It seems that each year since the Center’s beginning, our annual reports emphasize our continual growth. Indeed, again this year we have grown on virtually every dimension possible. During the past year, CDS became the largest Center within the College of Human Services, Education and Public Policy. The annual budget now exceeds $2.2 million. The number of funded research and demonstration projects increased, and the number of agencies with which we worked expanded. More graduate and undergraduate students, from more academic programs, trained and worked with us than ever before. Our community education programs continued to expand in both type and reach. These program activities are described in the pages that follow.

As a natural consequence of this increased activity, the Center outgrew its original space. Over the years, staff and students became increasingly scattered as project space was claimed wherever it could be found. Offices became more and more crowded. In February, after two years of planning, the Center staff moved into a new facility. This larger, newly remodeled space, provides offices or cubicles for each of the Center’s projects. Proximity has already facilitated communication, cooperation, and joint planning.

I would like to thank Dan Rich, Dean of the College of Human Services, Education and Public Policy, for his continued funding support of CDS staff, faculty affiliations, and graduate and undergraduate public service assistantships. I also would like to thank him for his financial support and advocacy in getting CDS its new home.

On a more personal note, this is the last time I will be writing the “Message from the Director” in the Center’s Annual Report. After eight years in the role, I have requested, and the Dean has agreed to seek a new leader for the Center by January, 2001. It has been an exciting and challenging time. It has been a pleasure to work with Theda Ellis, Associate Director, who has been with me since the beginning. It has been an excellent learning experience working with the Center’s talented and energetic faculty and staff. Their creativity and dedication are what made the Center’s programs grow and succeed in the goals of independence and productivity for Delawareans with disabilities. Finally, I want to thank our many community partners who have placed their trust in our efforts and backed it up with the funding that keeps our joint efforts moving ahead.

With confidence in the future of CDS, I am.

Sincerely,

Donald L. Peters, Ph. D.
Amy Rextrew Professor and
Director, CDS
The University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS) is Delaware’s University Affiliated Program. CDS is part of a nationwide network of over 60 UAPs, which provide leadership in the promotion of independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion of persons with disabilities into the community. With base funding from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, CDS actively seeks contracts and grants from federal, state, and private agencies to pursue these goals. Core functions of CDS are pre-service and community education, research and evaluation, model demonstration, technical assistance, and dissemination.

From its beginning in 1992, the Center for Disabilities Studies has focused its mission on lifespan issues for individuals with disabilities within Delaware. Using that approach, this annual report addresses CDS programs and activities over the lifespan.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Center for Disabilities Studies is to enhance the lives of individuals and families in Delaware through education, prevention, service, and research related to disabilities. We promote independence and productivity so individuals and families can fully participate in the life of the community.

Marianne Smith, Director of the Delaware Division of Mental Retardation, with board member, Karen Gallagher, at the Year 2000 Community Education graduation.
A Good Beginning... Pre-Natal Services and Young Children

A major focus of the Center for Disabilities Studies is on improving the lives of children, starting with pre-natal services, moving to infants and toddlers, through early childhood, and on to school life. The Center’s projects cross a spectrum of ages and activities during this period, ranging from model demonstration to pre-service and community education to research and evaluation. Working with state and private agencies, CDS is actively working to promote systems change.

In using a lifespan approach, prevention and early intervention become critical aspects of the work done at the Center. Two projects, the Wilmington Healthy Start project and the Northern Delaware Early Head Start program address these issues and the need for services for families who may have a young child with disabilities.

Wilmington Healthy Start

The vision of the Wilmington Healthy Start (WHS) project, an initiative of Christiana Care and the Wilmington community, is to facilitate a collaborative environment in which the people of Wilmington lead lifestyles that produce the healthiest babies and families in the nation. WHS increased prenatal and perinatal services and supports to parents within the poorest and most ethnically diverse areas of the City, serving over 700 women and children during its second year. The population served is estimated to be 74% African American and 19% Hispanic. The Wilmington area has some of the highest concentrations in Delaware for infant mortality (16.8 per 1000 among African American mothers); HIV/AIDS cases (961 cases); and teenage fertility (147.6 per 1000 teens).

CDS’ role is to provide program administrators and the local communities with information on the progress of the WHS project toward meeting their goals and objectives. Emphasis is placed on working one-on-one with project staff to develop a system of data collection and processing that will enable key organizations to adopt self-sustaining data management systems upon completion of the WHS grant.

Core function(s):
Research and evaluation, technical assistance
Northern Delaware Early Head Start

Northern Delaware Early Head Start (NDEHS) is designed to empower low-income pregnant mothers and families with children, three and under, to support their children’s best possible development. At the same time, NDEHS also supports families’ to function at the best levels possible in order to promote healthy child development. Administered by the University of Delaware through the Center for Disabilities Studies and the Department of Individual and Family Studies, there are six community partners in the consortium including: Delaware Association of Child Care Professionals, New Castle County Head Start, Easter Seal Society of Del-Mar, Children and Families First, Southbridge Children’s Center, and Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center. NDEHS is funded to serve 107 young children, pregnant women and their families. NDEHS also works to have an impact on many more families and service providers through its capacity building approach in the areas of childcare, disability support, training, and coordination of services. At least 10% of enrolled children have been identified with special needs.

Core function(s):
Model demonstration, technical assistance, research and evaluation

Project CREATE (Caregiver Recruitment, Education, and Training Enhancement) provides family- and center-based child care providers with free college courses focusing on developmentally appropriate child care practices for infants and toddlers. CREATE combines three one-credit college courses with on-site technical assistance and academic supports for first time college students. CREATE students continue to benefit from this format which bridges their experiences with informal community-based training and formal college course work. After completing the CREATE courses, all participants with no previous college experience expressed a strong interest in enrolling in early childhood degree programs.

Statewide, twenty-three students completed the courses this fiscal year.

Core function(s):
Community Education
The Center also works to help early intervention and early childhood programs evaluate and improve their services. For the fourth year in a row, the Center assisted the Delaware Child Development Watch program to measure family satisfaction and perceptions about the services provided. The Family Survey 2000 was distributed to 196 families receiving early intervention services for children between the ages of birth and 36 months. The results of the survey are used to improve the program’s responsiveness to families.

For the second year in a row, the Center assisted the Child Development Watch program in determining the developmental outcomes of the children served. With an emphasis on children with multiple disabilities and those living in poverty, 64 children and their families were followed for a twelve month period to determine what type of developmental changes occurred. A major result of this project was the creation of a permanent developmental change tracking system which allows the Child Development Watch staff to determine the impact they have on the skills of the youngest children with disabilities.

Also for the second year in a row, CDS assisted all Delaware Head Start and Early Childhood Assistance Programs (ECAP) with measuring the developmental changes of children in their programs. Over 400 children were followed during the year long study.
ON TO SCHOOL...

During the past ten years, Delaware has engaged in significant educational reform. The Center for Disabilities Studies has been a major partner in the reform of special education programs for students with the most severe disabilities. These systems change and capacity building projects cover the full span of public education from the ages of five through twenty-one.

Summer Institute: Quality Services for Individuals with Severe Disabilities

Today we recognize that individuals with severe disabilities have the right to make their own life choices and to be a part of all aspects of educational and community life. The Quality Services for Individuals with Severe Disabilities Certificate Program is a graduate credit program for teachers, related services personnel and others who wish to be better prepared to work with individuals with severe disabilities, including deaf-blindness. The Summer Institute includes eight, three-credit courses, offered over a four year period. Classes focus on critical topics for the support of creating life-enhancing alternatives for individuals with severe disabilities.

The topics are:
- Functional Impact of Severe Sensory Impairments
- Severe Disabilities and Communication
- Transdisciplinary Service Delivery
- Team Building and Family Collaboration
- Assessment and Evaluation of Individuals with Severe Disabilities
- Medical Aspects of Severe Disabilities
- Functional Aspects of Community Living
- Vocational Training and Employment

During the past year, 26 students were enrolled in the Summer Institute courses and six students completed all 24 credits. They received their certificates in December 2000.

Core function(s): Community Education

Delaware Inclusion Project

The Delaware Inclusion Project is a broad systems change project focused upon:
- changing teachers’ and administrators’ expectations for special education students’ achievement, and their attitudes and behaviors concerning inclusive schooling,
- increasing the capacity of local school districts to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment,
- incorporating more students with significant needs in regular education classrooms, and
- enhancing the meaningful participation of parents in their children’s education.

The Center has documented the progress of the project over the course of its three year existence.

Core function(s): Technical Assistance
Partners Council for Children with Disabilities

Formerly the state’s Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Committee (CSPD), the Council has expanded both in size and scope. During the past year, the Center continued to provide logistical support for the Council in the preparation of the State’s Improvement Grant for Special Education Services and in the State’s Self-Assessment.

Core function(s):
Technical Assistance

Positive Behavior Supports Training Initiative

This project was initiated to promote and institutionalize state-wide use of Positive Behavior Supports as a means to both enhance the learning environment for all students and reduce the number of referrals out of the classroom. The first year of this five-year capacity building initiative focused upon development of the core training modules using a fast-track methodology that simultaneously developed materials, trained a State Team and District Teams from three local school districts, and provided feedback for revisions of the training materials. Training Modules, including an Instructor’s Outline and a Participant’s Workbook were developed on the topics:

- Positive Behavior Supports Needs Assessment
- Introduction to Positive Behavior Supports
- School-wide and Classroom-wide Supports
- Person-Centered Planning
- Functional Behavioral Assessment
- Individual Behavior Supports
- Collaboration with Families.

During the initial year, 29 persons participated in part or all of the training and an additional 76 persons received direct technical assistance.

Core function(s):
Community Education, Technical Assistance

Delaware Alternate Portfolio Assessment

During the past three years, CDS has directed the design, development and piloting of the Delaware Alternate Portfolio Assessment (DAPA) for students with moderate to severe disabilities under contract with the Department of Education. The past year marked the last step before implementation in the 2000-2001 school year. A full field test of DAPA was conducted and involved training more than 400 teachers in portfolio development. One hundred ninety-seven student portfolios were submitted in May and scored in June.

Additionally, 87 of the 134 teachers involved in portfolio development completed surveys concerning the process and its utility. A sample of 58 parents of the students whose portfolios were submitted were also surveyed concerning their participation in and satisfaction with the portfolio development process. Finally, focus groups and information meetings for parents and teachers were held throughout the state both before and after portfolios were submitted.

Core function(s):
Community Education, Technical Assistance

Janine Weber and Brian Touchette score portfolios.
The Transition Partnership Project is a University-School District collaborative effort to provide a consumer driven, person-centered, education model program for students (ages 18-21) with moderate to severe disabilities as they transition from school to adult life and work settings. The collaboration involves:

a) an interagency agreement for full cooperation to allow a smooth transition between the public school system and adult service agencies, and

b) an agreement between the Red Clay Consolidated School District and CDS that provides technical assistance and the least restrictive, age appropriate environment for the individuals enrolled.

The school district provides two special education teachers (project co-directors) and support staff. UD undergraduate students may serve as paid employees of the project and as “pals” for the transition students.

The intent is to maximize the opportunities and support provided so the individuals enrolled may achieve independence, productivity and full integration. An evaluation was completed which showed strengths of the program to be interagency collaboration and life skills curricula which emphasizes self-determination and choice.

As a model-demonstration program fostering systems change, the Transition Partnership Project has already proven its worth. Within the University, students are involved in a course on adapted physical education, giving students in physical education and other health disciplines the opportunity to work in a clinical setting, and with a mentor course for undergraduates.

Core function(s):
Service Demonstration
**LIFE AS AN ADULT...**

Using the federal Training Initiative funding as a base, CDS works with the Divisions of Mental Retardation (DMR), Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), and Personnel to offer a comprehensive series of certificates for direct support and other professionals who work daily with individuals with disabilities. With self-determination and choice at the heart of services and supports for adults with disabilities, CDS stresses teaching how to support adults to make informed choices and decisions about their lives.

During this year, CDS added certificates on Job Coaching and Natural Supports and Introduction in Best Practices (in day programs) bringing the total number of certificates to six. The latter certificate was offered to all staff of New Castle County day programs. The addition of these certificates completed CDS training offerings to address the whole person, ranging from person-centered planning to recreation and leisure to job coaching. Students may take certificates over a three-year period, and they may also enroll in individual seminars.

**New Visions I and II**

*Purpose:* These one-day seminars offer an introduction to developmental disabilities and lay the philosophical foundation for supporting self-determination and informed choicemaking.

*Target Audience:* All New Staff

*# of Students:* 231 enrolled

**Innovative Concepts and Practices (ICP)**

*Purpose:* ICP is a 10 module (15 seminar) course on best practices across the lifespan. Students develop a portfolio of activities around a person whom they support. The portfolio includes an essential lifestyle plan which addresses: person-centered planning, work, home, recreation and leisure, family, communication needs, and positive behavioral supports.

*Target Audience:* Direct Support Professionals

*# of Students:* 29 enrolled and 17 graduated

**Quality Management and Supervision in Human Services (QMS)**

*Purpose:* QMS is a 15 module (18 seminar) course, giving basic management skills to entry and mid-level supervisors and managers. Again, students develop a portfolio of management activities based on their current job.

*Target Audience:* Supervisors and Managers

*# of Students:* 28 enrolled and 9 graduated

**Support Coordination**

*Purpose:* With the move away from case management to service brokering, this nine module (15 seminar) course combines components of ICP with self-determination and service coordination to ensure that service coordinators understand what best practices are, and their role in providing supports to individuals.

*Target Audience:* Case Managers

*# of Students:* 10 enrolled and 6 graduated
Job Coaching and Natural Supports

Purpose: Assessment, job development, teaching skills and building natural supports in the workplace are highlighted in this six seminar course.
Target Audience: Job Coaches
# of Students: 13 students enrolled and graduated

Introduction to Best Practices

Purpose: Designed for staff of traditional day programs, this six session course expands introductory information on disabilities, lays a philosophical foundation of person-centered planning and informed choices at work, and offers an introduction to communication and positive behavior supports.
Target Audience: Direct Support and Management Staff of Day Programs.
# of Students: 29 students enrolled and graduated

Foster Care Providers

Purpose: This eight module (12 seminar) course offers foster care providers information about current practices in disability supports.
Target Audience: Foster Care Providers Who Support Adults
# of Students: This certificate was not offered during the current year.

Highlights

• Mark Bernstein joined the Community Education Staff, teaching New Visions, Introduction to Best Practices, and various aspects of both ICP and QMS Certificates.
• Altogether, 86 seminars were offered to 1163 trainees.

Core function: Community Education

Support coordination students work on a group project.
Employment for Individuals with Severe Disabilities

For the past two years, the Center has joined the Department of Education, the Divisions of Mental Retardation, Vocational Rehabilitation, the Visually Impaired, and the Delaware Program for Deaf-Blind Children in a project to increase community employment outcomes for people with severe disabilities, including deaf-blindness. Funded by the Helen Keller Center’s National Technical Assistance Consortium for Children and Young Adults who are Deaf-Blind (NTAC), the project served as a field test for a community employment initiative for three individuals with severe disabilities.

During this period, local teams formed around each individual to offer employment assistance and support. A state level team of administrators also worked to support the local teams by addressing barriers as they arose. Throughout the project, NTAC provided on-going technical assistance, including bringing nationally known employment specialists, such as Bill Sharpton and George Tilson, to provide training and consultation to the local and state teams. The state team collaborated to pool resources to bring additional training resources to Delaware, which resulted in the development of the CDS training module on Job Coaching and Natural Supports.

Today, three young adults with severe disabilities are working in community settings, and collaborations are in place between state agencies and CDS to continue to support the movement of individuals with severe disabilities into community employment.

Core function(s):
Technical Assistance
ACROSS THE LIFESPAN...

Some projects are truly lifespan in nature, crossing age and disability groups. The description of these follows.

Delaware CarePlan

Families traditionally worry about what will happen to their members with disabilities when they are gone. Working with the Delaware CarePlan, Inc., and the ARC of Delaware, CDS assisted with the start up of this project including the development of 50 plans for adults with disabilities. Through estate planning and supplemental trusts, the CarePlan allows families to leave money for their children in a way which does not interfere with their public benefits. CDS also surveyed existing PLAN agencies across the nation and wrote a report summarizing approaches to estate planning, management structures used by agencies and recommendations for Delaware to consider in its implementation of this program.

Core function(s):
Technical Assistance

Mentor Project

Working with the ARC of Delaware, the Division of Mental Retardation, and Ken Crest, Inc., CDS trained five individuals with developmental disabilities to work as paid mentors to adults who live in group homes. Students learned elements of person-centered planning, active listening, keeping confidences, trust, respect for differing value systems, self-advocacy, and self-determination. This peer-to-peer approach offers individuals with developmental disabilities the opportunity to support others with the same disabilities through the state’s planning process, which is moving to person-centered planning.

Core function(s):
Demonstration, Community Education

Mentors and mentees socialize at a Christmas Party.
A joint venture of the Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) and the Center for Disabilities Studies, delAWARE is a newsletter which brings in-depth information on critical issues within the state to individuals with disabilities, their families, support professionals, legislators, and funding agencies. By taking an informal research approach, delAWARE highlights issues such as employment, housing, and friendship, leaving more typical newsletter topics to other publications. Each edition addresses what is happening in the national arena, what is happening within the state, and offers a consumer perspective. It also highlights projects and activities of the Center for Disabilities Studies and the Developmental Disabilities Council on an annual basis.

Core function(s):
Dissemination

Minor in Disabilities Studies

CDS continued to support a University-wide minor in Disability Studies. In this, its fourth year, enrollment increased to twenty-five students. Ten students were graduated in May, 2000 with Disability Studies as their official minor. Student interests in careers working with individuals and families extended across the lifespan as well as in professions ranging from classroom teaching to law.

With the minor as the cornerstone, CDS also expanded its affiliated faculty across campus, adding interested faculty to new projects.

Core function(s):
Pre-service Training

Don Peters, Director of CDS with Carol Denson, Pre Service Training Director.
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PROJECTS INCLUDE:

• Alternate Assessment
• Positive Behavior Supports
• Partners Council for Children with Developmental Disabilities
• ECAP Standards
• Head Start Facilities

COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROJECTS INCLUDE:

• Project CREATE
• Federal Training Initiative/DMR Direct Support for Professionals
• The Mentor Project
• DVR Job Coaching Certificate
• Division of Personnel Best Practices in Day Programs
Marie-Anne Aghazadian  
Parent Information Center of Delaware

Peggy Hirsch  
Family Member

Meryl Humphrey  
Northern Delaware Early Head Start  
Parent and Policy Council Chairperson

Ray Hunt  
Independent Resources, Inc.

Martha Brooks  
Exceptional Children and Early Childhood Education  
Delaware Department of Education

Paul Poplawski  
Division of Drug Abuse, Alcohol and Mental Health

Deborah Farris  
University of Delaware, ADA Coordinator

Brenda Kramer  
Family Member

Andrea Guest  
Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Chris Long  
Division of Resident Protection and Long Term Care

Brian Hartman  
Delaware Disabilities Law Program

Rita Mariani  
*1998-2000 Chair  
The ARC of Delaware

Catherine Soles  
Division of Child Mental Health Services

Sandy Reyes  
DELARF

Linda Heller  
Delaware Division of Services for Aging & Adults with Physical Disabilities

Marianne Smith  
Delaware Division of Mental Retardation

Note: 13 of 20 members are direct consumers or family members
Community Education Advisory Council

Holly Bounds
Kent Sussex Industries

Sue Brown
Martin Luther Homes

Joe Foote
Dungarvin Delaware

Kai-Stefan Fountain
The Salvation Army

Karen Gallagher
Consumer/Mary Campbell Center

Becky Hudson
Ken-Crest Services

Todd Jarger
Community Systems, Inc.

Anne Laird
The Chimes Delaware

Harriet Ann Litwin
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Eileen Marvel
Delaware Elwyn

Lori Prettyman
Consumer/The Chimes

Alisha Raiford-Hall
DMR Community Services

Sandy Reyes
DELARF

Mary Schrieber
Stockley Center

Sonja Simowitz
Delaware Assistive Technology Institute

Cindy Sterling
Opportunity Center, Inc.

Research coordinator, Michael Gamel-Mc Cormick, with Mary Liz Cummings, graduate assistant.
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Allison Miller
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Lidia Vela

Project CREATE
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Transition Partnership Program
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Northern Delaware Early Head Start and Project CREATE staff.

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Trudy Riley
Trudy Benally-Ho

Core Support Staff
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Deborah Koch

Graduate Assistants
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Adrienne Bey
Vanessa Broadbent
Shaunna Crossen
Erin Holmes
Suzanne Landmesser
Kristen Lovett
Laurie McLeod
Kristin Miller
Michelle Paraskewich
Ilka Pfister
Ryan Pommerening
Angela Pietraniello
Drew Raucci
Lynn Worden

CDS graduate and undergraduate students.
PRODUCTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Non-Refereed Publications


1999-2000 Wilmington Healthy Start Quarter Reports. July 99, Oct 99, Feb 00, April 00.

2000 Wilmington Healthy Start Stakeholder Survey. June 00.


Bernstein, M. Best Practices in Day Programs, 2000. Six-part curricula developed for training direct-support staff in current trends in day programs for persons with developmental disabilities.


Wilmington Healthy Start Yearly Federal Report for Project Year 02. Feb. 00.


Tressell, P. ResourceMom Database. March 00.


Refereed Publications


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