

DADD Express

Volume 30, Number 1 • Winter 2019



A publication of the DIVISION ON AUTISM AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, a unit of the Council for Exceptional Children

Focusing on individuals with autism, intellectual disability, and related disabilities

Teachers' Corner

Everything YOU Need and Want to Know but Were Afraid to Ask



Iris Kerbis Cantor
Retired Special Education Teacher

Dagny Fidler, Ph.D.
Morningside College

Catherine Brown, M.Ed., BCBA
*Director of Behavior Services,
Beacon Day School*



Not pictured:

Mark C. Francis, Ph.D.
Francis-Young International-Consultants

Karren Streagle, Ph.D.
Idaho State Department of Education

Paula Bodzioch
Marklund Day School, Bloomington, IL

Jennifer Naddeo, Ph.D.
Director of Special Education, Schaumburg SD #54

This session was one of three such sessions at the 18th annual DADD conference designed for teachers to address questions and issues in the field. It was an open forum for teachers to discuss the many challenges and demands facing them in today's educational climate. This was an administrative panel that looked at issues participants brought to the discussion. The focus was on discussion guided by the participants around key challenges and possible solutions that the participants brought to the session, and it was provided in a safe and confidential environment. Following is a summary of the session.

Working with Para-educators

Discussion centered on several issues in this area. Teachers in self-contained settings and in general education often work with para-educators. This can lead to teachers feeling more like managers than educators. Difficulties can arise when para-educators work with several different teachers as students move from classroom to classroom, so communication is key, and clear expectations are needed. Usually, this means standard expectations should be created for the role and responsibilities of para-educators in the school. One suggestion was to develop a

team approach by ensuring that teachers are willing to do all of the tasks they give to the para-educators. Building a relationship of trust and open communication improves the quality of the working environment and services for students. It is also important that each teacher is clear regarding each day's expectations, since lessons and activities will vary. As students are told what will be happening, teachers can explain what they want para-educators to do to help support student learning.

Participants also discussed the importance of having administrators understand the complexities of supervising para-educators in order to provide support to the teachers who are working with them. Additionally, pre-service courses need to address the issues teachers may face, such as supervising people who are older and have more years of experience. These supports may make working with para-educators easier for teachers.

Resource

Gerlach, K. (2014). *Let's team up! A checklist for teachers, paraeducators & principals*. Port Chester, NY: National Professional Resources, Inc.

<https://www.amazon.com/Lets-Checklist-Teachers-Paraeducators-Principals/dp/1935609947>

Note: This book is a good resource for working on clear expectations for para-educators.

Student Behavior

Student behaviors often impact the educational process. Understanding power struggles is important to understanding and dealing with inappropriate behaviors in class. One participant shared the phrase "behaviors are messages." Students use behavior to communicate, and they need to have more effective ways to communicate what they want and how they feel. Participants shared that it is important to emphasize the need for consistency when implementing behavior management strategies. Schools need to have appropriate professional development in this area to help teachers develop greater skills in dealing with more complex behaviors.

Resource

Dealing with Power Struggles

<https://positiveparenting.com/dealing-with-power-struggles/>
<https://positiveparenting.com/understanding-power-struggles/>

Dealing with Difficult Parents

This is an area where everyone agreed that relationships are key. It is important for teachers to be able to link parents with other school resources and community services. The group

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President's Message

Michael Wehmeyer



A somewhat belated Happy 2019 to DADD members! The dictates of print and production deadlines has me writing this message to you in early December, but by the time you read this, we will have already gathered in Maui to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the DADD International Conference on Autism, Intellectual Disability, and Developmental Disabilities and will have met in Indianapolis for the 2019 CEC Special Education Convention and Expo. It doesn't take a crystal ball for me to predict that those of you who were in attendance at these events left feeling energized, excited, and informed... and in at least one case, suntanned! If you missed the DADD annual conference this year, look for us in our usual slot in Florida the week of the MLK holiday. This year we're moving down the coast a bit to sunny Sarasota. We hope you'll join us then. Stay tuned for more information.

This first-of-the-year edition of the *DADD Express* provides the new President (yours truly) a chance to thank the division leaders. Elizabeth West completed her term as immediate Past President. During her tenure as an officer, the division initiated important actions to update our bylaws and to redouble our commitment to creating equitable educational systems, practices, and outcomes. That work was continued by Jordan Shurr during his term as President. One of the innovations that Jordan initiated was to hold a mid-year "mini-conference." This allows DADD to reach members (and potential members) outside the context of the annual conference or the CEC meeting. Our first mini-conference was held in Arlington, Texas, last summer on the campus of the University of Texas at Arlington, and with the support of our excellent Executive Director, Teresa Taber-Doughty, was an unqualified success. Look for news on the 2019 mini-conference to be held this summer. Jordan will continue to contribute to the division's mission in his role of immediate Past President.

Ginevra Courtade served ably as Vice President, and has assumed the role of President-elect. Ginevra will be the

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discussed the need for teachers to have a support system when dealing with parents and others. Additionally, administrators need to be sensitive when developing class lists, ensuring that new teachers are not given students whose parents are known to be difficult in their demands. Teachers also need to recognize that parents bring their past experiences with education with them when they deal with schools, and some of their experiences may have been very negative. Their perspectives need to be respected and addressed by showing them that things are different now.

Resource

Patterson, K., Grenny, J., McMillan, R., & Switzler, A. (2012). *Crucial conversations: Tools for talking when stakes are high*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

https://www.amazon.com/Crucial-Conversations-Talking-Stakes-Second/dp/0071771328/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1542142345&sr=8-1&keywords=crucial+conversation

Other Topics

The group also mentioned a few issues that we did not discuss in depth given our time limitations. They included:

- The need to find quality teachers, programs for new teachers to observe, and experienced mentors to provide guidance;

- How to find quality, cooperating teachers for student teaching experiences;
- Training for general education teachers in working with para-educators and regarding the needs of special education students;
- Social integration; and
- How to navigate disconnects or miscommunications with administrators.

Participants at this session included professors, consultants, supervisors and other administrators, but did not include current classroom teachers. Since the purpose was to address the needs of teachers, we wanted to make our notes available to members with the hope that you, as a teacher member, would find the information helpful. We are hopeful that in the future teachers will be able to attend the conference and a session such as this to share concerns and ideas, and to help other participants find solutions for their own situations.

This session was an opportunity to examine important topics from differing perspectives, and the experience of the panel members and participants brought a richness to the discussion. The panel members hope that this will be the first of many such panel presentations at future DADD conferences. ■



Legal Brief Gender and Disability



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Disability rights activists are aligning with LGBTQIA+ advocates to voice concerns about recent “bathroom bills” aiming to allow people to only use facilities consistent with their biological sex. The reality is these bills will affect the transgender community and they will also affect students and adults with disabilities because they do not accommodate for people who need assistance using restrooms. Sam Crane, legal director and director of public policy for Autistic Self Advocacy Network, claims that “many people with disabilities—including significant physical or developmental disabilities—are unable to use public bathrooms safely without assistance. Often, a person’s assistant will be someone of a different gender” (Walters, 2017). Individuals with disabilities who require assistance in restrooms are faced with a choice: use the bathroom aligning with their physical anatomy and potentially expose their assistants to fines or criminal penalties, or use the bathroom consistent with their assistants’ physical anatomy and incur fines or penalties themselves. Furthermore, “this law is problematic for people with disabilities not just because they might need assistance in the bathroom, but because people with disabilities are lots of other things,” says Corye Dunn, director of public policy for Disability Rights North Carolina. “They’re men, and they’re women, and they’re trans folks, and agendered people and visibly gender nonconforming people” (Sager, 2017).

Relevant Cases

The highest-profile restroom case to date is Virginia’s *G.G. v. Gloucester County School Board* (American Civil Liberties Union, 2017). Gavin Grimm, a transgender student, received permission from his high school principal to use the boys’ restroom. Several parents complained, leading to the school board mandating that multi-stall bathroom use correspond with biological sex or that students use single-stall restrooms. Grimm fought this ruling, going all the way to the United States Supreme Court (SCOTUS). In February 2017, SCOTUS referred the case back to the 4th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals. In May 2018, the court ruled in favor of Grimm, stating he had suffered from sex discrimination and the bathroom policy resulted

in sex stereotyping. The ruling stated, “There were many other ways to protect privacy interests in a nondiscriminatory and more effective manner than barring Mr. Grimm from using the boys’ restrooms. The Board’s argument that the policy did not discriminate against any one class of students is resoundingly unpersuasive” (Stevens, 2018).

Federal Law

In May 2016, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) and Department of Justice re-interpreted Title IX, the law that prohibits sex discrimination in education, and declared every K–12 school district, state education association, and high school athletic association “must not treat a transgender student differently from the way it treats other students of the same gender identity” (Underwood, 2017). To be compliant, schools were required to allow for school bathrooms and locker rooms to match students’ gender identities, even if their identity was not congruent with their physical anatomy, and participation in sports matching their gender identity. In February 2017, the DOE withdrew support for the 2016 Title IX ordinance (The Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights, 2018). In February 2018, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos stated the DOE will no longer review complaints or take action on discrimination cases and that Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, not gender identity (The Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights, 2018). Any harassment, bullying, or punishment of transgender or gender-nonconforming students would still fall under federal jurisdiction but access to facilities would not: “Where students, including transgender students, are penalized or harassed for failing to conform to sex-based stereotypes, that is sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX . . . In the case of bathrooms, however, long-standing regulations provide that separating facilities on the basis of sex is not a form of discrimination prohibited by Title IX” (Turner & Kamenetz, 2018). This legislation makes it illegal for anyone, even children as young as eight years old, to enter a bathroom with a sign not matching their physical anatomy.

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Executive Director's Corner

Teresa Taber Doughty



One of my favorite activities is to pour a big cup of coffee while I watch *CBS Sunday Morning* each weekend. It gives me a quick run-down of the national news in the first five minutes and then spends the rest of the program focusing on human interest stories. It's a terrific way to begin my week and usually leaves me thoughtful (or at least smiling).

In February 2018, CBS reporter Lee Cowan shared the story about companies that were hiring talented workers with autism, and it featured companies such as SAP (cybersecurity) and Microsoft. These companies and others are examining targeted hiring of employees with autism. A unique feature of their hiring strategy is focused on how potential employees are interviewed. Rather than a series of fast-paced individual interviews, applicants are vetted through weeks-long activities that focus less on social skills and more on critical and creative thinking. When hired, these new employees, who earn competitive salaries and benefits, are supported through a network of workplace opportunities to ensure long-term success and retention. These opportunities include employee mentoring and social networking, along with individualized supports as needed. What companies have discovered is that individuals with ASD are just as skilled and able to benefit a company as any other employee.

This story got me thinking about how we as professionals, parents, and others are facilitating the successful transition of individuals with ASD who may not be served in special education where transition planning is required by law. How are we helping to identify and support PreK–12 students with ASD as they transition to college and then to employment? What are we missing after more than 20 years of mandated transition planning?

A recent conversation with a colleague emphasized the urgency in which services are needed for many struggling college students on the spectrum. She noted that some students with autism on our campus—both those who have and have not sought supports from our Office for Students with Disabilities—have a very difficult time in developing social supports, advocating for themselves with their professors, making friends, and negotiating the complexities involved in being a college student. They frequently report experiencing anxiety, depression, high rates of OCD, and a lack of friends among their challenges. These have a direct impact on their college retention and ultimate success. A quick look at research reveals that nationwide, only 20% of college students with ASD complete college (HEATH Resource Center at the National Youth Transitions Center, n.d.). This likely includes the success rate of college students on my own campus and may result in considerable economic and personal costs in terms of future earnings and adult autonomy (Wei, Wagner, Hudson, Yu, & Javitz, 2016).

So, what can we do now for students with autism who are transitioning to college and do not receive special education

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State Law

There are a wide range of transgender rights in the U.S. The three largest school districts in the country have inclusive gender procedures in place. Los Angeles affirms that students' gender identity and expression are on a need-to-know basis; New York City's policy states students should be addressed by the name and pronoun that corresponds to their gender identity; and Chicago's policy calls for schools to organize a support team that consists of administration and guardians to address each individual and their needs (Kamenetz & Turner, 2017). The majority of the country doesn't have equivalent policies. Many transgender students report being disciplined for using the "wrong" restroom and being isolated or excluded from school activities or trips, as well as school communities' refusal to acknowledge preferred identities, names, and/or pronouns (Demissie, Raspberry, Steiner, Brener, & McManus, 2018).

Resources

Disability and LGBTQIA+ communities already face barriers due to a lack of public understanding, support, and acceptance, and an increased shortage of access to public restrooms will only exacerbate risks for violence, bullying, or harassment. While there is much work to be done and a lack of protection and understanding related to supports individuals with disabilities may need and ways in which identities intersect, being aware and staying current on information is important. We recommend visiting GLSEN, an advocacy group, to track information related to state legislation (<https://www.glsen.org/article/state-maps>). The Transgender Law Center provides resources for youth who are trans and their allies (<https://transgenderlawcenter.org/resources/youth>). It is also important to have an understanding of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the rights of individuals with disabilities that fall under public accommodations (<https://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm#anchor62335>).

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program head for the 2019 DADD conference in Sarasota, so you'll be hearing a lot from her! Gardner Umbarger completed another year as Treasurer, helping us steer the ship toward financial responsibility and fiscal solvency. Meaghan McCollow may be the most efficient Secretary in the history of non-profit organizations! Kimberly Maich brings energy and expertise to the Board in her role as Canadian Representative; Leah Wood and Nikki Murdick were important contributors in their roles as At-Large Members. In addition, Leah served as the Membership Chair and Nikki as Diversity Chair. Autumn Eyre brought enthusiasm and important perspectives to the board in her role as Student Representative. Emily Bouck's role as Communication Chair includes overseeing the publication of *DADD Express* (and thanks to Chris Denning for taking on the role of the *DADD Express* Editor) and all Division web activities. Emily also serves as the Critical Issues Committee Chair. Cindy Perras is our Conference Coordinator extraordinaire! And, a DADD stalwart, Stan Zucker, keeps ETADD, our flagship journal, timely and of high quality.

This year, we have also welcomed new leaders, whose terms began January 1 of this year. Rob Pennington has assumed the role of Vice President, Angi Stone-MacDonald as Secretary, Cary Trump as Student Representative, and Elizabeth Harkins as an At-Large Member. We look forward to working with these

colleagues. My thanks to one and all for all of the time, effort, and expertise they bring to the benefit of DADD.

In the coming year, the board will continue to consider ways we can ensure that the division is financially viable and brings value to its members. We have streamlined board responsibilities (notice that many board members now serve more than one role), invested in improved communications systems, and launched new initiatives (see "mini-conference" above). Members receive not only ETADD (including the online journal providing articles summarizing information presented at the DADD conferences), but also *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*. The division publishes research-to-practice resources to support educators in their roles. Look for new publications this year on embedded instruction and alternatives to guardianship, as well as a completely revised and reformatted publication of the DADD research-based practices volume (or, in this version, volumes!). Our newsletter provides information on evidence-based practices and teachers' perspectives as well. Did you ever notice that the first page of *DADD Express* always has the Teachers' Corner feature? Our conferences offer stakeholders in the areas of autism and developmental disabilities with timely, high-quality presentations that inform and motivate.

We look forward to working with you to make DADD your division. I hope you have a great 2019! ■

Students' Corner



Autumn Eyre
University of Washington



Cary E. Trump
University of Georgia

Meet an amazing doctoral candidate and person: Cary Trump. On January 1, 2019, Cary began her term as the new Student Representative for DADD. Cary is a doctoral candidate at the University of Georgia and received her master of arts in education at East Carolina University. Prior to beginning the doctoral program at UGA, Cary taught as a special education teacher in North Carolina for four years and worked at the Carolina Center for Applied Behavior Analysis for a year while completing coursework to become a Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

Not only is Cary an outstanding scholar, but she is also an incredible person. I witnessed this firsthand at a conference when I fell ill. Despite barely knowing me at the time, she helped me until the end of the conference, checking in on me and just being there when I needed someone to talk to or text. I know that she will be an outstanding Student Representative because of her outgoing, friendly, and compassionate nature. I interviewed Cary as a part of the transition to her role as Student Representative. Here is what she had to say.

Autumn Eyre

Q: Cary, help us get to know you a little better beyond your vita. What are three things you can tell us about yourself—interest, hobbies, weird facts?

Like most graduate students, I currently have pretty limited free time, but if I do find extra time, I enjoy playing all kinds of board games with friends. I am also a huge fan of crossword puzzles, and most nights I fall asleep trying to figure out the answer to 11 down intersecting with 23 across. However, one of my favorite things in the whole world is to play fetch with my pup, Sir Walden III.

Q: Why have you chosen a career in special education?

My mom just retired from a career as a special education teacher, and because of her (and my dad) I have learned the definition of equity and how to use the privilege of having a powerful voice. I am a staunch believer that high quality education is a right to which all people are entitled, regardless of income, race, nationality, or any other circumstances. I chose this field to advocate for, and with, our most vulnerable populations. Thanks, Mom and Dad!

Q: What are your research interests, in a nutshell?

As a former teacher, I know there are many reasons research sometimes does not translate to practice. Therefore, I am interested in researching variables that might impact interventions that are proven to be effective in tightly controlled experiments, and variables that might increase intervention durability when they are challenged. For example, what happens if a teacher does not follow all steps in the intervention? Does this change in procedural fidelity affect the student's behavior?

Q: Why did you apply to be the new Student Representative of DADD?

First, I have witnessed the vital role former student representatives have played in encouraging student involvement, and with our current political climate, there has never been a better time to promote active student participation. Second, I am interested in amplifying student voices, including minority voices, that often go unheard. As an openly gay, gender-nonconforming student, I am keenly aware of discrimination facing some of our student members, and I am prepared to advocate with them, and on their behalf, to ensure everyone is heard. Third, while I know the role of Student Representative is a leadership position, I also view it as a chance to acquire additional leadership skills as well as fine tune and practice my current skills. Due to my interest in future leadership positions within DADD, as well as CEC, I believe the DADD Student Representative position will provide me with the privilege of receiving guidance and mentorship from other leaders within our field. ■

Prism Series Overview

The Board of Directors of the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities of the Council for Exceptional Children are pleased to announce that the 11th volume in the **Prism** series is now available for purchase through the CEC bookstore (<http://pubs.cec.sped.org/p6296/>).

This 11th volume in the Prism series, titled *Transition to Adulthood: Work, Community, and Educational Success*, is co-edited by L. Lynn Stansberry Brusnahan, Robert A. Stodden, and Stanley H. Zucker. This latest release in the DADD **Prism** series provides a blueprint for supporting youth with autism and intellectual and other developmental disabilities in achieving their postsecondary goals in a variety of adult settings—education and training, employment, and the community.

With eight chapters written by 20 authors, *Transition to Adulthood* covers a wide range of topics, from assessing students' interests and abilities to fine-tuning their education plans and goals, ensuring that students with autism and intellectual and other developmental disabilities are included in a variety of settings, and building community relationships to ensure their continuing inclusion. It provides a valuable resource for transi-

tion personnel, special and general educators, and special education administrators at the school and state levels, as well as adult service professionals.

The **Prism** series is intended to provide practical and issues-oriented information related to serving children and youth with autism, intellectual disability, and related developmental disabilities. In addition to Prism 11, look for Prism 10, *Differentiating Instruction in the Inclusive Classroom: Strategies for Success*, co-authored by Barbara Gartin, Nikki Murdick, Darlene Perner, and Marcia Imbeau; Prism 9, *Footsteps Toward the Future: Implementing a Real-World Curriculum*, co-authored by Emily Bouck, Teresa Taber-Doughty, and Melissa Savage; Prism 8, *Friendship 101: Helping Students Build Social Competence*, edited by Juliet Hart Barnett and Kelly J. Whelan; and Prism 7, *A Guide to Teaching Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders*, edited by Darlene E. Perner and Monica E. Delano, all of which are available from CEC at <http://pubs.cec.sped.org/p6198/>.

Also look for the DADD books on *Social Skills for Students with Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, authored by Laurence Sargent, Darlene Perner, Mark Fesgen, and Toni Cook, and available in both elementary and secondary versions.



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services, including transition planning? How might we increase awareness and educate parents, school guidance counselors, college recruiters, and others about the post-school needs of adults with ASD to ensure that preparation and resources are provided? We know that these adults are highly capable of success, and some models are emerging from numerous college campuses where they are implementing strategies to ensure that success. In college, these strategies include academic and social supports along with targeted coaching (e.g., time management, social and organizational skills, self-advocacy/self-determination) and physical supports such as private study rooms. More secondary and post-secondary programs focusing on these skills are certainly warranted.

For individuals with ASD who do graduate from college, their next challenge occurs when seeking and maintaining employment. While companies like SAP, Microsoft, JP Morgan Chase, Ford Motor, and others are implementing strategies to ensure employment success for employees with autism, studies continue to reveal high unemployment rates among these college-educated adults (21%). I don't have the immediate

solution to this issue other than that we need to include individuals with autism in the process. Whether or not they are served via special education, we need to ensure that they are involved in transition planning and that school to post-school preparation occurs. We need to educate our colleagues about the breadth and depth of services we might provide to facilitate the school–post-school–employment pathway. This would be a start to ensuring that individuals who are skilled and highly employable are actually employed and able to thrive in their chosen careers. ■

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DADD Changes in 2019 and 2020

As DADD moves into 2019, we are excited to share some changes coming to the Division. For one, in late 2018 the DADD Board of Directors selected four individuals to assume appointed positions on the DADD Board effective January 1, 2020. Each of these individuals will begin a mentoring program in February 2019 with the person currently in each respective position.

The DADD Board of Directors is excited to announce that it has appointed the following individuals to the indicated positions:

- Communications Chair: Bree Jimenez
- Publications Chair: James Thompson
- Treasurer: Lynn Stansberry Brusnahan
- Executive Director: Emily Bouck

The Board thanks all the appointees for accepting these positions; the applicant pool was strong and Board members are excited to begin working with the new people in January 2020. The Board would also like to thank the individuals who have previously served in these roles and who will complete their terms in these positions at the end of December 2019:

- Communications Chair: Emily Bouck
- Publications Chair: Michael Wehmeyer
- Treasurer: Gardner Umbarger
- Executive Director: Teresa Taber Doughty

In other news, DADD is excited to announce it is working on getting a new website up and running. We hope this website will be more modern as well as more accessible to members, including via mobile devices. The new address is <http://www.daddcec.com/>. DADD will continue to utilize both websites until all relevant content is available on the new site. ■



Editor's Note:

Interested in writing for *DADD Express* or serving as a reviewer? We are soliciting articles for Teachers' Corner and for our Evidence-based Practices and Legal Briefs sections. If you would like to contribute, please contact me with ideas or questions (christopher.denning@umb.edu).

Save the Date for Sunny Sarasota, Florida!

CEC-DADD's 21st International Conference on
Autism, Intellectual Disability, and Developmental Disabilities

January 22–24, 2020



Soak up the sun along white-sand beaches. Treat yourself to diverse dining, enriching arts and culture, shopping districts of all sorts, and natural Florida fun.

For further information, please contact:

Cindy Perras, Conference Co-ordinator (cindy.perras@gmail.com)