan), I cannot help but note that he did so with objections. He objected to the federal control over education (wouldn't he be shaking his head at No Child Left Behind) as well as doubted the level of

federal funding. In his own words, “Despite my strong support for full educational opportunities for our handicapped children, the funding levels proposed in this bill will simply not be possible if Federal expenditures are to be brought under control and a balanced budget achieved over the next few years” (<https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/speeches/750707.htm>). President Ford predicted rightly, and we have never achieved the full funding at 40%. IDEA (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)—as PL94-142 later became known when it was reauthorized in 1990—provided students with disabilities, including students with intellectual and other disabilities, access to an education. IDEA is a fascinating law. In Fiscal Year 2019, \$13,451,145 were appropriated for IDEA. Of that amount, 94.8% was devoted to Part B, which supports the services for students between the ages of 3 and 21. Only 3.5% of that amount was authorized for state grades to Part C, which serves infants and toddlers (i.e., birth through age 2). Part D, which often provides personnel preparation grants, received 1.7% (see <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/tables.html>). Because I am currently teaching my special education law class,

(continued on page 7)



## Legal Brief

### **Espinoza v. Montana and the Unintended Implications for Special Education and Parental Rights**

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On June 30th, 2020, the Supreme Court ruled 5–4 to allow states to publicly fund private religious education through school vouchers in the case known as *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue* (2020; Liptak, 2020). While supporters of private education consider this a victory (Whelan, 2020), others feel that public dollars should stay with public education (Chávez, 2020). For families of students with disabilities, this ruling begs the question: If private schools accept public funding, to what extent should private schools be held accountable for the education of students with disabilities whom they serve?

For nearly 50 years, the precedent has been that publicly funded institutions must not discriminate from providing services to people with disabilities (Office for Civil Rights, 2020). Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973) mandated that any organization which receives federal funding must not discriminate based on disability. While not directly dealing with education, the passage of this law ensured that public schools could not discriminate against students with disabilities from being served in public schools even though special education services were not yet formally established until 1975 with the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142). Now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004), this legislation mandates the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). This right was challenged in 1989 when a boy with multiple severe disabilities was denied public education under the premise that he was not “capable” of benefitting from special education services. In this landmark case, *Timothy v. Rochester, New Hampshire*, (1989), the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit adopted the “zero-reject” policy and ruled in favor of Timothy receiving free appropriate public education. The court ruled that “capacity to benefit” was not a prerequisite for eligibility of services (*Timothy v. Rochester*, 1989).

IDEA and Section 504 only applied to public settings and public schools until 1990, when the Americans with Disabilities Act ([ADA], 1990) was passed. The ADA expanded the expectations set forth in the 1973 Rehabilitation Act by outlawing discrimination against persons with disabilities at public and private institutions, unless associated with a church (Civil

Rights Division, 2020). The ADA further required public and private institutions to provide reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities.

Traditional public and public charter schools must comply with the IDEA, but private schools do not. For example, private schools are not held to a “zero-reject” policy established in the *Timothy* case. While private schools are not allowed to discriminate on the basis of disability, they are allowed to deny enrollment to students who do not meet certain admission requirements. This creates disproportionality within the private school system. Additionally, while private schools must participate in Child Find and identify students with disabilities, they do not have to offer a full range of services or a continuum of placements to meet the least-restrictive-environment mandate.

The Trump administration is an outspoken advocate of school choice and using public dollars to fund private education through programs like school vouchers (Green, 2019). However, it does not clarify that parents of students with disabilities waive their rights for due process once they enroll their children in a private school. On the other hand, if a parent disagrees with a public school regarding special education services for their child, the procedural safeguards of the IDEA protect parents by outlining processes for dispute resolutions.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) maintains the position that school vouchers are “contrary to the best interests of children and youth and their families, the public-school system, local communities, and taxpayers” (2017, p.1). This position is held due to many reasons, including no guarantee of FAPE, the lack of accountability in the private school system, and loss of protections for families served under the IDEA. The absence of due process rights especially becomes a problem if students with disabilities receive ineffective or even harmful education experiences. While parents can sue a public school under IDEA, it can be challenging to bring a private school to court.

In the case of *Espinoza v. Montana* (2020), three mothers were denied using their school voucher funds towards a private

(continued on page 4)

(Legal Brief, continued from page 3)

religious school. These mothers sued on the basis of religious discrimination and the Supreme Court ruled in their favor and held that this violation invalidated the entire school voucher program. In other words, states must allow school vouchers to be used towards private religious education or the entire voucher program is invalidated. While this ruling grants parents the right to choose to use school vouchers towards any private school of their choice, religious or not, the irony is that parents of students with disabilities lose rights and protections under the IDEA when they use school vouchers.

If trends in special education law follow similar patterns in civil rights law, it is possible that students with disabilities may gain protections in private education. Just as the ADA promises nondiscrimination in public and private settings, except churches and private clubs, parents of students with disabilities should have extensive protections whether their child is in a public or private setting. Private schools funded with taxpayer funds should be held equally accountable for the education of students with disabilities as public schools.

Until then, it is crucial for educators and parents to be informed on the differences between public and private education for students with disabilities. Teachers and administrators should be prepared to answer questions asked by parents, and parents should carefully weigh risks and benefits before moving their child from a public school to a private school. It is also important to recognize and respect the perspective of families who feel their child with a disability may be better served in a private school setting. The *Andrew v. Douglas County* (2017) decision is a perfect example of a family with a child with a disability that experienced success with a private school.

In conclusion, here is a list of resources for school personnel and families to learn more about the IDEA in relation to private schools:

- **CEC's Position on School Vouchers**  
Council for Exceptional Children, 2020  
<https://exceptionalchildren.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/Public%20Funds%20-%202020.pdf>
- **6 Things to Know About Private Schools and Special Education**  
Understood for All Inc., 2020  
<https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/choosing-starting-school/finding-right-school/6-things-to-know-about-private-schools-and-special-education>

- **The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: Provisions Related to Children with Disabilities Enrolled by their Parents in Private Schools**  
U.S. Department of Education, 2011  
<https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/speced/private-schools/idea.pdf> ■

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University of North Carolina  
at Charlotte

## Navigating the Academic Job Market

Our October 2020 DADD Community Chat focused on navigating the academic job market, particularly for doctoral students preparing to complete their programs and transition to faculty positions. Drs. Reem Muharib, Marcus Fuller, Lynn Stansberry Brusnahan, and Veronica Fleury shared their experiences on the job market and as part of search committees. They offered several tips and thoughts on the job market for doctoral candidates to consider.

### Tip 1: Take Time to Prepare Materials

First, doctoral candidates should take the time to read the posting and prepare materials. Drs. Stansberry Brusnahan and Fleury have served on search committees at their respective universities, and they stated that small mistakes, such as typos or the wrong university name, could disqualify you from consideration for a position you are otherwise qualified for. Take time to thoughtfully prepare your application materials to relate directly to the position posting. Additionally, applicants should have someone, such as an advisor, read over application materials prior to submission.

### Tip 2: Find the Right Fit

Although there may be less postings for tenure track faculty positions this year due to COVID-19 and hiring freezes, our panelists stressed the importance of applying for positions that are a good fit. They suggested considering your future research and teaching goals, as well as personal needs and situation, when applying to positions. It is important to find a position that aligns to your interests, expertise, and personal needs. For example, Drs. Fleury and Stansberry Brusnahan talked about the importance of including the needs of their families when considering faculty positions. Dr. Muharib talked about the need for her to obtain a position somewhere her spouse could find work. However, due to a potential lack of positions, Dr. Stansberry Brusnahan stressed the importance of flexibility. For example, doctoral candidates may consider positions that are more focused on teaching, if they can continue collaborative relationships with faculty at other universities to conduct research.

### Tip 3: Prepare for the Interview Process

Most universities will first conduct a screening interview of applicants. This may be done via phone call or video call. These interviews are short (e.g., 30 min). According to Dr. Stansberry Brusnahan, universities typically have a set of questions with a rubric they will use to score candidate's answers. For this reason, candidates should practice answering questions about their research, service, and teaching in a direct and succinct manner. The panelists suggested candidates answer the question completely without taking more than a few minutes.

The second step in the process is typically the on-campus interview. However, on-campus interviews will most likely occur completely virtually this year. Dr. Fuller had virtual on-campus interviews in spring 2020. All sessions that would have taken place on campus (e.g., job talk, teaching demonstration, meetings with faculty and administrators) took place via Zoom. The good news is that Dr. Fuller and other DADD members have reported they were able to get a good feel for the university priorities and climate via these virtual interviews. However, unlike traditional on campus interviews, you may not have the opportunity to get to know faculty in less formal settings, such as lunch or faculty meet and greets. Dr. Fuller suggested preparing questions about the campus services and student life to ask before meetings start or during less formal meetings.

Furthermore, our panelists stressed the importance of preparing before any interview. Take time to get to know the university values, mission, and structure. Additionally, candidates should review the department's currently funded projects and partnerships and review the website for faculty bios and CVs. Have an idea of possible collaborations with faculty and how your research and teaching enhance the department. Most importantly, candidates should be prepared with questions. Drs. Muharib, Stansberry Brusnahan, and Fleury all stated that candidates without questions at the end of an interview indicates a lack of preparation for the interview and interest in the position. Questions could be about initiatives within the

*(continued on page 7)*

## Transition School-based and Related Services to the Home Using Embedded Instruction

While it may be tempting to suspend schooling, therapy, and related services that are no longer available in person, stopping occupational, speech, and physical therapies—as well as other related services such as ABA—can potentially result in regression of critical skills. In some cases, students may even revert to maladaptive behaviors. Teachers can encourage parents to connect with their school and other therapists to determine if telehealth options are available (Edenbaum, 2020). Many service providers are employing teletherapy visits to provide ongoing support to families. Although parents may need to supervise technology use and help students sustain attention during teletherapy, many children are responding positively (Edenbaum, 2020).

To maximize remote learning opportunities, families and teachers should collaborate to create predictable routines and look for ways to embed instruction as part of everyday activities (see DEC Recommended Practices; <https://www.dec-sp.ed.org/dec-recommended-practices>). Families and teachers can share home and school schedules, as well as examine the student's IEP goals and objectives, to create a new schedule that will best meet the student's remote learning needs. This new schedule can accommodate both the needs of the family and of the teacher by embedding instruction throughout daily routines and creating specific times to focus on skills in the context of regularly scheduled family activities. With embedded instruction, teachers should

- examine the home setting and schedule to identify those activities and routines that provide opportunities for the child to practice target skills;
- identify times of the day and home activities where engagement in the behavior is elicited naturally, and
- then embed learning opportunities across different activities and routines that target goals and capitalize on student interest.

For example, the family's morning breakfast routine can incorporate one of the child's goals for increasing communication requests. The student can practice asking for a specific breakfast item (e.g., toast or cereal). The teacher–parent team might target the number of words for the request (e.g., *cereal* vs. *May I have cereal please?*) or the use of descriptive words such as *cold milk* or *hot chocolate*. Teachers can demonstrate for parents how to implement a data collection sheet that they keep near the table. This requesting objective could be

addressed across all meal times and then could be generalized to requesting clothes to wear, soap to use during bath time, a TV show to watch during the day, or games to play. For more details and examples on embedded instructional practices, see [https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decpr/PG\\_Ins\\_EmbeddedInstr\\_prac\\_print\\_2017.pdf](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/decpr/PG_Ins_EmbeddedInstr_prac_print_2017.pdf).

## Conclusion

These tips are offered to assist families in meeting the unique needs of their children with ASD during this time of uncertainty. It is also hoped that the strategies described here can help guide teachers as they collaborate with families on how to effectively use evidence-based practices and maintain students' progress until they meet again in school. These strategies can help families adapt to new routines within their homes and promote parental collaboration with schools as they seek to meet the academic, social, and behavioral needs of their children in the home setting. ■

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*(Executive Director's Message, continued from page 2)*

I was fascinated by the OSEP Fast Facts and IDEA History released for IDEA's 45th anniversary (<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/osep-fast-facts-idea-45th-anniversary/>), which I cannot help but share for those who don't remember their own education law class.

- It was in the 1986 EHA reauthorization that services to children from birth until age 3 were provided.
- The 1990 authorization added autism and traumatic brain injury as categories covered under IDEA as well as required the individualized transition plan for students.
- A 2017 revision to IDEA aligned the law with Rosa's law, which changed the term *mental retardation* to *intellectual disability*.

While I think 45 years of IDEA is a reason to celebrate—45 years of providing access and opportunity for students with disabilities—we need to push more and continue to do better. IDEA has not been reauthorized since 2004. From the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2012 data, we continue

to see that students with intellectual disability face challenges within their homes (i.e., lower performing schools) and with their health and independence, and they struggle academically (Lipscomb et al., 2018). We know students with intellectual disability, autism, and other developmental disabilities continue to face poorer post-school outcomes. And we also know we continue to need research-based and evidence-based practices for teaching students with intellectual disability, autism, and other developmental disabilities in special education and general education settings. There is still much work to do, and I know DADD, its board, and its members are committed to continuing to provide high-quality services, research, and teacher preparation. So let's toast 45 years of IDEA and then get back to work to make the next 45 even better. ■

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Lipscomb et al., (2018). *Preparing for life after high school: The characteristics and experiences of youth in special education. Volume 2: Comparisons across disability groups: Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2012*. Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved from [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20174016/pdf/20174018CH1\\_6.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20174016/pdf/20174018CH1_6.pdf)



*(Students' Corner, continued from page 5)*

department, partnerships with local schools, or university strategic plans. Ideally, questions should show the committee you did your research on the university and you are interested in how you can contribute to the department.

### Tip 4: Consider Other Opportunities

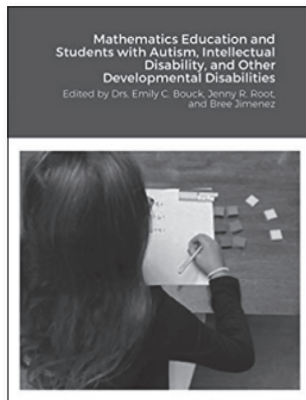
Many schools may not be hiring tenure track faculty positions for the upcoming academic year due to hiring freezes. The panelists suggested doctoral candidates look for other opportunities to continue their line of research and teaching outside of tenure track faculty positions. These include visiting professorships, clinical faculty positions, and post-doctoral positions.

Drs. Fleury and Fuller obtained postdoctoral positions after completing their doctoral programs. Dr. Fuller was on the job market in spring of 2020 when many schools stopped hiring. As a result, he took a postdoctoral position at the University of Vermont. The position aligns well with his future teaching and research goals. Dr. Fleury found that her postdoctoral position at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill provided her with valuable research opportunities.

In sum, our DADD Community Chat panelists offered valuable information and tips for doctoral candidates on the academic job market. We appreciate their time and insight. Please consider joining us for the next DADD Community Chat. ■

# Mathematics Education and Students with Autism, Intellectual Disability, and Other Developmental Disabilities

Edited by Drs. Emily C. Bouck, Jenny R. Root, and Bree Jimenez



In this book from DADD, the authors provide educators with research-based interventions and instructional approaches to supporting students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) in mathematics. Chapters provide educators with accessible resources that offer research-supported practical strategies and guides to educate students. Each chapter, written by a scholar whose work focuses on mathematics education for students with ASD/IDD, gives examples and materials teachers can use with elementary and secondary students with ASD/IDD. Throughout the book, research-supported mathematical interventions and instruction are presented, including contextualizing of mathematics standards, modified schema-based instruction, manipulatives and manipulative-based instructional sequences, embedded early numeracy instruction across mathematical domains, instruc-

tional decision-making in mathematics, and multi-tiered systems of support in mathematics.

## Contents

**Introduction: Mathematics Education and Students with Autism, Intellectual Disability, and Other Developmental Disabilities**

**Chapter 1: Contextualizing Math Standards**  
*Alicia Saunders*

**Chapter 2: Using Data to Design and Evaluate Math Instruction**  
*Sarah Cox, Jenny Root, & Addie McConomy*

**Chapter 3: Multi-Tiered System of Supports in Mathematics**  
*Jessica A. Bowman & Gail Ghere*

**Chapter 4: Manipulatives and Manipulative-Based Instructional Sequences**  
*Emily C. Bouck & Holly Long*

**Chapter 5: Teaching Problem Solving Using Modified Schema-Based Instruction**  
*Jenny Root, Amy Clausen, & Fred Spooner*

**Chapter 6: Embedded Instruction**  
*Bree Jimenez*

To obtain a copy of the book, go to the DADD store:  
<http://www.daddcec.com/dadd-market-place.html>. ■



## Editor's Note



**Chris Denning**

I hope you enjoyed this issue of *DADD Express*, and were able to attend our annual conference in Clearwater Beach, Florida. The spring 2021 issue will contain conference highlights. Let me know if

you'd like copies of recent Teacher's Corner, Legal Brief, and EBP articles or look for them on the new DADD website at <http://www.daddcec.com/>.

Interested in writing for *DADD Express*? We are always soliciting articles for Teachers' Corner and for our EBP and Legal Briefs sections. If you would like to contribute, please contact me with ideas or questions ([christopher.denning@umb.edu](mailto:christopher.denning@umb.edu)). ■

## DADD Website:

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