

Media Relations

Institute On Disability Receives DOE Grant For Autism Education

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DURHAM, N.H. – The Institute on Disability (IOD) at the University of New Hampshire has received \$450,000 from the U.S. Department of Education for the National Inclusive Education Initiative (NIEI), a national center that focuses on best practices in inclusive education for students with autism and related disabilities.

“We are so pleased to have been awarded funding to continue this initiative,” said NIEI project director Cheryl M. Jorgensen, a research assistant professor at the IOD. “We have engaged families and professionals from New Hampshire and from many states around the country in learning about best practices for including students with autism and related disabilities in general education classrooms. Our innovative use of distance learning technology and social media has allowed us to create a true community of learners who are committed to positive outcomes for students and we are thankful for Rep. Carol Shea-Porter’s leadership in this important endeavor.”

The NIEI, launched in 2009, draws on the IOD’s long-standing expertise on autism spectrum disorders and on New Hampshire’s success in improving student outcomes through inclusive education. Year two activities will focus on seven core areas: leadership, professional development, pre-service preparation, elementary school model demonstration, development of state-level systems of professional development and technical assistance, research and policy, and dissemination.

The NIEI works with families and professionals in 16 states: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Vermont, Maine, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, California, Washington, Nevada, Illinois, Wisconsin, Arizona, Maryland, Kentucky, and Virginia.

Based on projected goals, more than 500 professionals and parents in these states will be affected directly by the work of the NIEI this year, and an additional 10,000 will have access to information and products through dissemination activities. These activities will directly affect the educational programs and outcomes of approximately 1,000 students with autism and related disabilities.

For more information on the NIEI, visit <http://www.iod.unh.edu/niei.html>.

The Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire was established in 1987 to provide a coherent university-based focus for the improvement of knowledge, policies, and practices related to the lives of persons with disabilities and their families. Its mission is to advance policies and systems changes, promising practices, education, and research that strengthen communities to ensure full access, equal opportunities, and participation for all persons.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a New England liberal arts college and a major research university with a strong focus on undergraduate-oriented research. A land, sea and space-grant university, UNH is the state’s flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

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