



DHDD Newsletter – November 2020



A Note from the DHDD Director:

Dear colleagues –

I hope you are well and staying healthy. I have once again been deployed to help support the COVID-19 response, this time with the vaccine planning unit. DHDD's Associate Director for Science, Dr. Blythe Ryerson, will be serving as Acting Director while I am on the response.

This has certainly been a challenging year, and it might be difficult to find things to be thankful for. There is always something though! We can all be thankful for the many ways our organizations have opportunity to serve public health by contributing knowledge and expertise to the COVID-19 response. I am also thankful to DHDD staff for their hard work during these times and always, and am thankful for all of you, our DHDD partners, for your dedication to people with disabilities and your work toward helping all people achieve their best health possible. May you all have a very happy and healthy Thanksgiving. Please consider how your holiday plans can be modified to reduce the spread of COVID-19 to keep your friends, families, and communities healthy and safe. Visit the [CDC's holiday celebrations and small gatherings page](#) for some helpful information.

Take care and stay well,
Georgina Peacock

In the Spotlight

National Diabetes Month

About 1 in 6 people with disabilities (16.7%) in the United States in 2018 were diagnosed with diabetes, compared to 1 in 14 people without disabilities (7.4%). In recognition of National Diabetes Awareness Month, DHDD's November [feature](#) highlights the common risk factors for type 2 diabetes, as well as available lifestyle change programs and educational resources to support the health of people with disabilities.

[Read more](#)



National Family Caregivers Month

In recognition of November as National Family Caregivers Month, CDC's Division of Population Health designed a caregiver campaign focused around their recently [published study](#) on the health conditions of caregivers who are part of the baby boomer generation. The campaign consists of a [web feature](#) (also available in [Spanish](#)), [podcast](#), social media, and an [animated graphic](#).

COVID-19 Accessible Materials for People with Disabilities – Webinar Series

Georgia Institute of Technology's [Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation](#), the CDC Foundation and DHDD are collaborating on a free webinar series to provide information to supplement CDC's COVID-19 considerations for people with disabilities. You can register for these events by clicking on the links below.



- [A Closer Look: Face Masks and People with Disabilities](#)
Wednesday December 9 at 2:00 PM
- [A Closer Look: Mental Health and Resilience within the Disability Community During COVID-19](#)
Wednesday December 16 at 2:00 PM
- [Making Social Media Accessible for People with Disabilities](#)
Wednesday January 20, 2021 at 2:00 PM
- [A Closer Look: Guidance for Business and Employers Considering the Needs of People with Disabilities during COVID-19](#)
Wednesday February 10, 2021 at 2:00 PM

Participants will qualify for CEUs through the AAC Institute and CRCs through the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC).

Registration will close one hour before the live webinar. The webinars will be presented through Zoom, recorded, and archived. All webinars are accessible with captions and American Sign Language.

AAP Hosts “Now is the Time! Flu Vaccination for People with Special Healthcare Needs and Disabilities”

Please join us on Wednesday, December 9th from 1pm-2pm ET as the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) hosts a webinar for healthcare providers who care for children and adults with special healthcare needs and disabilities. The webinar will provide the latest information from the AAP and CDC on flu, including routine vaccination recommendations; safely vaccinating during the COVID-19 pandemic; flu activity and surveillance; and why flu vaccination for people with special healthcare needs and disabilities, and those who care for them, is more important than ever.



[Register now](#)

New Resources

Now Open for Applications for CDC Funding Opportunity: Characterizing the Natural History of Fragile X Syndrome to Inform the Development of Intervention Outcome Measures ([RFA-DD-21-002](#))

The Fragile X Syndrome funding opportunity builds on the foundation of the Fragile X Online Registry With Accessible Research Database (FORWARD) to conduct research to better characterize the natural history of fragile X syndrome (FXS) and meaningful outcome measures to improve the lives of children and adolescents with FXS with and without autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and from different racial/ethnic groups and geographic locations across the United States. The research will characterize the cognitive, behavioral, and adaptive skills, and other indicators of functioning of individuals with FXS.

The application period closes January 11, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. ET.

ASL video – “I Wear a Mask Because”

CDC developed a video, available in ASL, that features CDC staff wearing masks to protect themselves and others from COVID-19 and encouraging others to do the same.

Please share this link widely!



Helping Teenagers Find a New Normal After a Natural Disaster

After a natural disaster, it is normal to feel different and have strong emotions. To better help teenagers who have experienced a natural disaster cope, CDC's National Center for Environmental Health has developed a series of resources for teens, including videos, social media graphics, and posters available in English and Spanish. Parents of teens, mental health professionals, educators, school administrators, faith-based organizations, and others who work closely with teenagers can share these resources in the aftermath of a natural disaster.

Find first-person videos of teens' personal stories, along with posters, social media graphics, and other coping resources, at www.cdc.gov/disasters/teens.



Finding a new normal:
Life after a natural disaster



Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention
National Center for
Environmental Health

DHDD's Children's Preparedness Unit provided review of materials.

New SEED Newsletter

DHDD's [Study to Explore Early Development \(SEED\)](#), the largest study in the United States to help identify factors that may put children at risk for autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other developmental disabilities, recently released its Fall 2020 Newsletter with study updates and resources for families and professionals.

[Read the Newsletter](#)

SEED Study to Explore Early Development

Sprouting SEEDs: Young Children's Special Interests and Repetitive Behaviors

Many parents can tell you about the time when their child first showed an interest that most take everyone, or how their 3-year-old daughter "needs" to have a certain toy or game to sleep every night. It may be that your child has a repetitive behavior, like a specific routine, or likes to play with the same toy or change within a line more than the whole night, interrupting everyday activities.

However, for some children, these traits may be more intense and last longer than just a few months. It may be a sign of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Children with unusually intense interests that last as long as 12 months, below, may also have other repetitive behaviors that are so intense that the child cannot be called a "nurture" for a child to be diagnosed with ASD, at least two of the following behaviors must be present:

- Evidence of intense and specific interests;
- Fixated routines and repetitive patterns of behavior;
- Repetitive motor movements, repetitive speech or behaviors, or both;
- Atypical response to the sound, taste, touch, smell, or feel of objects.

Children with other types of disabilities may have these interests or repetitive behaviors, but they are not as intense or as long-lasting. Social and communication challenges seen among those with ASD:

Some examples of intense interests, at least one, unusual body movements, or repetitive behaviors include:

- Repeating a word or a phrase above at the same time every day or else the child has a meltdown;
- Needing to close all the doors before leaving the house;
- Having to carry out if a parent drives a different way to or from school; and
- Flapping hands, echolalic words, or repeatedly lining up objects in same way.

New Autism Guidance Targets Transitions and Early Detection

Dr. Susan Levy (Co-investigator at the TIG SEED site) and her co-authors highlighted that the focus of the new autism guidance article contained more on what causes autism and less on the family. The article also highlighted the need for autism screening in adults with autism to grow up to 30 adults with autism.¹ This focus on transitioning to adulthood is one of the five major themes of the AAP's new guidance for autism spectrum disorder published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in December 2019. This was a major undertaking that reflects a massive amount of research and clinical experience in autism. Another primary focus of the guidance is on early detection.

To read more about the updated guidelines, visit <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7315049/>.

¹ Accessed on 3/19/2020 from the *Prologue: Post-Script* published on 12/10/19 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7315049/>

Publications

Early Intervention and Parent Talk Improve Outcomes for Children with Hearing Loss

CDC supported a recently published study titled “Early Intervention, Parent Talk, and Pragmatic Language in Children With Hearing Loss” in Pediatrics. After assessing 124 children with bilateral hearing loss between 4 and 7 years of age living in Colorado, researchers found higher levels of pragmatic language ability (i.e. ability to use language in context) at 7 years of age for children who

- met [Early Hearing Detection and Intervention 1-3-6 guidelines](#)
- received greater quantity of parent talk
- had higher nonverbal intelligence
- had lesser degrees of hearing loss, and
- had mothers with higher levels of education



It is important that pediatricians and other health care professionals counsel families about the value of timely identification of hearing loss and early intervention for the optimal development of pragmatic language skills. They should also encourage parents to talk to their children as much as possible.

[Read the article](#)

New MMWR: Mental Health–Related Emergency Department Visits Among Children Aged <18 Years During the COVID-19 Pandemic

An analysis led by DHDD authors and recently published in MMWR found that, beginning in April 2020, the proportion of children's mental health-related emergency department (ED) visits among all pediatric ED visits increased and remained elevated through October. Compared with 2019, the proportion of mental health-related ED visits increased approximately

- 24% for children aged 5–11 years, and
- 31% for children aged 12–17 years.

Monitoring indicators of children's mental health, promoting coping and resilience, and expanding access to services to support children's mental health are critical during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Read the article](#)

New Study on Social (Pragmatic) Communication Disorder Relative to Autism Spectrum Disorder

A DHDD co-authored analysis from [CDC's Study to Explore Early Development \(SEED\)](#) was recently published in the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders. This study compares demographic and clinical characteristics in children with likely Social (Pragmatic) Communication Disorder (SCD) to those in children with possible and some SCD traits, other developmental delay, and autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Results from this study suggest that SCD may involve a continuum of symptoms characteristic of ASD.

[Read the article.](#)

DHDD'S mission is to lead inclusive programs to optimize the health and development of children and adults with, or at risk for, disabilities.



Page last reviewed: December 21, 2020

Content source: [National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)