

*NIDRR Projects*

## Research in the New Millennium

**Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Aging with Developmental Disabilities**, *University of Illinois at Chicago* (H133B031134) led by Tamar Heller, PhD, Margaret Campbell, PhD, Project Officer.

Abstract: The mission of the RRTC is to have a sustained beneficial impact on the health and community inclusion of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) as they age through a coordinated set of research, training, and dissemination activities.

Major goals are: (1) improving health and function of adults with I/DD, (2) enhancing caregiving supports and transition planning among older caregivers and other family members, and (3) promoting aging and disability friendly environments that enable adults with I/DD to participate in community life.

Find out more at: <http://www.uic.edu/orgs/rrtcamr>

### The Impact of Interventions on Self-Determination and Adult

**Outcomes**, *University of Kansas*

(H133A031727) led by Michael Wehmeyer, PhD (University of Kansas) and Laurie Powers, PhD (Oregon Health Sciences University). Shelley Reeves, Project Officer.

Abstract: This project conducts three semi-longitudinal, national studies examining the impact of interventions to promote the self-determination of students with high incidence and low incidence disabilities, and students who are at-risk for poor adult outcomes on student self-determination, adult outcomes, and quality of life. In all three studies, participants receive instruction for several years (with annual measurements) and adult outcomes are measured during the next two years, post-high school. The first study focuses on students with learning disabilities, mild intellectual disabilities, and emotional/behavioral disorders. The second study focuses on students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities, and severe autism. The third study focuses on students with disabilities from foster systems or juvenile justice system.

Find out more at: <http://www.beachcenter.org>

### Mental Retardation and Technology Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project

*University of Kansas* (H133A010602) led by Michael Wehmeyer, PhD, Richard E. Wilson II, EdD, Project Officer.

Abstract: This project increases the ability of people with mental retardation and other cognitive disabilities to use electronic and information technology as well as assistive and universally designed technologies. It examines current technology design features, gaps that exist in its utilization, what state-of-the-art technology exists or is emerging that would provide benefits, and what modifications to existing or new technology would enhance this



population's inclusion in the community and integration into the workplace. The project also includes a Special Interest Group on Technology and Mental Retardation through the AAMR, which allows stakeholders in the field the opportunity to participate in all project activities.

Find out more at: <http://www.beachcenter.org>

**Research and Training Center on Community Living (RTC/CL)**, *University of Minnesota* (H133B031116) led by Charlie Lakin, PhD, Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH, Project Officer.

Abstract: The Center conducts research, training, technical assistance, and dissemination to enhance inclusion and self-determination of citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The research program has six outcome areas: policy studies, database supports for full participation, self-determination and consumer-control, workforce development, and quality assessment and improvement systems. The research program within the priority areas includes: (1) research syntheses of the state of knowledge and

practice; (2) secondary analyses of high quality, topically relevant national and state data sets; (3) case studies of best practices; (4) evaluation of demonstration efforts to improve policy and practice; (5) survey and interview studies of critical issues; and (6) group process studies with key constituencies.

Find out more at: <http://rtc.umn.edu>

### Secondary Analyses of Persons with Disabilities in the 1994-1995 Disability Supplement to the National Health Interview Survey and in 1999

**and 2000 NHIS Surveys**, *University of Minnesota* (H133G020037) led by Sheryl Larson, PhD and Charlie Lakin, PhD. David W. Keer, Project Officer.

Abstract: This project conducts and disseminates the results of focused secondary analyses of data on persons with developmental and other disabilities within the 1994-1995 Disability Supplement to the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS-D) and within 1999 and 2000 NHIS surveys. The analyses build on earlier research using the NHIS-D in which operational definitions for mental retardation, developmental disabilities, and functional limitations were developed and used for estimating prevalence, demographics, and service use of persons with MR and/or DD. Data analysis topics include: (1) demographic, functional, and health characteristics; (2) in-home services and supports; (3) access to health care; (4) services, devices, and technology; (5) households with parents who have disabilities; and (6) social roles and experiences of adults. In each of these areas, four disability groups are examined: those with mental retardation only, those with developmental disabilities only, those with mental retardation and developmental disabilities, and those with substantial functional limitations but not mental retardation or developmental disabilities. Of particular interest is the comparison between working-age adults with developmental disabilities and those with three or more functional limitations whose disabilities first occurred in adulthood.

Find out more at: <http://rtc.umn.edu/nhis>

RehabWire for June highlights research and reports focusing on developmental disabilities. The change in terminology from mental retardation to developmental disability reflects the shift of focus from impairment to life needs.

## Muscle Strength, Physical Work Capacity and Functional Performance in Individuals with Down Syndrome, Syracuse University (H133G030150)

led by Bo Fernhall, PhD. Kristi E. Wilson, PhD, Project Officer.

Abstract: This project evaluates the minimal muscle strength and endurance thresholds required for daily functional performance, such as rising from a chair, ascending or descending stairs, the ability to walk fast enough to cross a street in the time allotted at signaled intersections, and general walk/run performance. The project also evaluates the effect of resistance training on the ability to perform these daily tasks and on quality of life in individuals with Down syndrome.

### New Research

## Selections from REHABDATA

Ardoin, S. P., Martens, B. K., Wolfe, L. A., Hilt, A. M., Rosenthal, B. D. (2004) **A method for conditioning reinforcer preferences in students with moderate mental retardation.** *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, 16(1), 33-51. NARIC Accession Number: J47070.

Abstract: Study conducted two experiments to examine ways to condition reinforcer preferences in children with mild or moderate mental retardation. The use of preferred stimuli that are likely to function as reinforcers are critical to the effectiveness of positive behavioral interventions. Experiment 1 examined the accuracy of pictorial choice preference assessments (PCPAs) for identifying reinforcers. Results showed that the PCPA accurately predicted only one of the 3 students' task choices. Experiment 2 results suggested that pairing low preferred items with students' choices of multiple, highly preferred items may be an effective means of establishing low preferred items as conditioned reinforcers.

Baker, B. L., Brightman, A. J., Blacher, J. B., Heifetz, L. J., Hinshaw, S. P. Murphy, D. M. (2004) **Steps to independence: Teaching everyday skills to children with special needs.** NARIC Accession Number: R08407.

Abstract: Handbook provides strategies for teaching independent living skills to children with developmental disabilities. Step-by-step guidance is presented for parents to teach seven types of skills: (1) get-ready, (2) self-help, (3) toilet training, (4) play, (5) self-care, (6) home care, and (7) functional academic. Includes information to help manage challenging behavior; strengthen partnerships with the child's teachers; and use technology, such as email, Internet communities, search engines, and software, as a source of information and support.

Bruey, C. T. (2004) **Topics in autism: Demystifying autism spectrum disorders: A guide to diagnosis for parents and professionals.** NARIC Accession Number: R08440.

Abstract: Presents information to help parents and professionals in the field of autism spectrum disorders to better understand their child's diagnosis. Book describes the five developmental disorders within the spectrum, spells out the distinctions among them, defines the technical jargon, and provides an overview of treatment. It includes lists of resources and recommended reading.

Davies, D. K., Stock, S. E., Wehmeyer, M. L. (2004) **Computer-mediated, self-directed computer training and skill assessment for individuals with mental retardation.** *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, 16(1), 95-105. NARIC Accession Number: J47072.

Abstract: Article describes the testing of a computer software system designed for self-paced, self-directed computer skills training for people with mental retardation. The prototype included use of computer-generated audio prompting and graphics to guide the user through a series of introductory computer use tasks such as mouse operation and data entry. Study participants were able to use the software to increase their independence, speed, and accuracy in learning basic computer use skills.

Grasso, E., Jitendra, A. K., Browder, D. M., Harp, T. (2004) **Effects of ecological and standardized vocational assessments on office of vocational rehabilitation counselors' perceptions regarding individuals with developmental disabilities.** *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, 16(1), 17-31. NARIC Accession Number: J47069.

Abstract: Article reports findings regarding vocational rehabilitation counselors' perceptions of either an ecological or a standardized assessment of individuals with developmental disabilities. Each group (ecological or standardized) responded to three items on a questionnaire regarding job coach funding approval, time required for training, and employment outcome for the individual with disabilities. No significant differences were found between groups with respect to job coach funding decisions. Counselors in the ecological assessment group perceived the individual with disabilities to need less training time, and to be more likely to remain on the job after job coaching was terminated than those in the standardized group.

Hayden, M. F., Lakin, K. C., Smith, J. (2004) **We watch the city: Stories in the shadow of 9/11.** NARIC Accession Number: O15261

Abstract: Reports the experiences of New Yorkers with intellectual and other developmental disabilities before, during, and in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center. An appendix provides general information and resources related to emergency preparedness.

Volkmar, F. R., Wiesner, L. A. (2004) **Topics in autism: Healthcare for children on the autism spectrum: A guide to medical, nutritional, and behavioral issues.** NARIC Accession Number: R08395.

Abstract: Offers parents and healthcare providers advice on managing a wide range of medical, nutritional, and behavioral concerns regarding children with autism spectrum disorders. Book covers the following topics: handling doctor and hospital visits; growth and nutrition; safety issues at home, school, and in the community; seizures; dental care, sensory issues, medications and behavior; adolescence and sexuality; developmental deterioration; diagnosis; sleep; and complementary and alternative treatments.

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### Defining Disability

## The REHABDATA Thesaurus

**Developmental disabilities:** Includes disabilities which are manifested before age 22 and which constitute a substantial limitation to the individual.

**Narrow terms:** Autism, cerebral palsy, child development, epilepsy, learning disabilities, mental retardation

**Related terms:** Multiple disabilities, severe disabilities