

## GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1789, the same year the U.S. Constitution took effect, Georgetown is the nation's oldest Catholic university. What began as Georgetown College, a small gathering of 12 students and a handful of professors, has grown into a major international university that includes four undergraduate schools, respected graduate programs, a law school and a medical school. The vision of Georgetown founder John Carroll, S.J., still guides the university in its commitment to respect for diversity and open dialogue in the pursuit of truth. The Center for Child and Human Development, the Georgetown University home of the National Technical Assistance Center, has operated since the early 1970's as a clinical, research, and policy Center serving children and families in Washington, DC and programs throughout the country.

## University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

### FUNDING

Administration on Developmental Disabilities  
Administration on Children and Families  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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## Significant Accomplishments

The GU-UCEDD has had many accomplishments during its forty year history, of which some of the most significant are highlighted below.

- **Leadership to close the state institution.** The GU-UCEDD assumed a major leadership role in closing the District of Columbia's institution for individuals who experience intellectual disabilities, and supporting the transition to community living.
- **Making a Difference!** The GU-UCEDD, in collaboration with the University of the District of Columbia, developed the first curricula for direct support and middle management personnel to build the capacity of the workforce supporting individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities residing in community-based settings.
- **Families experiencing homelessness.** The GU-UCEDD established the first early identification and intervention program developed specifically for young children and families residing in transitional housing and homeless shelters in the District of Columbia—a vulnerable and underserved population.
- **Through a Father's Eyes.** The GU-UCEDD created the first parent support and advocacy program expressly designed for fathers of children with disabilities. The program provided an opportunity for fathers, and male caregivers, to address their unique roles, issues, and feelings about parenting a child with a disability. The program continues to provide opportunities for advocacy training, leadership development, and participation in a consultant pool.

*The mission of the Georgetown University-University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (GU-UCEDD) is to promote self-determination, productivity, independence, and inclusion of individuals with developmental and other disabilities across the life span, and in all aspects of community life.*

*The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-402) authorizes the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Education, Research and Service (UCEDD). UCEDDs are funded to provide leadership, advise federal, state and community policy makers, and to promote opportunities for people who experience developmental disabilities and their families.*

For more than four decades, the Georgetown University-University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (GU-UCEDD) has been recognized as a national, regional, and local leader and made significant contributions to improving the quality of life for children and youth who experience or are at risk for a broad spectrum of special needs and their families, as well as adults with developmental and other disabilities. The GU-UCEDD is one in a national network of programs funded to conduct four core functions: Interdisciplinary Pre-service Preparation and Continuing Education, Community Services, Research, and Information Dissemination. The following essential elements serve as the foundation for all of GU-UCEDD core functions: (1) cultural and linguistic competency, and (2) collaborative partnerships with and on behalf of people who experience disabilities and their families.

The GU-UCEDD:

- promotes capacity building within the diverse network of individuals, programs and organizations concerned with developmental and other disabilities at the local, state, national, and international levels.
- provides knowledge and leadership in the development of policy that impacts systems of services and supports for individuals who experience developmental disabilities and their families.
- has a long history of providing an array of community services and supports to the District's most vulnerable populations and devotes a significant portion of its resources to address the multiple needs of these populations and the personnel and agencies that support them.



## Core Functions

*“The training provided emphasized the family and child first, maintaining professional competency and approaching families with sensitivity and caring.”*

GU-UCEDD TRAINEE

### ADVOCATING FOR OURSELVES

A major focus of the GU-UCEDD is partnering with individuals and self-advocacy organizations to build their capacity in the areas of choice, self-determination, influencing policy and practice, and leadership.

#### • Interdisciplinary Pre-service Preparation and Continuing Education

The GU-UCEDD provides interdisciplinary pre-service preparation and continuing education for students and fellows. This includes preparation and continuing education of direct service, clinical, leadership or other personnel to strengthen and increase the capacity of the District of Columbia, other states and communities to support individuals who experience developmental disabilities and their families.

#### • Community Services

The GU-UCEDD provides a broad array of training and technical assistance activities for individuals who experience developmental disabilities, their families, professionals, paraprofessionals, policymakers, students, and other members of the community. These activities focus on individual and systemic advocacy, early identification and intervention, person-centered planning, and full inclusion in educational and community-based settings.

The GU-UCEDD also partners with community-based and governmental agencies to increase their capacity to serve individuals who experience developmental disabilities and their families. These community services promote the development of public and organizational policy that are rooted in evidence-based and promising practices and cover the lifespan from infancy through adulthood.

#### • Research

The GU-UCEDD contributes new knowledge by conducting research and evaluation activities to inform the development of public policy, at the state and national levels, for people who experience developmental disabilities and their families. Past and current research efforts focus on such areas as assessing the impact of:

- specific curricula and training on inclusive practices for teachers, use of assistive technology by allied health professionals, and a therapeutic strengthening device for individuals with intellectual disabilities; and

- medical home service delivery model for adults with intellectual disabilities in residential settings in the District of Columbia.

In partnership with members of its Consumer Advisory Council, the GU-UCEDD collaborates to translate research findings into formats that are accessible and useful to consumers, providers, policy makers, legislators, and other constituencies concerned with developmental and other disabilities.

#### • Dissemination of Information

The GU-UCEDD disseminates information on the broad range of issues that impact the lives of individuals who experience developmental disabilities and their families with emphasis on health status, choice, and community inclusion. Consistent with principles of universal design, the GU-UCEDD uses multifaceted approaches for information dissemination, including but not limited to:

- conference/meeting presentations and poster displays/exhibits,
- participation on committees, task forces and councils at the local, national and international levels,
- printed materials available in alternative formats (low literacy, languages other than English, pictures/symbols, and other modifications), and
- Web-based and other electronic communication technologies that meet Federal mandates. The GU-UCEDD’s web site is designed to be user friendly, accessible, and inviting for individuals who experience developmental and other disabilities and serves as a primary approach for information dissemination. The website offers a Spanish language portal to ensure access to the Spanish speaking community—the second most prevalent language spoken in the District of Columbia.

GU-UCEDD faculty serve on over **35** committees, boards, and task forces at the state, national and international levels:

*UNESCO’s Steering Committee The Flagship on Education for All and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Towards Inclusion.*

*Steering Committee for the International Congress for Children with Special Needs*

### IN THEIR OWN WORDS

A web feature devoted to family stories that share the triumphs and challenges of experiencing disability.