

Autism Specialty Track

This program is funded by a U.S. Department of Education training grant entitled “Advanced Training for Speech-Language Pathologists to Address the Needs of Infants and Children with Autism.” Participation in the DHSS Autism Specialty track offers students the following program opportunities, among others:

- Students can join the Autism Specialty Track (AST) as either (1) a “grantee” (tuition award of 75% per academic year; OSEP payback agreement stipulating post-graduation work in the field for same number of years funded by the grant; and requirement to participate in all AST training activities + additional required coursework), or (2) as an “affiliate” (no tuition award, no payback agreement, no extra required coursework; requirement to attend a subset of the AST training activities).
- Travel award: Grantees will receive funding to attend the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) annual meeting or the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) Autism annual conference. Funding for affiliates, as available.
- Multidisciplinary training cohort: Grantees on this track will be selected from both the SLP program at VUMC and the Early Childhood Special Education program at VU.
- Grantees from both programs are required to take 2 additional SLP courses (Autism; Augmentative Communication). Grantees from the SLP program are required to take a 3 course Applied Behavior Analysis sequence in Special Education (Intro to ABA, Experimental Analysis of Behavior, ABA Research Methods).
- Grantees and Affiliates will be complete training and certification in ASD assessment and diagnosis (ADOS-2).
- Extended clinical practicums: Grantees will receive extended placements in the Vanderbilt Preschool for Children with Autism (PCA) and the VBWC Autism Early Assessment & Diagnostic Clinic. Placements at these sites will include hands-on experience in delivering autism-specific therapeutic services and accumulation of required supervision hours from both a licensed SLP supervisor (supervised hours for CCC-SLP) and a licensed BCBA supervisor (supervised hours for BCaBA Certification). Affiliates can also arrange specialized ASD clinical experiences as available.
- Autism Journal Club: All Grantees and affiliates will participate in a monthly journal club devoted to research-to-practice guided readings and discussions in the area of autism.
- Autism clinical research opportunities: SLP Grantees who choose to do a research project will be linked to existing autism clinical research projects for support and mentoring of supervised research experiences. This will support one or more of the following products: Master’s Thesis project, conference presentations, authorship on journal article.
- Maymester - Grantees will receive an immersive 4-week clinical placement working with children with ASD. Affiliates will participate, when possible.



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