



Seventh Annual Richard L. Simpson Conference on Autism

October 1-3, 2025

**Plaster Student Union
Missouri State University
1110 E. Madison St
Springfield, Missouri**

**Sponsored by
Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders (MSLBD)
The TASN Autism and Tertiary Behavior Supports Project (ATBS)
Missouri's Project ACCESS**

WELCOME

On behalf of the Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders (MSLBD) The Kansas Technical Assistance System Network (TASN), and Missouri's Project ACCESS we welcome you to the Seventh Annual Richard L. Simpson Conference on Autism. This conference honors our friend and colleague, Dr. Rich Simpson, who was a leader in the field of special education for children and youth with autism. Rich had a vision to provide a professional development opportunity specifically for educators who serve students with autism. Rich's commitment to evidence-based practices is evident in the speakers and workshops represented during this annual event.

We hope that you will gain new insights, establish professional contacts, and obtain new perspectives to meet the ever-changing educational challenges of improving the lives of children and youth with autism. In planning this conference, we recognize the critical role that competent and caring school leaders play in addressing the needs of students with autism in a variety of contexts. We hope to share with you information and effective practices across a wide range of issues and topics and offer opportunities to network with your colleagues. We are offering 16 CEU's for Board Certified Behavior Analysts this year. See the conference desk for a tracking form and eligible sessions.

All conference attendees are welcome to attend a social event Thursday, October 2 at the Moxy Springfield Downtown, 430 South Avenue, Springfield, Missouri, 65806. Bring your beverage ticket for a free drink and appetizers, 5:30-7:00 p.m. on the lower level in "The Subterranean".

We welcome feedback on all aspects of the conference. Please be sure and complete the conference evaluation. This evaluation gives us valuable information as we improve and expand on the conference each year. <https://forms.gle/jKzyeW9Y1mbdoZMw9>

We thank you for choosing to attend this conference and for your commitment to children and youth with autism.

CONFERENCE CO-SPONSORS

MSLBD would like to express its sincere gratitude for the support provided by the **Autism and Tertiary Behavior Supports Project** of the Kansas Technical Assistance System Network (TASN) and **Missouri's Project ACCESS**. Both TASN and Project ACCESS share their highly knowledgeable and talented professionals to present workshops and sessions at this event. The planning committee is grateful for their collaboration to honor the man who made such an impact to the field of Autism education.

2025 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: **Sonja de Boer, PhD, BCBA-D**, Sheepscott Valley, RSU#12; de Boer Consulting & Training, LLC; Union, ME

Birdie Ganz, PhD, BCBA, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE

Mike Garton, MEd, Project ACCESS, Missouri State University, Springfield, MO

Trudy Georgio, PhD, BCBA, True Behavior Development

Deborah Griswold, PhD, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS

Shana Kaplan, MEd, BCBA, LBA, TASN, Autism & Tertiary Behavior Supports, Overland Park, KS

Paul LaCava, PhD, Rhode Island College, Providence, RI

Shannon Locke MS, CCC-SLP, Doctoral Candidate University of Missouri-Columbia and Autism Outfitters, LLC, Belton, MO

Lane Maxcy, PhD, University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg, MO

Kaye Otten, PhD, BCBA, Summit Behavioral Services, Kansas City, MO

Cannon Ousley, MS, BCBA, Doctoral Candidate, University of Missouri-Columbia, MO

Jennifer Paxton, MEd, BCBA, LBA, TASN, Autism & Tertiary Behavior Supports, Holton, KS

Ciara Ousley, PhD, BCBA-D, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE

Rose Osnaya, PhD, BCBA-D, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO

Tracy Riensche, MSLBD Registration Specialist, Hickman, NE

Keri Frey, MSLBD Manager, Hickman, NE

Wednesday, October 1, 2025

7:00 a.m. –
9:15 a.m.

Shuttle Service

Parking Pass is valid for Lot 43, Bear Park North, 725 E. Cherry Street, Springfield, MO 65806. Conference shuttle service from Moxy Hotel and the SOUTH side of Lot 43/Bear Park North/Cherry Street. Drop-off will be on the North side of Plaster Student Union, 1110 E Madison St, Springfield, MO 65897. Parking Pass can be found within email sent to conference participants on Mon, Sept 29.

7:30 a.m.–
4:45 p.m.

Preconference Check-in

PSU 2nd Floor
Theater

Plaster Student Union (PSU), Missouri State University, 1110 E. Madison St., Springfield, MO 65897. Plaster Student Union is open for breakfast & lunch. No meals are provided on Wednesday. Name Badges must be worn throughout the event for campus security and access to sessions. Attendees to the preconference must check-in/out of each portion of this full-day session to receive professional development certificate or BCBA CEUs.

9:00 a.m. –
10:30 a.m.

PART 1 – PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOP

PSU 2nd Floor
Theater

Practical Functional Assessment and Skill-Based Treatment:

A Compassionate and Effective Approach to Addressing Severe Behavior

The presenter will share a contemporary, trauma-assumed, and compassionate approach to assessing and treating problem behavior in children with autism and developmental disabilities. The Practical Functional Assessment and Skill-Based Treatment processes were first described by Hanley and colleagues (2014), based on years of prior research, and have since been replicated by research groups nationally and internationally. Science, however, is iterative; we continue to learn each time we use these processes. Therefore, the presenter will describe strategies to foster meaningful relationships while addressing problem behavior and highlight the latest updates and refinements. Client values, safety, and collaboration will be emphasized. (Intermediate, Advanced) (5.0 BCBA CEUs Available, full day participation required)

Adithyan Rajaraman, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA, FTF Behavioral Consulting

10:30 a.m. –
10:40 a.m.

BREAK

10:40 a.m. –
12:00 p.m.

PART 2 – PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOP

PSU 2nd Floor
Theater

Preconference Workshop Continues

12:00 p.m. –
1:00 p.m.

LUNCH BREAK

Plaster Student Union is open for breakfast & lunch. Additional lunch venues will be shared onsite. No meals are provided on Wednesday.

1:00 p.m. –
3:00 p.m.

PART 3 – PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOP

PSU 2nd Floor
Theater

Preconference Workshop Continues

3:00 p.m. –
4:00 p.m.

SHUTTLE SERVICE

Shuttle service return to parking lot and hotel.

Thursday, October 2, 2025

7:00 a.m. –
9:00 a.m.

SHUTTLE SERVICE

Parking Pass is valid for Lot 43, Bear Park North, 725 E. Cherry Street, Springfield, MO 65806. Conference shuttle service from Moxy Hotel and the SOUTH side of Lot 43/Bear Park North/Cherry Street. Drop-off will be on the North side of Plaster Student Union, 1110 E Madison St, Springfield, MO 65897. Parking Pass can be found within email sent to conference participants on Mon, Sept 29.

7:30 a.m.–
5:00 p.m.

CONFERENCE DESK OPEN

PSU 3rd Floor
Foyer

Plaster Student Union (PSU), Missouri State University, 1110 E. Madison St., Springfield, MO 65897.
7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Coffee and Pastries, PSU Grand Ballroom West (PSU GBW)
Name Badges must be worn throughout the event for campus security and access to sessions.

8:30 a.m.–
11:30 a.m.

THURSDAY MORNING HALF-DAY WORKSHOPS

- WS1. Coaching Parents in AAC Interventions for Children with Autism** PSU 308
This workshop is designed for educators and behavior analysts who work with parents and caregivers to support children with communication deficits, including children with autism, particularly through the use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems. Participants will gain practical strategies for coaching parents to effectively implement communication interventions and AAC systems at home, promoting generalization and long-term communication outcomes. By the end of this session, participants will have a clear framework for coaching parents in the effective use of communication strategies and AAC systems. (Basic, 3.5 BCBA CEUs)
Sanikan Wattanawongwan, PhD, BCBA-D, Research Scientist, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX
- WS2. Ready, Set, Structure: Engaging Every Learner in Music and PE** PSU 315
Music and PE can be some of the most joyful yet challenging environments for students with autism and other low-incidence disabilities. This session explores how to apply the Structured Teaching framework to these high-movement, less-predictable settings to promote engagement, independence, and emotional regulation. Participants will learn practical strategies for embedding visuals, routines, work systems, and sensory supports into music and PE lessons. Participants will walk away with ready-to-use tools and ideas to create more inclusive affirming experiences for all students -- whether they're moving to the beat or playing in the gym. (Basic)
Kaylie Collins, MA, Autism Instruction Facilitator and **Sydney Donaldson, BME**, Teacher, Auburn-Washburn USD 437, Topeka, KS; **Amy Locke, BME**, Teacher, Park Hill School District, Kansas City, MO
- WS3. Behavioral & Self-Regulation Interventions to Help Students that Present with Challenging Behaviors or Trauma that have Negative Effects on their Academic Outcomes** PSU 4th Floor
Union Club
Students who experience trauma or demonstrate challenging behaviors often face significant barriers to academic success. In this session, Dr. Aaron Campbell will share practical tools and intervention strategies that educators can use to support student self-regulation and promote positive behavior. Grounded in research and informed by real-world classroom experience, this presentation will highlight approaches that integrate trauma-informed practices, behavioral supports, and culturally responsive teaching. The session will also explore how to build strong student-teacher relationships and foster classroom environments that support emotional safety and academic engagement for all learners, including those with autism. (Basic)
Aaron Campbell, PhD, Assistant Professor of Special Education, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO

11:30 a.m.–
12:15 p.m. **LUNCH** PSU Ballroom
Baked Potato & Salad Bar West

12:15 p.m.–
1:15 p.m. **KEYNOTE SESSION 1** PSU Ballroom
West

KN1. Implementing the Universal Protocol: Managing Interfering Behaviors in the Classroom Before Assessment and Instruction

Interfering behaviors are prevalent among individuals with autism and similar developmental disabilities. Problem behaviors are often shaped and/or emerged due to a lack of skills such as communication, toleration, communication, medical side effects, and/or heavy reliance on aversive strategies. Prior to conducting a functional behavior assessment (FBA), it is imperative that practitioners and teachers do no harm or escalate the student to further engage in severe problem behaviors. Universal protocol refers to a proactive, standardized set of procedures, designed to mitigate interfering behaviors, and to promote/sustain rapport before an FBA and/or more individualized interventions are implemented. This presentation will provide educators and practitioners with current best practices to prevent interfering behavior and to create an environment that facilitates rapport between the teacher and the student.

(Basic, 1.0 BCBA CEU)

Celia Heyman, PhD, BCBA-D, Assistant Faculty, Capella University; Lead Consultant, FTF Behavioral Consulting, Plainsboro, NJ

1:30 p.m.–
4:30 p.m. **THURSDAY AFTERNOON HALF-DAY WORKSHOPS**

WS4. Practical Strategies for Supporting AAC Users in Classroom Routines & Activities - PK-2nd PSU 4th Floor
Union Club

This session will offer creative ways to include AAC users into classroom routines, such as snack, circle time, and other daily activities. We will learn how to effectively model AAC, discuss methods for obtaining AAC tools for the classroom, and review data collection tools to document AAC user progress. The emphasis will be on high-tech devices and the practical benefits of this type of communication tool, even with younger students. (Intermediate)

Jolie Everett, MS, CCC-SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist, Everett Speech Connection, LLC; Independent Contractor, Missouri First Steps, Lee's Summit, MO

WS5. Creating Legally Defensible FBAs & BIPs in Schools PSU Ballroom
West

This workshop is designed for educational professionals, administrators and behavior analysts who supervise or conduct and implement functional behavior assessments (FBA) and behavior intervention plans (BIP) in schools. The federal government special education law (IDEA) includes little information or guidance regarding who, when, what and how FBAs or BIPs are needed or what needs to be included in the reports. This workshop will review special education federal guidelines, federal law and case law. A guidance document will also be provided that can be used by schools to outline the who, how, what, when and where is needed in order to develop FBAs and BIPs that can be reliably defensible in a court of law, while also being immediately useful and effective for implementation with students. (Intermediate, Advanced, 3.5 BCBA CEUs)

Sonja de Boer, PhD, BCBA-D, Behavior Analyst, Sheepscott Valley, RSU#12; de Boer Consulting & Training, LLC, Union, ME

Afternoon Workshops Continue

WS6. Voices Heard: Integrating AAC Into Classroom Culture, Instructions, and IEPs for Middle Grade Students

PSU 308

This interactive workshop will explore practical strategies for integrating Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) into upper elementary and middle school classrooms. Designed for educators, speech-language pathologists, and IEP team members, the session will focus on supporting multimodal communication through effective use of AAC tools, instructional planning, and collaborative goal development. Participants will learn to identify commonly used AAC modalities and features and understand how they function in real classroom contexts. A strong emphasis will be placed on embedding AAC into daily instruction, creating communication-rich routines, and building a supportive AAC culture at the classroom, school, and district levels. Attendees will engage in case-based learning and hands-on activities to personalize AAC supports and apply strategies to their own educational settings. The workshop will also guide participants in developing IEP goals that reflect authentic, curriculum-aligned communication opportunities, and in distinguishing between accommodations and modifications to ensure equitable access for AAC users. (Intermediate)

Rachel Moore, MS, CCC-SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist, Missouri State University, Springfield, MO;
April Bailey, MS, CCC-SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist, Joplin Public School District, Joplin, MO

4:00 p.m.–
7:30 p.m.

SHUTTLE SERVICE

Shuttle return to parking lots, hotel, and Social Event at Moxy Hotel – Subterranean Lounge

5:30 p.m. –
7:00 p.m.

SOCIAL EVENT

Moxy Springfield Downtown Hotel, Subterranean Bar

(Lower Level/Basement) 430 South Avenue 65806, Springfield, MO

Bring your complimentary beverage ticket from the conference material and relax with a drink and appetizers. Shuttles will be available to return those parked at MSU Bear Park North until 7:30 p.m.

Friday, October 3, 2025

7:00 a.m. –
9:00 a.m.

SHUTTLE SERVICE

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8:30 a.m. –
9:30 a.m.

KEYNOTE SESSION 1

PSU Ballroom
West

KN2. Surprise! You're Autistic – Adjusting to a Life Changing Discovery

After finally getting an autism diagnosis at age 46, Ron underwent a complete paradigm shift. Having felt like a failure through much of life, due to assuming he was just like everyone else, with no reason to believe otherwise. From communication to relationships and self-awareness, everything was scrutinized and changes made to better cope with the new found reality. Ron will talk about those changes, life adjustments before and after diagnosis, as well as the circumstances that led to starting to suspect he could be on the spectrum.

Ronald Kerns, Graphic Designer, StudioKerns and Missouri State University-West Plains, Mountain Home, AR

9:45 a.m. -
10:45 a.m.

SET A – CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS

- A1. Building Strong Foundations and Empowering Paraprofessionals: BST and Antecedent Interventions for Reducing Challenging Behavior** PSU Ballroom East
- Often, paraprofessionals implement behavioral strategies and respond to challenging behaviors with little training. While there are no quick fixes for challenging student behavior, there are evidence-based and high-leverage practices that when combined with professional development and coaching can lead to the reduction of challenging behavior. Presenters will share evidence from their implementation of Behavioral Skills Training (BST) on antecedent interventions to paraprofessionals. Direct training was conducted by in district Board Certified Behavior Analysts, Autism Specialists, and Registered Behavior Technicians. The data the presenters gathered and analyzed involved data taken from their own district on classroom look-fors designed for paraprofessionals engaging in the skills, direct observations, and surveys of staff. Data taken both pre-coaching and training and post-coaching and training showed significant increases in the use of antecedent strategies. (Intermediate, 1.0 BCBA CEU)
- Kathleen Hammond, EdS, BCBA and Lindsey Fritts, MSE**, Blue Springs School District, Blue Springs, MO
- A2. From Overwhelmed to Impactful: A Team-Based Approach to Verbal Behavior Programming in Rural Schools** PSU 4th Floor Union Club
- Schools are facing a perfect storm with rising communication and behavior needs, staffing shortages, and overwhelmed educators. Individualized verbal behavior programming is a proven, evidence-based approach, but the time and training required often feel out of reach. This session shares how a rural Kansas cooperative, supported by their Executive Director, reimagined roles and leveraged support staff, including speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and an autism consultant, to launch a verbal behavior program in schools with limited resources. Participants will learn how beginning with support staff and a small group of students led to improved outcomes, increased team confidence, and growing staff buy-in. This session offers practical strategies for building sustainable, team-based systems that reduce challenging behavior, improve student outcomes, and gradually bring in teachers and paraprofessionals based on their individual readiness. (Basic, Intermediate)
- Jessica Rawson, MS, Molly Dohrman, MS, CCC-SLP, and Melissa Strathman, MS, CCC-SLP**, McPherson County Special Education Cooperative, McPherson, KS
- A3. The Impact between Bear POWER and Collaboration** PSU 317
- In this presentation, it will be discussed about how partnerships have been forged, nurtured, and broadened within the campus, community, and across states. When agencies, school personnel, campus staff/faculty, and individuals work together, there is a positive outcome for IDD students. Being willing to reach out and discuss everything from building awareness of ISPE programs, required materials for financial aid, academic coursework, internships, to post-graduation is vital to program and students' success. (Basic, Intermediate)
- April Phillips, EdD, Christopher J. Craig, EdD, and CW Tillman**, Missouri State University
- A4. Tech Check! The Latest in Apps, AI and Other Tools for Students with ASD** PSU 308
- Calling all techies and those who want to adopt new tools for teaching, planning and evaluation. This session will include a brief presentation, participant discussion, Q & A, along with demonstrations of various technologies for instruction, behavior support, problem solving and other educator tasks. Come learn about the latest in AI, robotics, video modeling, and more. (Basic)
- Paul LaCava, PhD**, Professor, Rhode Island College, Providence, RI

11:00 a.m.-
12:00 p.m.

SET B – CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS

B1. Do it Scared: Imposter Syndrome in Professionals Working with AAC

PSU 4th Floor
Union Club

This session is about empowering professionals to embrace their existing communication expertise and applying it to high tech, ever evolving AAC technology. We will complete self-reflection and identify how imposter syndrome may be impacting us as professionals, and therefore our students and clients. We will discuss how a willingness to abandon comfort and "do it scared" can open new doors of connection with AAC users and their loved ones. (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced)

Jolie Everett, MS, CCC-SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist, Everett Speech Connection, LLC;
Independent Contractor, Missouri First Steps, Lee's Summit, MO

B2. Laughter as Language: Incorporating Jokes into Communication Training

PSU Ballroom
East

Effective communication is essential for social interactions and independence, yet individuals with communication challenges often struggle with social nuances like humor. This presentation examines how integrating joke-telling and humor comprehension into communication training enhances social engagement and complex communication skills. Using behavior analytic principles, we will explore humor as a functional communication tool that fosters positive interactions and reduces problem behavior. Attendees will learn evidence-based strategies, including task analyses, reinforcement systems, and naturalistic teaching. Case studies will demonstrate how humor supports reciprocal interactions, and reduces challenging behavior. This session highlights how laughter bridges communication gaps, creates meaningful connections and improves quality of life. Participants will gain practical tools to incorporate humor within behavior support plans, advancing both functional and complex communication goals. (Basic Intermediate, 1.0 BCBA CEU)

Sarah Goldstein, MEd, BCBA, LBA, Prism Autism Education & Consulting, Berlin, CT, Bay Path University Graduate 2025 and **Trudy Georgio, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA/LABA**, Assistant Professor, Bay Path University, Longmeadow, MA

B3. Show and Tell: Comparing Modeling and Explicit Instruction for Teaching Augmentative and Alternative Communication

PSU 308

Modeling (i.e., aided language input, augmented input, aided language stimulation) is a widely recommended strategy for teaching augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. However, many studies on modeling include additional teaching techniques, such as prompting students to use their AAC systems, making it difficult to isolate the effects of modeling alone. In this session, we share findings from a study that directly compared explicit AAC instruction to modeling alone for five autistic students who use AAC. We report individual student outcomes and examine how characteristics such as imitation skills and receptive language influenced response to each intervention. Results offer practical guidance for tailoring AAC instruction based on learner needs. We highlight the importance of using ongoing data to inform decisions and adjust strategies for efficient, individualized AAC instruction. (Advanced, 1.0 BCBA CEU)

Jenee Vickers Johnson, PhD, BCBA-D, Assistant Professor University of Missouri-Kansas City, MO

B4. Harmony in Action: Leveraging Music-Mediated Interventions to Boost Engagement in School Activities

PSU 317

Student engagement is a critical factor in academic and social development, particularly for autistic students who may face challenges with communication, social interaction, and sensory processing. This presentation explores the potential of music-mediated interventions as an effective strategy to enhance participation, motivation, and connection in school activities for autistic students. Drawing from

research in music and special education, we will examine how structured musical activities—such as rhythm-based exercises, guided improvisation, and collaborative songwriting—can support sensory regulation, emotional expression, and social engagement. (Basic)

Xiaoning Sun, PhD, Assistant Professor, **Christopher J. Craig, EdD**, Professor, **Connor Purcell**, Student, **Allison Schoonbeck**, Graduate Student, Missouri State University, Springfield, MO

12:00 p.m.-
12:50 p.m.

LUNCH AND AWARDS PRESENTATION

PSU Ballroom
West

12:00 p.m.-
3:00 p.m.

SHUTTLE SERVICE

Shuttles return to the parking lot & hotels

1:00 p.m.-
2:00 p.m.

SET C – CONCURRENT BREAKOUTS

C1. When Talking is Tricky: Speech & Language Developmental Milestones and Complex Communication Needs

PSU 317

Nearly 10% of the student population is reported to have a communication disorder. Students with autism all present with communication difficulties as part of their diagnostic determination. During this session you will hear from an SLP with over 25 years of experience serving students with autism. We will briefly cover speech and language components, developmental milestones, and implications for students with more severely impacted by communication disturbances. Be prepared to think and talk about cases you know and how you can make “talking” easier for them. (Basic, Intermediate)

Shannon Locke, PhD, CCC-SLP, Raymore-Peculiar Schools, Belton, MO

PSU Ballroom
East

C2. Free Registered Behavior Technician Training with Project ACCESS

Upskill Your School’s Behavior Support Team: Dealing with interfering behaviors is frequently cited as a reason why teachers leave the field. Likewise, parents and guardians list disruptive, disrespectful, and aggressive behaviors as a primary concern. School teams may become adept at supporting behaviors for tier 1 students but may feel challenged by behaviors that need tier 2 and tier 3 intervention strategies. To help schools close the behavior support skills gap, Project ACCESS is unveiling a new training program that offers an intensive 40-hour program of instruction that introduces learners to strategies based on the science of behavior. Designed to meet requirements for candidates seeking licensure as a Registered Behavior Technicians, this program is also for any school personnel from para-educators to administrators who simply want to learn more about tools from the field of applied behavior analysis. The program will be offered for free, is available asynchronously, and incorporates games and interactive exercises to keep it fun and interesting. (Everyone Welcome)

Mike Garton, MEd, Mikayla Campbell, MEd, BCBA, Blayne Stemple, MEd, BCBA, Project ACCESS Staff, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of Special Education on the campus of Missouri State University, Springfield, MO

Set C Continues

C3. A Medical Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder: Why is this Important for Individuals with ASD

PSU Ballroom
West

The rate of autism spectrum disorder continues to grow. Currently, one of 31 children are meeting criteria for a medical diagnosis (CDC, 2025). The need for an accurate diagnosis is essential for this population to ensure access to appropriate support and resources for the lifespan. This session will review the current DSMS-TR diagnostic criteria and explain the various comorbidities that occur most frequently with a diagnosis of ASD. Additionally, information will be provided on how to align the DSMS-TR with the educational eligibility criteria utilized by the federal/state. (Everyone Welcome)

Dr. Lindsey Reichert, Director of Diagnostic and Counseling, Autism Neurodevelopmental Center; **Dr. Sapna Chakraborty**, Program Director of Doctoral Occupational Therapy, Missouri State University; **Dr. Xiaoning Sun, BCBA-D**, Assistant Professor, Missouri State University; **Dr. L. Garrison-Kane**, Graduate Coordinator of ASD Program, Missouri State University; **Jamie McGranahan**, Autism Resource Specialist, Autism Neurodevelopmental Center

C4. Preparing Children with Autism for Kindergarten: Learning How to Learn Skills

PSU 308

Early intervention for children with autism essentially focuses on training their brain to learn how to learn. That means we, as behavior analysts alongside educators, are utilizing the principles of applied behavior analysis to train the child's brain to not only learn new skills, but to use those skills to gain more skills. Through motivating the children to learn, to explore, to communicate, to generalize what they learn, and to allow them to make mistakes and use trial and error to figure out what to do next, we are helping the brain to learn how to learn. The brain and thus, the child, needs to become more and more independent in using their skills and figuring out how to use their skills in new settings and with new materials. Eventually, you enable a child to learn new skills that you never directly taught them, because you taught their brain to learn how to use their skills to figure out new things. This is what we aim to do for our children with autism when they are entering Kindergarten - to be able to independently demonstrate the skills needed to learn and participate in academic, social, play, functional communication, adaptive behavior, and self-help activities. This seminar will provide a brief overview of these critical learning to learn skills that should be a part of all early intervention autism programs. Video examples will be provided, and participants will leave with a checklist of early, intermediate, and advanced skills to follow when teaching and evaluating young children with autism readiness for kindergarten. (Intermediate, 1.0 BCBA CEU)

Sonja de Boer, PhD, BCBA-D, Behavior Analyst, Sheepscott Valley, RSU#12; de Boer Consulting & Training, LLC, Union, ME

2:00 p.m.

CONFERENCE ADJOURNS

12:00 p.m.-
3:00 p.m.

SHUTTLE SERVICE continues

2025 Richard L. Simpson Conference on Autism

PRESENTERS

April Bailey, Aprilbailey@joplinschools.org
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