



UCEDD



LEADERSHIP

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University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs) are committed to a world where individuals with disabilities are a part of their communities.

As a UCEDD, the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center provides the expertise and leadership to help make this a reality for Tennessee and our nation.



WHO WE ARE & WHO WE SERVE

The Vanderbilt Kennedy Center UCEDD provides innovative leadership in education, research and discovery, interdisciplinary training, and service to promote the independence, self-determination, community integration, and inclusion of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the lifespan and supports their families by the following principles:

- Strength-based perspective and individualized services and supports;
- Systems improvement; and
- Public/private collaboration.

A developmental disability is a condition that • is significant and ongoing, • begins before age 22, and • substantially limits functioning in daily activities of living.

Examples include autism, intellectual disabilities (e.g., Angelman, Down, fragile X, Prader-Willi, Williams syndromes), and sensory-related disabilities.

WORKING THROUGH NATIONAL NETWORKS

The Vanderbilt Kennedy Center UCEDD is one of 67 centers in a national network. Tennessee is one of only a few states to have two UCEDDs. This network of centers has played key roles in every major national disability change in policies and practices over the past 45 years. UCEDDs work together to provide training, develop model services, conduct research, and disseminate information.

The Vanderbilt Kennedy is among a small number of centers in the nation to be a University Center for Excellence (UCEDD), a national *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Research Center (IDDRC), and a Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) training program. We address autism through the Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders (TRIAD). As part of a major medical center and research university, the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center is in a strong position to provide training, service, research, and information to make lives better for people with disabilities.

WHAT WE DO

Training

Faculty and staff help train university students, practicing professionals and direct care providers, individuals with disabilities and family members, disability advocates and policymakers. Training is varied. It includes classes in degree programs, supervised clinical experiences, continuing education, conferences, workshops, and technical assistance. Training is done in close collaboration with the Vanderbilt Consortium LEND training program.

Service and Technical Assistance

Faculty and staff provide cutting-edge, evidence-based services and supports to address pressing needs of persons with disabilities. We focus on serving people in Tennessee and the Mid-South while creating model



programs for national use. Some Center programs provide diagnosis and intervention for children and adults. Other programs offer information and technical assistance to educators or direct service providers. Programs are done in partnership with Vanderbilt and community and State agencies.

Research

Faculty and staff conduct research that aims to improve disability services and policies, and to identify causes of disabilities and novel ways to intervene and provide support for persons with disabilities and their families. We partner with our Community Advisory Council, State and community agencies, and families to identify pressing but under-studied topics. We also use existing large databases to identify research and policy issues.

Information and Dissemination

We share what we learn through research and model programs so that others can use this information. We produce brochures, booklets, videos, and web-based materials. We provide accessible information to persons with disabilities, families, trainees, professionals, direct service providers, advocates, and policy makers.

AREAS WE EMPHASIZE

Although the UCEDD addresses many issues affecting the lives of people with disabilities across the life span, we emphasize four areas.



Education and Early Education

We have innovative programs to promote learning and development in inclusive settings. Other programs focus on supporting persons and families at transition points across the life span. Model programs include:

- Britt Henderson Training Series for Educators
- Learning Assessment Clinic
- Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders—TRIAD Professional Development and Parent Training
- Vanderbilt Consortium LEND
- VKC Reading Clinics
- Volunteer Advocacy Project

Employment

Individuals with disabilities have high rates of unemployment and underemployment. We collaborate with State agencies, community agencies, disability advocacy organizations, and natural partners to promote community-based meaningful employment and volunteer work for youth and adults with disabilities.

Programs and activities include:

- Next Steps at Vanderbilt, a 4-year postsecondary education certificate program
- Next Steps at Vanderbilt Summer Institute
- Project ASSIST
- Tennessee Inclusive Higher Education Alliance
- TennesseeWorks
- Transition Tennessee

Health and Mental Health

Many people with developmental disabilities face physical and mental health challenges. The Center sponsors or partners with clinics and other programs to address these challenges. Model programs include:

- ACM Lifting Lives Music Camp, a week-long residential camp for persons with Williams syndrome
- Genetics Clinics and Research Programs
- Health Care for Adults with IDD Toolkit
- Rett Syndrome Program
- SENSE Theatre for children with autism
- Vanderbilt Center of Excellence for Children in State Custody

Quality of Life

Persons with disabilities and families do not need to face challenges alone. We provide model services to families, including those from culturally diverse groups, and from low-income or rural areas. We provide training and share these practices by involving college students and practicing professionals. Model programs include:

- Arts Program
- Disabilities, Religion and Spirituality
- Tennessee Disability Pathfinder (partnership with State of Tennessee agencies)
- Tennessee Kindred Stories of Disability
- Vanderbilt Autism Resource Line and TN Cares Network
- Vanderbilt Autism Treatment Network (ATN)
- VKC Community Engagement



COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Our programs are strengthened by the leadership of a Community Advisory Council. It is a full partner in planning, implementing, and evaluating activities across the Center. The chair and a majority of the members are self-advocates or family members. Representatives of Tennessee disability organizations also serve on the Council. You can directly share your interests and concerns by emailing UCEDD@vumc.org.

TENNESSEE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES NETWORK

The UCEDD works in partnership with the University of Tennessee Center on Developmental Disabilities UCEDD and LEND, Disability Rights Tennessee, and the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities. Together, we work to promote the goals of the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act). Visit TennDDNetwork.org.

