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Ensuring that all children, youth, and adults with disabilities, and those receiving educational supports, are valued by and contribute to their communities of choice.

MARCH 2019

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FEATURE STORIES

New Impact Issue Examines Inclusive K-8 Education

Historically, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities were often taught only functional skills in our K-12 schools — how to do self-care, tell time, use money, carry out routine daily tasks. But several laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) and the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), have affirmed that students with disabilities have the right to access the grade-level curriculum. Today, we know how much more students can learn when provided with the opportunity, and growing numbers of families, educators, and students are advocating for higher expectations and a more inclusive educational experience.



What does it look like when schools transition to more inclusive and rigorous education for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities? In the new [Impact: Feature Issue on Inclusive Education for K-8 Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities](#), inclusive education is explored through the perspectives of researchers, teachers, education administrators, students, and parents. They share knowledge, skills, experiences, and resources that can help K-8 schools nationwide support the learning and inclusion of all students.

“The learning curve for adults is sometimes steep when more inclusive practices are introduced in

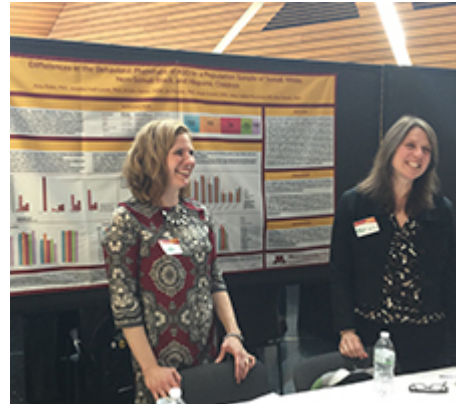
schools,” says [Sheryl Lazarus](#), Director of ICI’s [TIES Center](#). “However, students — both those with cognitive disabilities and their peers without — often make the shift more easily. The key is for the needed and appropriate supports to be in place for students, and for their teachers and related services personnel to have the knowledge, skills, and quality curricular resources they need to confidently support the learning and participation of all students.”

This Impact is available in the interactive digital edition with bonus content (videos, webinars, podcasts) and also in print. For print copies, contact icipub@umn.edu or 612-624-4512.

Impact is published by ICI and its [Research and Training Center on Community Living](#). Additional support for this issue came from the TIES Center, the National Technical Assistance Center on Inclusive Practices and Policies for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, based at ICI’s National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Six ICI Posters to be Featured at CEHD Research Day on March 26

How common is autism among Minnesota’s immigrant communities? What does well-being mean to adults with intellectual disabilities? How can online modules help teachers, test writers, and policymakers decide which accessibility features and accommodations to use for students with disabilities? Answers to those and other questions will be shared on March 26 when ICI presents six research posters in two categories at the University of Minnesota’s College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) Research Day. The posters and display tables will showcase a range of ICI research activities, and staff will be on hand to discuss their work. ICI posters and their authors include:



Autism and Developmental Disabilities

- “[Autism Spectrum Disorder Prevalence in Immigrant Communities in Minnesota](#),” by [Libby Hallas-Muchow](#) and [Jennifer Hall-Lande](#) (pictured with their award-winning poster at a previous CEHD Research Day), [Jenny Poynter](#), [Amy Esler](#), Anab Gulaid, and [Amy Hewitt](#).
- “Doing, Being, and Belonging: A Photo Elicitation on the Meaning of Well-being of Adults with Intellectual Disabilities,” by [Lynda Lahti Anderson](#).

Education Research and Educational Equity

- “Diploma Options, Graduation Requirements, and Exit Exams for Youth with Disabilities,” by [David Johnson](#) and [Martha Thurlow](#).
- “[Exploring Predictors of Transition Planning Participation and Future Goal Aspirations of Secondary Students with Disabilities](#),” by David Johnson, [Yi-Chen Wu](#), Martha Thurlow,

[Xueqin Qian](#), Ernest Davenport, and [Cynthia Matthias](#).

- “Using Online Modules to Learn about Accessibility Features and Accommodations,” by [Darrell Peterson](#), [Erik Larson](#), and Martha Thurlow.
- “The Impact of Accessible Assessments on English Learners on Teachers and Students Perspectives and State Assessments,” by Yi-Chen Wu and [Linda Goldstone](#).

This is a free, annual event featuring research throughout the College. Posters will be displayed at [McNamara Alumni Center](#) from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. [Please register by Tuesday, March 19](#). A buffet lunch will be available.

Linking Nutrition and Disability

What does food have to do with disability? Kalia Thor wanted to know. She is a Fellow in ICI’s [Minnesota Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities \(MNLEND\) Program](#), but she is also a second-year Master of Public Health nutrition student at the University of Minnesota, a Maternal and Child Health nutrition trainee, and a nutrition educator for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program. “During undergrad [in nutritional science], I always wondered why nutrition choices were so limited for certain individuals with disabilities and why they tended to be so ‘picky’ at mealtime,” she says. Thor still wants to know, but her interests have become more specific. “I want to work with diverse populations and figure out the nutritional deficits and needs of people with neurodevelopmental disorders like autism. Being part of MNLEND, I hope to use my knowledge and skills from previous experiences and apply them to children with neurodevelopmental disorders and their nutritional intake.”



As an interdisciplinary leadership training program, MNLEND helped Thor broaden her perspective. “Being a MNLEND Fellow has really allowed me to view things differently from disciplines outside of nutrition for individuals who may have neurodevelopmental disabilities. Looking through the lens of other disciplines allows me to glimpse what other professionals can see all the time — how they observe early signs of developmental delays, how they anticipate the effect that surroundings might have on the daily activity and thoughts of people with autism, and more. Being a Fellow and with the year continuing, I will learn more about individuals with neurodevelopmental and related disorders.”

MNLEND believes that hands-on training helps build interdisciplinary leaders. Thor’s MNLEND project combines her new interdisciplinary overview with her background in nutrition. “As a LEND Fellow and WIC nutrition educator, I am fortunate enough to work on a project for both organizations. In this project, we want to identify issues that WIC staff have in addressing developmental delays with families. We also hope to partner with other programs and help families who identify possible developmental delays in their young children; oftentimes these delays can be overlooked. Offering

support could be as simple as referring them to other programs in Minnesota, such as 'Help Me Grow' or 'Learn the Signs. Act Early.' MNLEND has shown me the importance of working with young children with neurodevelopmental disorders and now I want to advocate for them. I want to help families.”

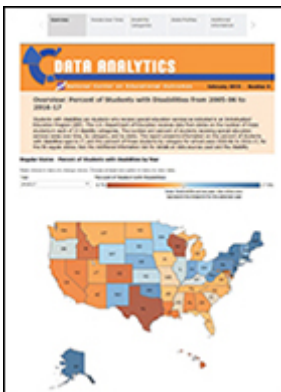
SOCIAL MEDIA SPOTLIGHT



Featured on [ICI's Facebook](#) on March 5, 2019

"Ableism is implicit in our attitudes: When we feel sorry for people who experience disability or assume they need or want to be 'fixed,' we are practicing ableism." From SCARYMOMMY.COM: "Let's Talk About Ableism: What It Means, And Why Everyone Should Care."

NEW RELEASES



NCEO Data Analytics 8: Percent of Students with Disabilities by Disability Categories for 2005–06 to 2016–17

Authors: [Yi-Chen Wu](#), [Martha Thurlow](#), [Deb Albus](#), and [Kristin Liu](#)

[This interactive report](#) presents data on the number and percent of students receiving special education services by trends over time, category, and by state. The U.S. Department of Education receives data from states on the number of students with disabilities who receive special education services as indicated in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in each of 13 disability categories. This report presents information on the percent of students with disabilities ages 6–17, and the percent of these students by category for school years 2005–06 to 2016–17, for the 50 regular states. Published by ICI's National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO).

Journal Articles Published

"Psychotropic Medication Use for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder who Receive Services and Supports Through Adult Developmental Disability Services in the United States." (2019). By [Amy Esler](#), [Amy Hewitt](#), [Jennifer Hall-Lande](#), [Sandra L Pettingell](#), and [James Houseworth](#). Published in the [Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders](#).

"Agreement Between Structured Descriptive Assessments and Functional Analyses Conducted Over a Telehealth System." (2019). By Brian K. Martens, Emily Baxter, Jennifer McComas, Samantha J. Sallade, Johanna S. Kester, Miguel Caamano, [Adele Dimian](#), [Jennifer Simacek](#), and Brittany Pennington. Published in [Behavior Analysis: Research and Practice](#).

EVENTS

ICI Staff Present AAIDD Webinar on Community Living



April 16, 3–4 p.m. CST

**"Being 'Of the Community': Exploring and Celebrating
Community Living for Adults with IDD"**

This free webinar from the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) focuses on [Community Living and Participation for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities](#), a new book edited by the webinar's presenters, ICI's [Amy Hewitt](#) and [Kelly Nye-Lengerman](#). The book is an exploration of how to create the ideal conditions to facilitate community living and participation for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The editors/presenters will share a model of community living for adults with IDD that includes ever-evolving dimensions related to both the place of community and the feeling of community. Several of the book's core topics will be discussed in detail, including using person-centered and positive support practices, social inclusion and relationships, practices that promote quality outcomes, and the direct support workforce. Join the conversation from being "in the community" to being "of the community." [Registration for this webinar is open.](#)

Film Screening and Panel Discussion

April 30–May 1

**Positive Behavior Support Collaborators Forum
Minneapolis, Minnesota**



A community planning team composed of ICI, the Minnesota Department of Education, and many other community members, including educators, family members, and other advocates, are working together to host a free screening of the film [Intelligent Lives](#) at South High School at 3131 - 19th Avenue South on April 30 at 6:30 p.m. Intelligent Lives stars three young adults with intellectual disabilities who challenge perceptions of intelligence as they navigate high school, college, and the workforce. Academy Award-winning actor and narrator Chris Cooper contextualizes their lives through the story of his son as the film examines intelligence testing in the U.S.

At 9 a.m. the following morning, May 1, filmmaker Dan Habib will facilitate a discussion on the issues raised in the film at the John B. Davis Center at 1250 W. Broadway Avenue. This panel discussion will also explore collaboration among many Minnesota organizations to advance education, employment, and housing for people living with disabilities throughout the state. The screening and discussion are free and open to the public, but [registration is required](#) and space is limited.

Check & Connect Mentor Training

June 19–20, 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

**University of Minnesota Continuing Education and Conference Center
1890 Buford Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota**



[Check & Connect](#)'s two-day Mentor Training provides participants with the information, competencies, and skills needed to be an effective Check & Connect mentor at their local site. This training is designed for those assigned the role of Check & Connect mentor as well as those interested in Check & Connect mentoring principles and practices. Check & Connect site coordinators and administrators are also encouraged to attend. Check & Connect is an intervention used with K–12 students who show warning signs of disengagement with school and who are at risk of dropping out. At the core of Check & Connect is a trusting relationship between the student and a caring, trained mentor who both advocates for and challenges the student to keep education salient. [Register by May 29](#) (early bird pricing until April 19).

STAFF UPDATES



Sheryl Larson: On February 13, [Larson](#) presented, “Residential and In-home Services for People with IDD: Residential Information System Project,” at the Release of the 2018 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium in Washington, DC.

Kelly Nye-Lengerman, D. Mohoehney, and Sarah Hollerich: On February 18, [Nye-Lengerman](#), Mohoehney, and [Hollerich](#) submitted their report, Workforce for the 21st Century: A Working Life Alliance Evaluation Report, to their client, The Arc Minnesota. In separate news, Nye-Lengerman also co-authored the recently-published [APSE Universal Employment Competencies](#) for the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE), a national nonprofit organization promoting the right to competitive employment in an inclusive workforce for all people with disabilities. Nye-Lengerman is past president — and the current treasurer — of APSE's Minnesota chapter.



Beth Fondell, Patrick Mitchell, Casey Burrows, Catherine Moss, and Maren Christenson Hofer: On February 19, [Fondell](#), and [MNLEND Fellows](#) Mitchell, Burrows, Moss, and Hofer rallied at the Minnesota State Capitol for Disability Day.

Martha Thurlow and Kelly Nye-Lengerman: On February 20, [Thurlow](#) and [Nye-Lengerman](#) presented, "Achievement Standards and Beyond: Taking the Next Steps with WIOA," to the Council of Chief State School Officers conference in Los Angeles. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is landmark legislation designed to strengthen and improve the nation's public workforce system and help get Americans, including youth and those with significant barriers to employment, into high-quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and retain skilled workers.



Nicole Duchelle, Rachel Freeman, David Johnson, Eileen Klemm, Julie Kramme, Nichole Meyer, Barbara Brent, and Jessica Simacek: On February 20–23, several ICI staff presented at the 16th International Conference on Positive Behavior Support in Washington, DC. [Simacek](#) and [Kramme](#) (pictured together) and [Freeman](#) presented, "Implementing Positive Supports in Agencies Supporting People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities." [Duchelle](#) and [Meyer](#) presented, "Using Picture of a Life (POL) as a Person-Centered Planning Approach." [Johnson](#) and [Klemm](#) presented, "Check & Connect: Monitoring Students' Academic and Positive Behavioral Progress Toward Graduation." Freeman also co-presented, "Minnesota Positive Behavior Support Network" and "Implementing Sustainable PBS in Organizations Supporting People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities"; she and [Brent](#) were among the co-presenters of "Positive Behavior Support in IDD Systems of Support: State and National Perspectives."

Lynda Lahti Anderson, Katrina Simons, and Jody Van Ness: On February 25, [Anderson](#), [Simons](#), and [Van Ness](#) presented "Invest in Others: Invest in You" in Burnsville, Minnesota. This is a training designed to enhance the skills of Minnesota direct support workers who are employed through self-directed programs such as PCA Choice, Consumer-Directed Community Supports, and the Community Support Grant programs. Anderson, Simmons, and Van Ness repeated the training in St. Paul on February 26 and in Eden Prairie on March 12.

Nicole Duchelle, Susan O'Neill, Chet Tschetter, and Jody Van Ness: On February 28, [Duchelle](#)



and [Tschetter](#) (pictured together), along with [O'Neil](#) and [Van Ness](#), completed the final six training events around Minnesota on “Next Steps in Person and Family Centered Approaches in Mental Health and Co-occurring Conditions.” They worked together with five community facilitators and a representative from the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

Erik Larson, Darrell Peterson, Martha Thurlow, and Yi-Chen Wu: On March 7–8, staff from ICI’s National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) presented at the National Association on Bilingual Education annual conference in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. [Wu](#) and [Thurlow](#) presented, “Trends in Accommodations and Accessibility Features English Learners Received on Statewide Assessments.” Thurlow, [Peterson](#), and [Larson](#) presented, “Using Online Modules to Learn about Accessibility Features and Accommodations.”

ALUMNI UPDATE



Breanne Byiers: Byiers is a researcher at the University of Minnesota’s Department of Educational Psychology. “I was already working in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities when I did the [MNLEND](#) as a post-doctoral student in 2013–14, but it did help me make interdisciplinary connections with people across the University community that have been valuable in my work. I would also say that it gave me a better appreciation for the roles of advocacy and public policy in the lives of people with disabilities, which provided me with a different lens through which to view my work.”

The MNLEND Fellow’s interdisciplinary connections soon spread beyond campus. For example, Byiers is collaborating on a new study with the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. “Frank Symons [Associate Dean for Research and Policy at the University’s College of Education and Human Development] leads that project, and we want to use behavioral, environmental, and biological measures to see if we can identify kids with neurodevelopmental disorders who are at high risk of developing self-injurious behavior, with the goal of preventing these behaviors. I assess how parent-child interactions might impact the risk or resilience of families to self-injurious behavior.”

Byiers also collaborates with the physicians and researchers in the Rett syndrome clinic at Gillette Children’s Specialty Healthcare in St. Paul. Rett syndrome is a rare genetic syndrome associated with the loss of spoken language, hand function, and other ailments that undermine quality of life for the people and families affected by it. Drugs that might help treat some of the symptoms of Rett syndrome are being tested, but it is difficult to measure effectiveness because most people who are affected can’t self-report. To help find effective treatments, Byiers aims to develop reliable, valid ways of measuring change in symptoms, using non-invasive methods that don’t burden the family. Years ago, the MNLEND Fellowship helped Byiers appreciate family advocacy. Now, she and her fellow University researchers on the project have strong ties with the regional parent advocacy group, the Midwest Rett Syndrome Foundation, which plays an important role in driving University research in this area.

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