

**LEADERSHIP EDUCATION IN NEURODEVELOPMENTAL AND  
RELATED DISABILITIES (LA LEND) PROGRAM  
TRAINEE HANDBOOK**



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## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT CENTER AT LSU HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

### Human Development Center

#### Description

The Human Development Center was established in 1974 and became a University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Education, Research and Service (UCEDD) in 1984. The center, which is housed within the School of Allied Health Professions at the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, is an organizational member of the Association for University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), a national network of 67 UCEDD programs.

#### Mission

To provide leadership and innovation in interdisciplinary education, community services, and research, and to disseminate information to strengthen and increase the capacity of local communities to support and include individuals with developmental disabilities and their families in all aspects of community life.

#### Vision

To build capacity and inspire change.

### Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities

#### Program Description

Louisiana Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LA LEND) is an interdisciplinary training program offered by the Human Development Center to graduate students, professionals, self-advocates, and family members who wish to become leaders in their fields and communities. The program is funded under the Autism Collaboration, Accountability, Research, Education, and Support (CARES) Act, and is administered by the Health Resources and Service's Administration's (HRSA) Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). There are more than 50 LEND programs operated within university systems across the United States, all of which share the following objectives<sup>1</sup>:

1. Advance the knowledge and skills of all child health professionals to improve health care delivery systems for children with developmental disabilities.
2. Provide high-quality interdisciplinary education that emphasizes the integration of services from state and local agencies and organizations, private providers, and communities.
3. Provide health professionals with skills that foster community-based partnerships.
4. Promote innovative practices to enhance cultural competency, family-centered care, and interdisciplinary partnerships.

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<sup>1</sup> Association for University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD). <https://www.aucd.org/template/page.cfm?id=473>

## LA LEND Core Faculty & Faculty Mentors

The LA LEND program is predominantly administered by Core Faculty. Core Faculty include the LA LEND Director, the LA LEND Co-Director, the LA LEND coordinator, and any additional faculty having a significant role in the planning, implementation, and/or evaluation of the training program.

Additional faculty include Faculty Mentors. Each trainee is assigned a Faculty Mentor who will provide support and mentorship throughout the program year. The intended role of these Mentors is to help trainees make meaningful connections between what they are learning in LA LEND and their future careers. Trainees should also utilize Mentors as a resource in the development and implementation of projects and other activities. Trainees and Mentors should coordinate an in-person meeting at least once per month. The following items should be used to guide discussion during these meetings:

- What seminars, activities, or assignments were completed since the last trainee-Mentor meeting?
  - Did the trainee identify any major takeaways or implications for practice?
  - Was there anything the trainee did not understand or struggled with?
- Upcoming LEND activities/assignments, especially year-long projects:
  - *Capstone Project*: proposal development, implementation, evaluation
  - *Policy & Advocacy Project*: advocacy topic, fact sheet and elevator speech, speaking with the legislator
  - *Family Mentor Experience*: challenges or concerns, lessons learned

### *Core Faculty for Program Year 2020-2021*

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## Core Maternal and Child Health Leadership Competencies

The Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Leadership Competencies developed by the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau are used as a framework for developing LA LEND training objectives and for the measurement and evaluation of trainee leadership skills.

### The 12 MCH Leadership Competency Areas:

#### SELF

1. MCH Knowledge Base/Context
2. Self-Reflection
3. Ethics
4. Critical Thinking

#### OTHERS

5. Communication
6. Negotiation and Conflict Resolution
7. Cultural Competency
8. Family-Professional Partnerships
9. Developing Others through Teaching, Coaching, and Mentoring
10. Interdisciplinary/Interprofessional Team Building

#### WIDER COMMUNITY

11. Working with Communities and Systems
12. Policy

Further description of the MCH Competencies can be found on the HRSA website.

[Maternal and Child Health Leadership Competencies Version 4.0](#)

### Early Career Professional Self-Assessment

After completion of the LA LEND program, trainees will experience improved competence in the areas listed above. To demonstrate and evaluate these improvements, trainees complete the AUCD Early Career Professional (ECP) Self-Assessment at the start and end of the training program. The ECP can be completed by visiting the following site: <http://www.aucd.org/ecp/satool/>

## Flipped Classroom Approach

LA LEND utilizes a flipped classroom approach, an instructional strategy that provides content (e.g., readings, webinars, assignments) prior to class so that students arrive primed to learn and prepared to engage in the discussion. LA LEND also values interactive and hands-on lesson components that increase trainee learning and engagement.

## Moodle and Assignment Submission

LA LEND utilizes the course management system Moodle to disseminate program information and provide prior-to-seminar materials. Trainees are required to submit all assignments (e.g., reflection papers, presentations) in Moodle. For trainees who are not familiar with this system, more information can be found by visiting the following site: <https://nursing.lsuhsu.edu/helpstudents/moodle.aspx>

## LA LEND Program Components

### Overview

LA LEND includes the following components, which are described in more detail in the sections below:

- Friday seminars (in-person)
- Virtual seminars
- Family Mentor Experience
- Capstone Project
- Policy & Advocacy Project
- Experiential components (i.e., field and clinical activities)
- Pivotal papers

### LA LEND Seminars

Seminars occur on Friday afternoons from 12:30 pm – 4:30 pm approximately every other week. Seminars serve two purposes: 1) Increase knowledge base in topics related to Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and other Neurodevelopmental Disorders (NDD) and 2) Improve leadership and policy/advocacy skills. Topics related to ASD/NDD follow the life course (i.e., prenatal through transition to adulthood) as chronologically as possible. Leadership and policy/advocacy content is delivered intermittently throughout the year.

#### *Virtual Seminars*

Some seminars are offered virtually in lieu of meeting face to face. For these seminars, trainees will utilize Zoom to participate in a video conference within their interdisciplinary cohorts. Core Faculty will provide guidelines for conducting these meetings. To access Zoom or learn more about how to use it, visit the following site: <https://www.lsuhsu.edu/admin/it/helpdesk/zoom/>

## Family Mentor Experience

Each trainee is assigned a Family Mentor at the beginning of the year as part of the Family Mentor Experience (FME). The purpose of FME is to provide trainees the opportunity to witness the “lived experience” of families with children with disabilities. These families mentor their trainees by answering questions about their lives, discussing the challenges and triumphs of being a family of a child with a disability, and providing insight into how clinical recommendations are executed in the real-life home environment. Trainees meet with families a minimum of six times throughout the training year (about once per month) and complete a service learning project at the end of the year. A full explanation of the FME component can be found in the LA LEND FME Manual.

## Year-Long Projects

### *Capstone Project*

The Capstone Project is a year-long project that immerses trainees in an MCH- or disability-related field. Trainees collaborate with their LEND faculty mentor on a project. Trainees work on their project through the end of the training year. A full explanation of the Capstone Project can be found in the LA LEND Capstone Project Handbook.

### *Policy & Advocacy Project*

The Policy & Advocacy Project is year-long project that improves trainees’ understanding of legislative processes and provides the opportunity for trainees to interact with policymakers. The group project is completed within trainees’ assigned interdisciplinary cohorts. Cohorts work together to identify an MCH- or disability-related issue about which they wish to educate a legislator. Cohorts then develop a fact sheet and elevator speech that are presented to a local policymaker near the end of the training year.

## Experiential Components: Field & Clinical Experiences

Trainees also complete a number of field and clinical experiences throughout the training year.

Longstanding experiences are listed below, though the exact opportunities may vary from year to year:

- *Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) observation:* Trainees observe an interdisciplinary NICU team implement family-centered practices.
- *Autism Spectrum Disorders Identification and Diagnosis (ASDID) clinic observation:* Trainees observe the interdisciplinary ASDID clinic team at the Human Development Center as they evaluate a child who is suspected of having autism using the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) protocol.
- *Hearing Loss Genetics Laboratory:* Trainees learn about clinical genetic testing of hearing disorders as staff shows trainees how to isolate DNA from saliva and prepare chromosomes for testing.
- *Legislative Roundtable:* Trainees attend a local disability-related legislative roundtable organized by the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council.

- *Classroom observation:* Trainees travel to a local school to observe a child with ASD in a classroom setting. Trainees evaluate the environment for inclusive practices and make recommendations based on a checklist provided by the Louisiana Autism Spectrum and Related Disabilities (LASARD) Project at HDC.
- *Assistive technology (AT) adventure:* Trainees use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices and mobility aids in the community to better understand the lived experience of people with disabilities.

### Pivotal Papers

The purpose of the Pivotal Papers activity is to introduce trainees to important peer-reviewed research that addresses MCH or disability topics. Each month trainees will be assigned one or more papers to read and discuss online via Moodle. The intention is for trainees to engage in thoughtful discussion of peer-reviewed papers, including what they found surprising or impactful and how it will influence their practice or viewpoint. At minimum, trainees should:

- Read the article(s) provided for each month
- Submit a post on the appropriate Moodle discussion board responding to the prompts provided by Core Faculty no fewer than 7 days prior to the last day of the month
- Respond to at least two posts and/or comments made by other trainees by the last day of the month

### Timeline and Due Dates

The At-A-Glance Calendar is provided to trainees at orientation and contains all known dates and deadlines for the program year. However, there are a small number of events/activities that are not known until nearer to their occurrences (e.g., field and clinical experience opportunities). Trainees should work with Core Faculty to identify these dates and make room in their schedules to complete them to the greatest extent possible.



## Attendance

Trainees are expected to attend all scheduled seminars and activities. In the case of emergencies or other extenuating circumstances, trainees must provide notice as soon as possible prior to absences to receive approval from Core Faculty. Trainees are allowed up to one approved absence before removal from the program.

## Trainee Performance Evaluation

The rating scale outlined below was created for LA LEND Core Faculty and Faculty Mentors to provide trainees ongoing feedback on their performance. Rubrics for written assignments ([Appendix A](#)) and presentations ([Appendix B](#)) can be found at the end of this document.

Score	Level	Description
1	Unsatisfactory	Trainee is performing below expectations in multiple essential areas of responsibility, and significant improvement is needed. The trainee's mentor and/or Core Faculty should work with trainee to outline a plan to correct performance in areas of weakness.
2	Improvement needed	Trainee is performing below expectations in one or two essential areas of responsibility. The trainee's mentor and/or Core Faculty should work with trainee to outline a plan to correct performance in areas of weakness.
3	Satisfactory	Trainee's performance meets expectations in most essential areas of responsibility. The overall quality of work is good.
4	Exceptional/ Exceeds expectations	Trainee's performance exceeds expectations in most or all essential areas of responsibility. The overall quality of work is superior. Trainee is prepared, engaged, and insightful in classes.

## Probation and Remediation Plans

Trainees should maintain at least a 3.0 average score on all LA LEND assignments and presentations. Trainees who fall below this score may be placed on a probationary period and a remediation plan will be developed through collaboration among the trainee, his or her Mentor, and Core Faculty. Stipend payments may be delayed for trainees placed on a probationary period. Additionally, trainees who fail to meet the expectations set forth in the remediation plan in a timely manner may be subject to removal from the program without receipt of stipend payment.

# APPENDIX A: Rubric for Written Assignments

## Performance Rating Scale Scoring Rubric: Written Assignments

TRAINEE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

*Circle the number that best corresponds to trainee’s performance in each essential area of responsibility. The overall average score should be indicated at the below the table. Scoring:*

1 = Not met;

2 = Partially met;

3 = Mostly met;

4 = Completely met or exceeded

Trainee submitted the assignment in a timely manner. [1= 3 or more days late; 2= 2 days late; 3= 1 day late; 4= submitted on time]	1	2	3	4	N/A
Trainee followed assignment instructions, including prompt submission, and included all appropriate components.	1	2	3	4	N/A
Trainee’s writing was clear, concise, and reasonably free of grammatical/formatting errors.	1	2	3	4	N/A
Trainee offered insightful comments or viewpoints that demonstrated that MCH concepts were integrated into his or her viewpoint.	1	2	3	4	N/A

AVERAGE SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments:

## APPENDIX B: Rubric for Presentations

### Performance Rating Scale Scoring Rubric: Presentations

TRAINEE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

*Circle the number that best corresponds to trainee's performance in each essential area of responsibility. The overall average score should be indicated at the below the table. Scoring:*

1 = Not met;

2 = Partially met;

3 = Mostly met;

4 = Completely met or exceeded

Trainee followed assignment instructions and included all appropriate components.	1	2	3	4	N/A
Trainee's presentation materials were clear, concise, and reasonably free of grammatical/formatting errors. Information was delivered in a logical sequence.	1	2	3	4	N/A
Trainee was well-prepared for presentation as evidenced by confidence and mastery of presentation materials and topics.	1	2	3	4	N/A
Trainee offered insightful comments or viewpoints that demonstrated that MCH concepts were integrated into his or her viewpoint.	1	2	3	4	N/A

AVERAGE SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments: