

Mission: Committed to optimizing the quality of life for individuals with disabilities and their families through research, training, technical assistance and public service.

History: For over 50 years, the University has maintained a research and training program residing on the campus of the Parsons State Hospital and Training Center. This program includes the Parsons Research Center and the Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities at Parsons. Over the years this center has achieved international recognition for the landmark and pioneering work conducted by University faculty. Early learning and communication research including the first national project demonstrating that individuals with intellectual disabilities could learn to cook, clean, meet their own grooming needs, and live independently was conducted at this site. University researchers at Parsons also developed and disseminated the first procedures for reliably testing both hearing and vision of persons with intellectual disabilities/hard to test, whose hearing and vision impairments were typically neither diagnosed nor treated before these developments. Similarly, Parsons pioneered work in the field of testing and treatment for disorders of speech, language, and communication.


Current Highlights:

- 11 PhD/EdD, 1 EdS, 7 Masters with a total of approximately 45 faculty and staff.
- Contact with 15,354 Kansans/year through Training/Technical Assistance/Conference Presentations (18 year average).
- Contact with 2,892 professionals/year through national Training/Technical Assistance/Conference Presentations (8 year average).
- University Investment in Parsons of \$1 returns \$4.74 in grants/contracts (FY12 - Total budget \$4,256,212).
- Only NIH funded research on reading by individuals with intellectual disabilities.
- NIH funded research to understand and develop novel treatments for self-injurious and aggressive behavior by combining laboratory and clinical research.
- Assistive Technology for Kansans (ATK) was 1 of 5 states invited to present to the US Department of Education and this project has provided technical assistance to 21 other states in 2011-2012.
- State training program that provided support for first three professionals in the nation to be certified by the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals.
- Innovative program for support of foster and biological parents of children with challenging behaviors and has been identified to be replicated across the state of Kansas.
- Nationally recognized statewide training and technical assistance system for training early childhood special education professionals. Staff was invited to present at the National Early Childhood Outcomes Conference.
- Research on communication of persons with developmental disabilities continuously funded since 1964.
- Newly funded project will develop strategies to support children with hearing impairments to learn to respond to tones used in hearing assessments.
- A faculty member at Parsons is a part of newly funded National Early Childhood Personnel Center.

Current Collaborations with other Universities: Columbia University, East Carolina University, Florida State University, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine – Kennedy Krieger Institute, Kansas State University, Mississippi University for Women, University of Kansas Medical School, University of Kansas School of Medicine at Wichita, University of Massachusetts School of Medicine, Virginia Commonwealth University, West Virginia University, Western Oregon University, University of Washington, Wichita State University

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