



Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders

SYMPOSIUM2026

March 5, 6, 7, 2026 | Sheraton Kansas City Hotel at Crown Center | Kansas City, Missouri

For the 44th year, the Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders will address cutting-edge issues of interest to professionals working with students with emotional/behavioral disorders and autism spectrum disorders.

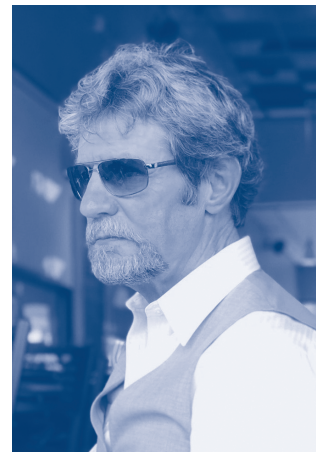
KEYNOTE

Friday, March 6 | 8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

The Knobs and Dials of Behavior: A Spectrum of Clinical and Practical Applications Derived from Behavior Analysis

The core idea of behavior analysis directs attention to the circumstances producing behavior rather than the behaving person. Thus it results in understanding and fixing problems rather than blaming people for those problems. Virtually everything this idea touches improves. It has revolutionized approaches to multiple areas of problem behavior (e.g., incontinence, habits, sleep, addiction, etc.). Still, the idea has only begun to be harnessed. The assertion of this presentation is that in addition to improving the lives of clients in need, it can also be used to improve the lives of their providers, and indeed, the lives of all people. This presentation will describe several options derived from behavior analysis, the application of which could exert a powerful beneficial influence on everyday life. (Intermediate, 1.0 BCBA CEUs)

Patrick Friman, PhD, Dir. CBH Emeritus, Boys Town, Boys Town, NE



SYMPOSIUM AT-A-GLANCE

Thursday, March 5

7:30 a.m.	Conference Desk Opens
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Pre-symposium Workshops
11:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Exhibits
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)
1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Pre-symposium Workshops

Friday, March 6

7:30 a.m.	Conference Desk Opens
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Exhibits
8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Keynote Session
10:20 a.m. - 11:20 a.m.	Concurrent Breakouts, Set 1
11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Concurrent Breakouts, Set 2
12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Concurrent Breakouts, Set 3
3:15 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.	Concurrent Breakouts, Set 4
4:15 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Poster Session with Cash Bar and Complimentary Hors d'oeuvres
8:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.	Symposium Party

Saturday, March 7

8:00 a.m.	Conference Desk Opens
9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Saturday Concurrent Sessions
11:45 a.m.	Adjournment

Visit our website

<https://mslbd.org/symposium-conference/>

REGISTER BY JANUARY 30

FOR REGISTRATION DISCOUNT

Register early for preferred workshops

No Walk-In Registrations

PRE-SYMPOSIUM WORKSHOPS

Additional fee applies. Participants select one morning and one afternoon session to attend.

THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 2026 | PRE-SYMPOSIUM HALF DAY WORKSHOPS

MORNING SESSIONS | 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

1. What Do I Do If They Don't: Behavioral Strategies and Philosophical Changes That You Can Use on Monday Morning

Working in any field with children can be challenging work. When that environment also includes defiant and oppositional students, the challenge can seem overwhelming. What are some strategies that you can use when they don't want to do what you ask them? What do you do when the children refuse? How do you adjust your thinking so that you are focusing on the management of behavior instead of the behavior managing you? This workshop will provide easy to implement strategies that reframe your attitude towards resistant behavior and effectively address student challenges. (Basic, Intermediate)

Matt McNiff, PhD, Behavior Consultant, Educational Service Unit #5, Beatrice, NE

2. An Ounce of Prevention: Antecedent Strategies for Supporting Students with Developmental Disabilities

Challenging behaviors in students with developmental disabilities can disrupt learning, strain teacher-student relationships, and create stressful classroom environments. Instead of solely relying on consequent strategies, evidence-based antecedent strategies may be implemented in order to prevent challenging behaviors from occurring--resulting in less disruption to learning and the overall classroom environment.

This session will explore how practical, preventative strategies rooted in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) frameworks can reduce the likelihood of challenging behaviors in students with developmental disabilities. Through real-world examples, case studies, and collaborative problem-solving, attendees will leave equipped with practical tools to create supportive, structured, and engaging learning environments. (Intermediate, 3.5 BCBA CEUs)

Keith Radley, PhD, BCBA-D, NCSP, Dee Endowed Professor of School Psychology, Department Chair, University of Utah, Bountiful, UT

3. An Awesome Academic Session at this Behavior Conference

Reading, writing, and math can be challenging for many students. In this session, we highlight several research-validated practices for the support of reading, writing, and math. First, we focus on math because it always plays second fiddle to reading. We will highlight and discuss five research-validated practices for your math instruction: building vocabulary, using representations, modeling and practicing, building fluency, and solving word problems. Second, we focus on writing because it is ignored as much as math. We will dig into research-validated writing practices that align with the Simple View of Writing, including those in the areas of transcription, text generation, and self-regulation. And finally, we will pay a bit of attention to reading and research-validated practices in comprehension. (Basic, Intermediate)

Sarah Powell, PhD, Professor, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX;
Erica Lembke, PhD, Curators' Distinguished Professor, Associate Dean for Research, Special Education, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO

4. Supporting Student Behavior with AI: A Hands-On Workshop

Artificial intelligence (AI) is envisioned to transform various aspects of society, including the way we educate students with disabilities. This hands-on workshop offers a practical introduction to AI's role in special education, led by team members from a leading national center dedicated to supporting the use and adoption of technology in special education. Participants will explore how AI influences curriculum design, instruction, learning supports, and assessment practices. The session will also address key ethical considerations, particularly those related to the responsible implementation and provision of meaningful support for students with disabilities. Participants will leave with tools, resources, and real-world strategies that can be applied immediately in their educational setting.

James D. Basham, PhD, Professor, **Yerin Seung** and **Teddy Kim**, Graduate Research Assistants, University of Kansas, Center for Innovation, Design, and Digital Learning (CIDDL)

5. Supports and Services Around Challenging Behavior in a Shifting Policy Landscape: Whither EBD?

This presentation begins with a brief update on federal policy around student behavior, in an admittedly shifting landscape. While this is NOT a policy session, we first take stock of current trends in special education law, funding shifts, and evolving guidance around behavior and disciplinary practices. But we then focus mainly on two questions: (a) what does the current political landscape mean for children and youth with or at risk for EBD, and (b) what should educators know and prioritize in serving students and families with the best available, evidence-based supports? We offer guiding principles educators might consider to help them support students with EBD in the most effective, ethical manner; navigate disciplinary challenges with equity and fairness; and maintain both their professionalism and personal well-being.

Timothy J. Landrum, PhD, Professor, Department of Special Education, Early Childhood, and Prevention Science (SECP) University of Louisville, Louisville, KY

AFTERNOON SESSIONS | 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

6. 100 Real World Strategies for Students with Oppositional Defiant Behaviors, Anxiety, ADHD and More

This session will provide an array of evidence-based strategies that meet the needs of students with these challenges. Strategies that work as well as strategies that don't work and why will be shared. Activities will be built into the session and they are designed to take back to use in the classroom on Monday morning. At least 100 strategies will be shared for diffusing difficult situations, building emotional regulation, strengthening relationships, and utilizing the arts. (Basic)

Beverley Johns, MS, Special Education, Learning and Behavior Consultant, Retired Professional Fellow, MacMurray College, Jacksonville, Illinois

7. From "Oh Sh*t" to "A-Ha!": Core Components of an Effective Behavior Support Program

Without the necessary program components, specialized behavior programs have fallen short in providing essential support for students that struggle with emotional and behavioral challenges. (Jones & Greenwood, 2016). Throughout this session, participants will explore key components of a specialized behavior program for students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) and autism. Attendees

will hear directly from teachers who are in the trenches with them and working in a specialized behavior support setting. This presentation will be interactive and collaborative, while giving actual resources, tools and strategies to take back and use tomorrow. Attendees will walk away with the skills and expertise to create, enhance, and improve their behavior programs that support students with EBD and those on the autism spectrum. (Basic, Intermediate)

Carrie Fairbairn, MEd and **Sallye Vanderplas-Lee, BA**, Elementary EBD Teachers, ESU 3, LaVista, NE

8. What's Your Recipe for MTSS Success?

In this session, we will explore the key ingredients every school and district should have for equitable and inclusive MTSS success and identify ways to add in your own ingredients that meet the contextual needs of your school or district. (Basic, Intermediate)

Erika McDowell, EdD, CEO, Inspired Minds Collide, Paterson, NJ

9. From Escape to Engagement: Transforming Challenging Behavior

Escape-maintained challenging behavior represents the largest single function of challenging behavior exhibited by individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD). In these situations, two goals exist: reducing challenging behavior and establishing or strengthening an alternative, appropriate response. In this workshop, we will discuss how to arrange contingencies that (a) promote the occurrence of alternative, appropriate behavior, (b) reduce challenging behavior, and (c) allow for practical implementation. In addition, we will discuss the roles positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, and extinction can play in the development of such interventions. The workshop will lean heavily on published accounts of successful intervention from the scientific community, with an emphasis on educational environments or adapting the procedures for educational environments. (Intermediate, Advanced, 3.5 BCBA CEUs)

Joel Ringdahl, PhD, BCBA-D, Professor, University of Georgia, Province, GA.

10. Let's Reimagine Behavior Disorders with UDL Jams!

We've done the research, delivered the trainings, and sold the programs—yet kids are still struggling. More of the same is not acceptable. To better support students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD), we must think differently, act differently, and move quickly. This session reimagines professional development as a jam session: structured but improvisational, deeply resonant, and joyful. Using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as the framework, participants will explore music as a metaphor for inclusive practice – where variability is expected, choice is essential, and improvisation is a strength. Participants are not just attendees, but creators. Working in “bands,” they will identify problems of practice, design and perform solutions, and contribute to a shared resource that builds a movement for engaging, memorable professional learning.

Jose Blackorby, PhD, Co-Director of Research in Learner Variability and Impact, WestEd/HGSE, San Francisco, CA

SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2026 | 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. SATURDAY WORKSHOPS

1. Legal Developments in the Education of Students with EBD: What Teachers Need to Know and Why

This workshop provides a timely and practical update on legal and policy issues affecting students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). Participants will gain insight into recent court decisions, state-level due process hearings, and guidance that impact how schools support students with EBD. Special attention will be given to the legal implications of providing school-based mental health services, discipline procedures, and the most frequent missteps that lead to litigation or compliance findings. Educators, administrators, and support personnel will leave with actionable strategies to promote legally sound and educationally effective practices in their schools.

Katherine A. Graves, PhD, Assistant Professor, Utah State University, Logan, UT; **Angela Tuttle Prince, PhD**, Associate Professor, Iowa State University of Science & Technology, Ames, IA; **Jason C. Travers**, Professor, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

2. From Prevention to Response: SEL and Restorative Practice Strategies to Reduce Disproportionality in School Discipline

In this workshop session, International Institute for Restorative Practices Associate Professor Doug Judge will present implementation frameworks and practice guides for integrating proactive and responsive Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Restorative Practice (RP) approaches in K-12 schools. Organized within the SEL Signature Practice framework and utilizing opportunities to practice, the session will focus generally on the integration of SEL and RP as an evidence-based approach to promote academic excellence and reduce race- and ability-based disproportionality in special education referral and classroom/school exclusion. We will review both critical and practical guidance for sustained implementation, as well as three assessment frameworks to assist with systematic troubleshooting and evaluation. (Intermediate)

Doug Judge, PhD, Associate Professor, International Institute for Restorative Practices Graduate School, Seattle, WA

3. Using the EBP of ABA Framework to Enhance Client Outcomes: Focusing on the Role of Client Values and Context

The evidence-based practice of applied behavior analysis (EBP of ABA) framework drives effective and ethical clinical decision-making by emphasizing the nuanced integration of the best available evidence with client values and context and clinical expertise (Contreras et al., 2021). This workshop will provide a brief overview of the EBP of ABA framework and will explore the client values and context component of the framework in depth. We will discuss considerations including focusing on quality of life, identifying client-driven goals, ensuring client voices are consistently centered through assent procedures, and balancing client and stakeholder needs. (Intermediate, 3.0 BCBA CEUs for Learning and Ethics)

Bethany Contreras, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of Nevada, Reno, Sparks, NV

4. Kindness and Caring as an Antidote to Bullying

We are living in unprecedented times where bullying behaviors have become more normative and even accepted. How do we teach students and adults to reject bullying? One solution is to teach, model, and support acts of kindness, caring, and bravery.

Susan Swearer, PhD, Willa Cather Professor of School Psychology and Chair, Department of Educational Psychology, University of Nebraska – Lincoln, Lincoln, NE

2026 Symposium Registration

All registrations are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Seating in Presymposium Workshops is limited! REGISTER EARLY!

Online registration for groups and individuals paying with a credit card. <https://mslbd.org/symposium-conference/registration.html>

Name _____ Position _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____ Phone (_____) _____ ☐ Mobile ☐ Daytime

PAYMENT

Include name, phone number and email of the individual coordinating payment:

- ☐ Credit Card Payment. MSLBD will send electronic invoice to coordinator, payment due on receipt.
- ☐ Check payable to Midwest Symposium with completed registration forms. Mail to MSLBD, PO Box 202, Hickman, NE 68372.
- ☐ Purchase Order; accepted through January 30. Payment Terms 30 days from date of invoice. Email: registration@mslbd.org, fax: 402-313-4702

Payment coordinator (name, email, phone): _____

REGISTRATION OPTIONS

	Early Bird Discount (On/Before Jan 30)	Regular Registration Rate (after Jan 30)
☐ Presymposium Workshop & Symposium* ^ (Thurs, Fri & Sat, please pre-register for Thursday & Saturday Workshops)	\$240.00*	\$295.00
☐ Symposium Only ^ (Fri & Sat, please pre-register for Saturday Workshop)	\$225.00	\$280.00
☐ Pre-symposium Workshop Only* (Thurs Only, please pre-register for Thursday Workshops)	\$210.00	\$265.00
☐ BCBA Type 2 CEUs (Optional Addition: Only available to Board Certified Behavior Analyst)	NA	\$65.00

Discounted registration rate available through January 30. If you must cancel your registration, please notify the MSLBD Office at registration@mslbd.org, through January 30 to receive a refund less a \$35 administrative fee. No refunds after January 30. Registrations may be transferred to another individual at no cost. See full cancellation, transfer, and inclement weather policies on our website.

* THURSDAY PRESYMPOSIUM WORKSHOP

Morning Half-Day Presymposium Workshops (choose one)

- ☐ 1. What Do I Do If They Don't: Behavioral Strategies and Philosophical Changes That You Can Use on Monday Morning
- ☐ 2. An Ounce of Prevention: Antecedent Strategies for Supporting Students with Developmental Disabilities
- ☐ 3. An Awesome Academic Session at this Behavior Conference
- ☐ 4. Supporting Student Behavior with AI: A Hands-On Workshop
- ☐ 5. Supports and Services Around Challenging Behavior in a Shifting Policy Landscape: Whither EBD?
- ☐ Unknown or Unable to Attend

Afternoon Half-Day Presymposium Workshops (choose one)

- ☐ 6. 100 Real World Strategies for Students with Oppositional Defiant Behaviors, Anxiety, ADHD and More
- ☐ 7. From "Oh Sh*t" to "A-Ha!": Core Components of an Effective Behavior Support Program
- ☐ 8. What's Your Recipe for MTSS Success?
- ☐ 9. From Escape to Engagement: Transforming Challenging Behavior
- ☐ 10. Let's Reimagine Behavior Disorders with UDL Jams!
- ☐ Unknown or Unable to Attend

FRIDAY SYMPOSIUM KEYNOTE AND BREAKOUT SESSIONS

All sessions are general seating, pre-registration is not required.

^SATURDAY MORNING WORKSHOPS

(choose one)

- ☐ 1. Legal Developments in the Education of Students with BD: What Teachers Need to Know and Why
- ☐ 2. From Prevention to Response: SEL and Restorative Practice Strategies to Reduce Disproportionality in School Discipline
- ☐ 3. Using the EBP of ABA Framework to Enhance Client Outcomes: Focusing on the Role of Client Values and Context
- ☐ 4. Kindness and Caring as an Antidote to Bullying
- ☐ Unknown or Unable to Attend

Email: registration@mslbd.org / Fax: 402-313-4702 / Mail: MSLBD, P.O. Box 202 Hickman, NE 68372



Board Certified Behavior Analysts Type 2 credits are available at the conference from the Behavior Analyst Certification Board. Information about obtaining BCBA credit is available on our website or from our office.

Participants who would like to track contact hours for professional development may track sessions during the conference. Tracking forms are collected and a Letter of Attendance with participants detailed attendance is emailed to them for documentation.

2026 Symposium Breakout Sessions

Friday, March 6, 2026 | 10:20 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

MASTER TEACHER STRAND

From Intention to Impact: Practical Systems for Data Collection and Analysis in Special Education
Keeping Kids in the School Community: Smarter Alternatives to Suspension
Hope Matters: How to Measure and Grow It in the Classroom
AI Literacy 101: Leveraging AI for FBAs, BIPs, and Behavior Intervention in K-12 Special Education

BCBA CEU STRAND

Implementing a Safe Place for Emotional Regulation in the Classroom: Considerations from Behavioral Science
Teaching Emotional Regulation: A Skills-Based Approach to Student Behavior
Show and Tell: Comparing Modeling and Explicit Instruction for Teaching Augmentative and Alternative Communication
Breaking Barriers: Reducing Restraint, Eliminating Isolation, and Fostering Inclusion in Public Schools
From Strategy to Success: Coaching Teachers to Implement Evidence-Based Practices Using Behavioral Skills Training
Recognize. Relax. Record.: A Practical Teacher-led Tier 2 Intervention for Managing Anxious Feelings
Evidence-Based Practices to Build Relationships, Support Behavior, and Facilitate Language Development
From Firefighting to Frameworks: Leveraging BCBAs in Tiered Systems of Support in Public Schools
Selection City: Decision-Making and Progress Monitoring Guides for Selecting and Implementing Behavioral Interventions in Elementary Classroom Settings
Skill Deficit, Not Defiance: Reframing Behavior in Trauma-Impacted Youth for the Classroom
Teaching Students to Advocate for Their Needs: A Function-Based Approach
Developing and Implementing a Model for Effective Mental Health and Wellbeing Service Delivery in Middle Schools

GENERAL BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Supporting Teachers of Students with EBD: Understanding Behavior Intervention Practices, Barriers, and Needs in Restrictive Settings
Student Voice in Function-Based Behavior Support Plans: A Person-Centered Approach
Start Your Day the PBIS Way: Proactive Strategies for Positive Classroom Climate
Discipline in 2025: Legal Implications, Common Sense Executive Order, and Evidence-Based Practices to Support At-Risk Students
Teachers and Parents as Partners (TAPP): Improving Student Behavioral Outcomes Through Teleconsultation
Out of Sight, Out of Mind? Exposing and Addressing Informal Removals in Special Education
Para Power: Creating Sustainable Systems to Train and Retain Support Staff
Strategies to Incorporate Student Voice in Behavior Interventions: Lessons Learned from a Pilot Study
Examining Teachers' Use of Opportunities to Respond and Feedback with Students with Challenging Behavior: Findings and Suggestions for Training
Strengthening School Behavioral and Mental Health Teams Through Interdisciplinary Teamwork
Preliminary Results of a Multi-Site Examination of Check-in /Check-out: Implications for Practice
HELP! I Need Somebody: Navigating Language and Behavior Across Inclusive Settings
Talk Human to Me: Explaining Social-Emotional Development to Everyone
Helping Anxious Kids Be Less Anxious
Improving Mathematics and Self-Regulation Skills with SRSD Math Instruction
Including Student Voice in Corridos Interventions: Implications for Students, Teachers, and Leaders in Special Education
Increasing Inclusion of Students with EBD in General Education Classrooms
Increasing Involvement in the Transition IEP for Students with Behavior Disorders
Bring Your Own Data (BYOD): Using AI to Write Legally Defensible Behavior Goals
Enhancing FBA-BIPs by Incorporating Contextual Fit for Effective and Sustainable Implementation

Hotel Reservations

Sheraton Kansas City Hotel at Crown Center
2345 McGee St. • Kansas City, MO 64108

Reservations online: <https://mslbd.org/symposium-conference/hotel-information.html>

- Guest Room Rate \$191 plus tax, fees (single/double/triple/quad)
- Phone Reservations: 1-866-932-6214; Group Code: "MSLBD Annual Convention 2026"
- **Cutoff Date January 30, 2026, by 5:00 PM CST, subject to availability.** The block can fill quickly, book early! Reservations requested after the block is full OR the cut-off date will be based on availability at the hotel's prevailing rates.
- 2026 Special Amenities: Those booking in the room block are eligible for complimentary self-parking and guest room internet. Self-parking should be billed to the guest room at the time of check-in.
- The hotel does not accept purchase orders.
- Request a credit card authorization form. crown@westin.com, reference: "MSLBD Annual Convention 2026"

Parking Information

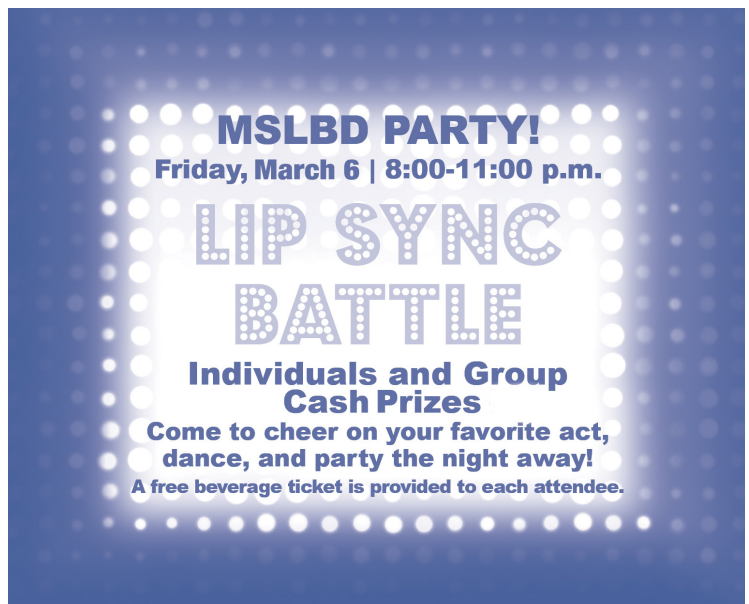
<https://mslbd.org/symposium-conference/getting-there-parking.html>

Parking may be found in the parking facility immediately to the north of the Sheraton Crown Center. Self and valet parking are available in the covered garage \$29-39/day.

Parking spaces are limited. Enjoy unlimited in/out privileges by directing parking charges to your guest room. A height restriction of six feet, eight inches applies. Please contact the hotel for more information.

Special Accommodations

For questions about accessibility or request accommodations please contact Keri Frey, (402) 792-3057, manager@mslbd.org. Requests should be made as soon as possible, but four or more weeks advance notice is requested.





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P.O. Box 202
Hickman, NE 68372

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How to GET THERE

DRIVING IN:

The Sheraton Crown Center is located at 2345 McGee Street in Kansas City, Missouri. The following are directions to the hotel from:

I-70 Eastbound: Take I-35 South exit to 20th Street exit. Turn left on 20th Street. Right on McGee Street to hotel entrance.

I-70 Westbound: Take I-35 South exit to 20th Street exit. Turn left on 20th Street. Right on McGee Street to hotel entrance.

I-35 Southbound: Take I-35 South to 20th Street exit. Turn left on 20th Street. Right on McGee Street to hotel entrance.

I-35 Northbound: Take I-35 North to Broadway exit. Turn right on Broadway. Turn left on 20th Street. Right on McGee Street to hotel entrance.

FLYING IN:

<https://mslbd.org/symposium-conference/getting-there-parking.html>
See our website for private service options for 1-10 passengers
Alternate options: Uber, Lyft, zTrip

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Keri Frey, Manager
P.O. Box 202, Hickman, Nebraska 68372
402-792-3057; fax 402-313-4702
manager@mslbd.org, mslbd.manager@gmail.com

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders is to foster leadership that advances equitable education opportunities and outcomes for students with behavioral needs, and to support the professionals and families with whom they are connected.

Visit our website for session descriptions and updates: www.MSLBD.org