

## Director's Note



**Kristen L. Padilla, Ph.D., LSSP, BCBA**  
Director, BCDD  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
Department of Educational Psychology  
School of Education

Welcome to the Baylor University Center for Developmental Disabilities (BCDD) Newsletter! I am the Director of the BCDD, and my job is to oversee the clinical training, practice, and research initiatives that directly impact individuals in the community diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or other developmental disabilities. We have had such a great year and have adapted our programming and services to best meet the needs of our clients, students, and faculty as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to expanding our training, research, and services that focus on interdisciplinary work, early childhood, telehealth, and young adulthood. Stay tuned!

## About Us

The BCDD was established in November 2013 as a collaborative effort between Baylor University and Baylor Scott & White McLane Children's. The mission of the BCDD is to enhance the well-being for individuals with ASD or other developmental disabilities and their families through assessment, therapy, education, research, resources, and other supportive services. The BCDD concentrates on addressing the complex issues of ASD and other developmental conditions through its cooperative research, educational, and service programs.

Currently, the BCDD offers the following programs and services:

*\*Programming may change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

ABA Skill Building Program

\*ABA Severe Problem Behavior Program

Assessment Services

\*Autism Summer Camp

Caregiver Coaching Program

\*College Support Group

Educational Consultation

\*Literacy Intervention

\*Social Circles

Professional Development

PEAKS Teacher Training Program

Resource Library



## BCDD STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

### UNDERGRADUATE



**Rylee McHenry**  
BCDD Undergraduate Research Fellow  
Neuroscience Major  
C/O '2021

Rylee McHenry is a senior neuroscience major and BCDD Research Fellow. She has had a passion for the advocacy of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities from a young age, and, upon declaring herself as a neuroscience major, she knew that she wanted to pursue autism advocacy as a career. She learned of the BCDD upon reaching out to Dr. Kristen Padilla her sophomore year, and the rest was history. In addition to being mentored by Dr. Padilla, Rylee has been a part of a number of research projects. She served as a research assistant on multiple studies addressing aggression and play-behavior. This past semester, Rylee was honored to be a co-author on an animal assisted intervention book chapter with Dr. Tonya Davis. She recently presented at the annual Texas American College of Sports Medicine conference with Dr. Grant Morgan. Rylee is humbled and ecstatic to build upon the foundation laid by the BCDD as a future graduate student at Mississippi State University's School Psychology PhD program. Rylee hopes to focus her research and clinical practice to serving those with ASD with hopes to one day become a professor to teach the next generation of psychologists and behavioral analysts.

*"I am beyond blessed to have been exposed to the incredible work being done in the BCDD during my time as an undergraduate. Although I came to Baylor with a lot of personal experience with people on the spectrum, I had little idea of what a professional career in autism work, applied behavioral analysis, and educational psychology looked like. Through the amazing partnerships with all sorts of people within the BCDD, I have obtained irreplaceable experience, knowledge, and friendships. I am confident and humbled as I move on to the next stage of my personal and professional lives knowing that the BCDD has prepared me well. I look forward to seeing the incredible things that will continue to come out of the BCDD, and I hope to partner with the Center again in the future!"*

*-Rylee McHenry*



**Bailey Mungiguerra, BA**  
BCDD Graduate Assistant  
School Psychology  
C/O '2022

Bailey Mungiguerra is a second-year graduate student in the School Psychology program. She currently serves as the BCDD Graduate Assistant where she assists the BCDD Director with clinical services, programming, research, and community outreach. Bailey has expanded her research experience in the areas of behavior supports in educational settings and has presented at state and national conferences. During this past year, Bailey has been working on conducting preliminary research on pediatricians' comfort level in screening for autism spectrum disorder and postsecondary programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities as part of an initiative of the BCDD.

*"I am passionate about promoting children's social-emotional, behavioral, and academic development, which is why I chose to study School Psychology and also why I enjoy working at the BCDD. My position has allowed me to explore new topics such as behavior analysis and transition which will benefit my career as a school psychologist."*

*-Bailey Mungiguerra*



**Marie Kirkpatrick, M.Ed., BCBA, LBA**

**Doctoral Candidate – ABA  
Specialization**

**Graduate Research Assistant  
Department of Educational Psychology**

Marie Kirkpatrick is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and doctoral candidate in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) program within the Department of Educational Psychology. Her research interests include evidence-based practices to support skill acquisition and problem behavior reduction for children with autism and developmental disabilities within schools, and preparation and training of professionals who work with these children such as teachers and future behavior analysts. Currently, Marie is working on her dissertation, which focuses on evaluating the use of video activity schedules to help young children with autism and their peers complete a math activity and stay on-task. Marie was awarded a grant from the Organization for Autism Research to fund her dissertation. After Marie completes her dissertation and graduates this summer, she will be moving back home to San Antonio where she will begin a faculty position in the fall as an Assistant Professor at The University of Texas at San Antonio's ABA program in the Department of Educational Psychology.

*During my doctoral program at Baylor, I've had the privilege of coming to the BCDD to engage in research as well as provide support and supervision to the master's students in the ABA program. The BCDD offers so many opportunities for students and BCDD affiliated faculty to collaborate and engage in meaningful research that not only benefits children with developmental disabilities but the pre-service teachers and behavior analysts who will end up impacting the lives of children with disabilities. Because the BCDD offers a variety of clinics, I've had the opportunity to collaborate and learn from many of Baylor's faculty including Dr. Tracy Sulak, Dr. Jessica Akers, Dr. Stephanie Gerow, Dr. Tonya Davis, and Dr. Kristen Padilla. They have not only shaped me to be a better researcher, but an effective and meaningful supervisor. I think the BCDD is an invaluable resource for our ABA, school psychology, and special education programs for students to gain hands on experience in working with children with disabilities and their families. I know that the skills I've gained during my time at the BCDD and Baylor will serve me well in my future career in academia*

*-Marie Kirkpatrick*



*Sic Autism*

## BCDD PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Tonya Davis and colleagues were awarded a grant funded by The Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to develop the Preparing Educators with Autism Knowledge and Skills (PEAKS) project. The PEAKS project\* is being conducted under the BCDD. The goal of PEAKS is to provide high-quality professional development to special education teachers serving children with autism spectrum disorder. The PEAKS project began in the summer of 2020 and began with a two-day workshop followed by online modules and a virtual learning community facilitated by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) to afford teachers expert consultation and support to overcome implementation barriers. The PEAKS project delivers the Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) curriculum, which allows teachers to seek RBT® certification. The PEAKS team has provided training to 85 teachers across the state of Texas that has impacted hundreds of classroom serving children with ASD statewide.

\*This work was supported in whole or in part by a grant from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The opinions and conclusions expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the opinions or policy of the THECB.



**Tonya Davis, Ph.D., BCBA-D**  
Professor, Educational Psychology  
PEAKS Director



We hope you enjoyed reading about our exciting things going on at the BCDD. We hope to return back to normal operating services this fall but we will keep the community posted! We are very fortunate to have the opportunity to provide clinical training opportunities for students across disciplines in school psychology, applied behavior analysis, special education, and social work while conducting quality research and providing a service to individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities. Thank you all for your continued support!

[Donate to the BCDD!](#)

### Contact Us

#### **Baylor Center for Developmental Disabilities**

2201 MacArthur Dr., Suite 101

Waco TX, 76708

254-537-1042

[bcdd@baylor.edu](mailto:bcdd@baylor.edu)

[www.baylor.edu/bcdd/](http://www.baylor.edu/bcdd/)



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