

THE BURKHART CENTER FOR AUTISM EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

STRATEGIC PLAN 2007

MISSION STATEMENT

The Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research provides, studies, and disseminates research-based programming and services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) from early childhood through adulthood, their families, and the professionals who serve them with an emphasis on transitioning individuals with autism spectrum disorders from secondary school to adulthood success.

VISION STATEMENT

The Burkhart Center strives to be the Autism Spectrum Disorder Center of choice for families, professionals, and support networks in West Texas.

VALUES

The Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research identifies the following values:

1. Individuals with autism spectrum disorders deserve respect and acknowledgement of their unique abilities and contributions to the world.
2. Individuals with autism spectrum disorders have specific strengths that represent quality avenues for instruction and learning.
3. Adults with autism spectrum disorders continue to require learning experiences including life skills training, vocational training, or support in postsecondary or university settings in order to facilitate a high quality of life.

4. Individuals with autism spectrum disorders, their families, current university students, and professionals benefit from learning to use research-based interventions and materials and require increased opportunities to obtain information not currently available to them..
5. Products, programs, lectures, networks, and research of the Center should reflect research-based practices that have practical applications for individuals with autism spectrum disorders, their families, current university students, and professionals.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Access and Diversity- Goal One: Access and Diversity-To improve access to research-based, best practice interventions and techniques for educating and living with individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Objective 1.1: To provide families with easily accessible, research-based information and techniques.

Objective 1.2: To involve community members in learning about methods for working and living with persons with ASD.

Objective 1.3: To engage students in the TTU system in developing knowledge about teaching and living with persons with ASD.

Objective 1.4: To supply in-service teachers and professionals with accurate, research-based intervention techniques for working with persons with ASD.

Objective 1.5: To engage in organized evaluation of current programming and determination of future agendas for all consumer groups to provide information about programming needs.

Benchmarks:

- Obtain positive feedback in the forms of surveys, interviews, and personal correspondence.
- Offer fifteen events during the academic year.

Strategies

- Provide the Burkhart Lectureship and Teaching Academy programming annually;
- Increase capacity through graduate and undergraduate education courses emphasizing research-based practices for use with students with ASD;
- Create Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for inservice teachers using modules one, two, and three, and the Teaching Academy monthly meetings;
- Develop and disseminate of two additional modules (Executive Functioning and Transition to Adulthood) in addition to the three modules already developed or currently under development;
- Supply individual, family, and sibling support groups programming to increase opportunities for learning about and living with ASD.

Goal Two: Academic Excellence-To prepare educators at the undergraduate and graduate levels as well as inservice teachers and professionals to utilize research-based, best practice interventions and techniques for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Objective 2.1: To develop CEU credits available online and through the Burkhart Teaching Academy.

Objective 2.2: To create increased opportunities for undergraduate students to work directly with students with ASD.

Objective 2.3: To engage students in masters action research projects.

Objective 2.4: To increase the number of Burkhart Doctoral Fellowships to fund more doctoral students to study ASD.

Objective 2.5: To explore methods for pairing with the Jones Fellowship program for doctoral students wanting to study ASD.

Objective 2.6: To select and launch the Jere Lyn Burkhart Endowed Professorship in Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Benchmarks:

- Develop CEU course credit for each of the three modules and the nine Teaching Academy sessions.
- Identify and use ten classrooms with ASD mentor teachers.
- Complete 30 action research projects in five years.
- Support six doctoral fellows in five years.
- Create and become certified to offer a nationally-recognized Board Certification in Applied Behavior Analysis (BACB).

Strategies:

- Engage masters students in action research concerning strength-based assessment or best practices in instruction in the public school through graduate scholarships,
- Fund doctoral fellows to study autism education and produce dissertations research detailing the practices of The Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research,
- Select and hire the Jere Lyn Burkhart Endowed Professorship candidate and get them appointed and on-campus.

- Create two syllabi for new courses for the BACB.
- Contract with individuals to create lectures to be included in the BACB.

Goal Three: Resources and Infrastructure-To obtain financial and physical resources to achieve the mission and vision of the Center through external funding.

- Changes to the strategic plan incorporate
 - seeking state funding for a State Resource Center.
 - increasing the operating fund endowment to \$10 million.
 - raising a facility endowment of \$5 to \$10 million.
 - applying as a Center for Excellence through the federal government.

Objective 3.1: To seek state funding to become a State Resource Center through DADS and the Developmental Disabilities Council.

Objective 3.2: To increase the operating fund endowment to \$10 million.

Objective 3.3: To raise a facility endowment of \$5 to \$10 million.

Objective 3.4: To apply as a Center for Excellence through the federal government.

Objective 3.5: To create a facility master plan:

- a) for a 1500 square foot physical space for the Collin Burkhart Transition Academy,
- b) to obtain a specified site for a long term, state of the art facility.

Objective 3.6: To identify private donors to obtain materials for Center.

Objective 3.7: To identify Foundations to obtain funding for staff for the Center.

Objective 3.8: To secure federal grants to obtain funding for staff for the Center.

Benchmarks:

- Establish the physical space for the Collin Burkhart Transition Academy.
- Build the operating fund endowment to 10 million dollars.
- Build the facility endowment to between 5 and 10 million dollars.
- Apply as a State Resource Center.
- Apply as a federal Center for Excellence.

Strategies:

- Develop request for funding and submit them to individuals and foundations.
- To formulate a Business Plan that identifies prospective donors, identifies center needs, and outlines a timetable that can be endorsed by the TTU Foundation Board.
- Present the plan to the TTU Foundation Board.
- Work with TTU administration to locate the physical space.
- Create a marketing plan for the Center.
- Apply as a State Resource Center.
- Apply as a federal Center for Excellence.

Goal Four: Engagement and Partnership-To provide a link between individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders, their families, the professionals who work with them, Texas Tech University students, and community members interested in learning about Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Objective 4.1: To continue support of the South Plains Autism Network.

Objective 4.2: To create specific formal partnerships with Texas Tech Health Sciences Center including the Medical School, Allied Health, Neuropsychiatry, and

Vocational Rehabilitation as well as others.

Objective 4.3: To create formal partnerships with the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) and the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS).

Objective 4.4: To create formal partnerships with Lubbock ISD, Lubbock-Cooper ISD, Frenship ISD, Idalou ISD, Lorenzo ISD, Post ISD, Ralls ISD, Roosevelt ISD, Crosbyton ISD, Slaton ISD, EPEC Cooperative – Director – Lorenzo, HONDA Cooperative – Director – Shallowater, and SELCO Cooperative– Director – Slaton.

Objective 4.5: To create a written model for developing family groups based on the SPAN project.

Objective 4.6: To build a partnership between the community and the University to create an in-service teacher education mentoring group in local school districts through the Teaching Academy.

Benchmarks:

- Development and dissemination of model for creating parent/professional networks.
- Creation of mentoring groups with school districts for supporting inservice teachers.
- Expansion of formal partnerships and collaborative projects with TTU, TTUHSC, and other state entities.

Strategies:

- Create a handbook delineating the steps to developing network.

- Electronically archive presentations of current SPAN meetings as resources.
- Meet with local established partnerships.
- Create local teacher mentoring groups.
- Provide consultation to newly developed partnerships.
- Utilize local and statewide partnerships to develop the Collin Burkhart Academy.

Goal 5: Postsecondary Education National Recognition-To establish a nationally recognized center for researching and disseminating information about postsecondary educational opportunities for individuals with ASD.

Objective 5.1: To provide direct services to young adults with autism spectrum disorders enrolled at Texas Tech University needing support in the areas of academics, socialization, or self-advocacy through the Collin Burkhart Transition Academy.

Objective 5.2: To supply direct assistance to individuals with autism spectrum disorders through a job coaching program that finds competitive employment and furnishes job coaching through the Collin Burkhart Transition Academy.

Objective 5.3: To establish a Life Skills Day Center for young people who have completed high school or their IDEIA eligibility to engage in daily living skill education to maintain or improve their quality of life through the Collin Burkhart Transition Academy.

Objective 5.4: To develop partnerships with other service providers to establish high quality related service opportunities.

Objective 5.5: To engage undergraduate and graduate students in service delivery for

adults with autism spectrum disorders in improve their understanding of the impact of a disability on the life span.

Objective 5.6: To provide strength-based assessment.

Objective 5.7: To create strength-based plans.

Objective 5.8: To write curriculum support by strength-based planning and intervention.

Objective 5.9: Disseminate research concerning strength-based assessment success.

Objective 5.10: To supply postsecondary transition information on website.

Objective 5.11: To disseminate the curriculum products.

Objective 5.12: To engage in research to assess success of strength-based planning and intervention as well as other services provided by the Academy.

Objective 5.13: Disseminate research concerning success of strength-based activities.

Objective 5.14: Establish a life skills day center.

Benchmarks:

- Number of individuals served by the Collin Burkhart Transition Academy
- Evaluation of the success of the services offered by the Collin Burkhart Transition Academy
- Number of partnerships established with other service providers
- Number of opportunities for TTU students to be involved with the Academy

- Development of strength-based assessment protocols
- Dissemination of curriculum and strength-based assessment products.
- Dissemination of research findings through publications and presentations.

Strategies

- Develop the Collin Burkhart Academy based on research-based practices to provide adult educational opportunities for persons with autism spectrum disorders after the age of 21 serving:
 - students attending Texas Tech University
 - young adults seeking competitive employment with direct support
 - young adults needing continued educational opportunities in the area of life skills to maintain or improve daily living functioning.
- Create strength-based assessment protocols to examine the individual's interests and skills;
- Design a model for establishing an Individual Adult Activity Plan for use in various community settings;
- Produce curriculum for the activities identified on the plans for dissemination to family members and caretakers;
- Establish continuing education courses for online instruction for individuals with high-functioning autism;
- Plan activities with the Collin Burkhart Transition Academy to engage undergraduate and graduate students;
- Create partnerships with the TTUHSC in Allied Health (Speech, Language and Hearing, Occupational Therapy), Vocational Rehabilitation, Neuropsychiatry; and

- Develop support plans for current or prospective university students with high functioning autism.

Goal 6: National Recognition for Connecting Families and Professionals -To establish a national reputation as the leader for connecting families and professionals in learning about ASD issues.

Objective 6.1: To disseminate model for family professional partnerships

Objective 6.2: To publish the model on the Center website and in professional journals.

Objective 6.3: To provide training sessions for individuals and groups.

Objective 6.4: To create a Statewide Resource Directory to be published on the Texas Department for Aging and Disability Services (DADS) to provide families and professionals with information concerning services available across the state.

Objective 6.5: To develop an electronic support system for families and professionals to allow for people to communicate and meet without regard for geographical distance.

Objective 6.6: To train teachers and others to use research-based practices for intervention with students with autism spectrum disorders.

Objective 6.7: To provide direct support to families impacted by autism spectrum disorders.

Objective 6.8: To increase awareness of the needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorders, their families, and the professionals who work with these individuals through various media outlets.

Objective 6.9: To add to the literature about autism spectrum disorders concerning issues of intervention, connecting families and professionals, and postsecondary education.

Benchmarks:

- Create a model for family/professional partnerships.
- Provide training sessions for both families and professionals.
- Complete the Statewide Resource Directory.
- Establish an electronic parent/professional forum.
- Supply support opportunities for families.
- Set up numerous media contacts and opportunities.
- Increase submissions to journals and conferences.
- Obtain funding for a parent center.
- Present findings for support network development.

Strategies:

- Increase capacity in autism spectrum disorders through partnerships, educational opportunities, and research findings.
- Develop and disseminate a model for creating successful family/professional partnerships.
- Improve access to information about autism spectrum disorders through continuing Education Units, undergraduate and graduate courses, modules, and the Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research website.

- Establish the Collin Burkhart Academy to develop quality of life transition planning and assessment.
- Increase research activity regarding the activities of the Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research.
- Develop and publish the Statewide Resource Directory through DADS.
- Contact media sources/outlets and seek opportunities to publicize the Center activities and findings as well as autism information.
- Create an electronic forum to bring families and professionals together for discussion.
- Explore additional avenues for informing people about autism spectrum disorders.

Goal 7: Research Activities-To engage in research activities to increase knowledge concerning research-based, best practice interventions and methods for individuals with autism spectrum disorders, their families, and the professionals working with them.

Objective 7.1: To research topics such as intervention, postsecondary education, employment, university support systems, family needs, and training issues.

Objective 7.2: To publish articles in international and national peer-reviewed journals.

Objective 7.3: To publish books informing people about postsecondary education and employment for individuals with autism spectrum disorders as well as family and professional partnerships.

Objective 7.4: To present research findings at international and national conferences.

Objective 7.5: To engage undergraduate students in conducting action research projects in the classroom and the Center.

Objective 7.6: To mentor Masters students in conducting action research projects in the classroom and the Center.

Objective 7.7: To guide Doctoral students through the dissertation process to conduct research concerning autism spectrum disorders.

Objective 7.8: To enable all students to convert their research into meaningful articles and presentations in both statewide and national venues.

Benchmarks

- Number of research projects undertaken.
- Number of refereed articles published.
- Number of books published.
- Number of conference presentations.
- Number of students conducting research in each category.
- Number of student conducted research presented or published.

Strategies

- Create data collection procedures for all activities of the Center.
- Plan two specific research studies per year.
- Write 6 manuscripts per year.
- Submit to 2 conferences per year.
- Develop research activities and include them in undergraduate coursework.
- Recruit 4 Masters students per year to complete action research projects.
- Recruit Doctoral students interested in autism spectrum disorders.
- Write 2 manuscripts per year with students.

