

# Indiana UCEDD Trainees

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2007-2008



*The Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC) has been host to an illustrious cadre of students in its Interdisciplinary Training Program. During their tenure at the Institute, graduate and undergraduate students work in a variety of venues, and engage in a variety of research, training, and program development activities. Their experience with people with disabilities, issues in the disability field, and with collaboration and team building creates a strong foundation for their careers once they leave Indiana University. The following are short “cameos” about each of these future professionals.*



*Sarah Junk*

I am in my last semester of the *Master of Library Science* program at IU, and I've been working at the Institute since January 2007 as a *Reference Assistant in the Library*. I work with a variety of patrons including people with disabilities as well as parents, professionals, caregivers, and educators. My primary job is to respond to these patrons' needs in person, over the phone, and via e-mail. My work here at the Institute has enabled me to understand the informational needs of patrons throughout the state and the local the community. Whether it is giving a person information on how to apply for disability or sending them a video to help them deal with their child's behavior problems, the variety of questions and responsibilities has exposed me to a community of people who are often ignored in main-stream libraries. It feels good to be able to make a difference in people's lives.



*Laura Carpenter*

I am a first-year doctoral student in the *HPER Kinesiology Motor Control* program. In December 2007, I completed a Master's Degree in Educational Psychology, Human Development. My undergraduate degree is in Occupational Therapy. I am a *Graduate Assistant* in the *Early Childhood Center*. My primary projects include the Essential School Readiness Skills Research Study, and issues related to Universal Design in Early Childhood Education. In addition, I consult with other ECC staff to provide an occupational therapy practitioner's perspective on various projects. Specific activities I am completing include survey data collection, literature reviews, and authorship. In general, my time at the Institute is allowing me to gain valuable experience regarding the multiple steps involved in the process of scholarly work, including academic collaboration and the use of various technologies, such as the Survey Monkey computer software. This experience will provide an excellent starting point for further research related to real-world issues of clinical decision-making and evidence-based practice in the areas of disability issues and methods of learning.



**Stephanie LaFontaine**

I am a doctoral student in the *School of Education Learning & Developmental Sciences* program, majoring in human development. I have a Master's in clinical psychology with Indiana licensure as both a mental health and school counselor. I bring quite a few years of practical experience in the field of mental health to my *graduate assistantship with the Center on Aging and Community*. I am working as a researcher for a state-funded project focused on gaining a deeper understanding of the possible supports that might assist family caregivers, often elderly, to keep their adult family member with a developmental disability in a home environment as well as the role of effective family planning for adults with disabilities beyond the life expectancy of their aging caregivers. I am investigating best practices for family support in the US and internationally to see how they may be applied in Indiana. Additionally, my role includes helping develop and conduct interviews and focus groups with families. I'm excited to be involved with this form of policy research, combining best practice inquiries with qualitative and participatory methods, because it involves older parents and older adults with developmental disabilities. This learning experience ties directly into my interest in human development across the lifespan, particularly in relation to parents and their adult children. It provides me with an opportunity to look at family relationships with the unique challenge of aging caregivers and adults with disabilities.

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I am a Ph.D. candidate in the *Department of Geography*, and have been working at the *Center for Aging and Community* since September 2007. As I moved on from employment in social services to an interest in national and international policy making, I have found my work at the Center to be a constructive bridge between my varying interests. Currently, I am working on the Indiana Partnership for Lifespan Communities Advantage Initiative, while I also work on my thesis and continue to teach regional geography. My responsibilities on the initiative include summarizing, graphing, and mapping data on the background characteristics and location of Indiana's aging population. Individual reports will be provided to each county and Area Agency in the state as informative guides for service provision to older adults. I am also gaining exposure to policies and social services related to the elder population, which help me to make positive contributions to policy development in the future.



**Frank Marshalek**



**Amy Piper**

I am a doctoral candidate in *Early Childhood Special Education*. My dissertation examines the relationship between parents of young children with disabilities and the professionals who provide services to them. I completed my MS degree in Speech Language Pathology in 1998 and have worked in a variety of settings over the past ten years. I am currently part of the team at the *Early Childhood Center*. The primary projects I am working on include the First Steps Evaluation and the First Steps Audit. As a graduate assistant, I have been helping to collect data, design surveys, and draft reports about our findings. Another focus of my work is to design and provide full-day workshops centered around Home Visiting and Functional Outcomes. These workshops will serve the early intervention practitioners around the state in continuing their professional growth. I also am an assistant instructor for the School of Education and the School for Continuing Studies. Working at the Institute has allowed me to apply the skills that I have acquired as a PhD student to a real world setting. This is very rewarding as my primary goal as a professional is to serve the young children of Indiana and their families.



**Michael Jones**

I am a PhD student (ABD) in the *Education Policy – International Comparative Education* program. I have been working as a *Graduate Research Assistant at the Center on Community Living and Careers* since May 2007. Some of my assignments have been to develop the database for the Benefits Information Network project and compile data and create graphs for state reports. I have also worked on the *Muscatatuck report*, compiling the data from interviews and preparing data analysis and graphs for a state report. Most of my work has been related to designing questionnaires; developing research questions and strategies; analyzing research data; running data reports; and assisting in writing/editing research reports. My training experience at the Institute has made me more keenly aware of the impact of past trends of institutional shortcomings and how paying more attention to policies that emphasize services, training, and hiring of “disabled” adults enriches people’s lives as well as national policies. I believe that my work here will widen my perspective about how to integrate people with disabilities into mainstream society and how to break down ignorance and assumptions regarding people with disabilities.

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I am a first year student in the *School of Library and Information Sciences*, working toward my MLS. I’ve been a *Reference Assistant at the CeDIR Library* since September, 2007. My main job is to provide reference services for our Library patrons and anyone else who needs information on disability issues. Working at CeDIR has been great because I get to work with a variety of people and issues I may not have encountered working anywhere else. After graduation, I plan to work as a reference librarian in either an academic or special collections library, and I know that the skills and service values I’m learning at CeDIR will prepare me for my future career.



**Todd Branson**



**Taryn Burton**

I am in my last semester at the *School of Library and Information Science*. I have always loved both finding information and helping people. At the library, I get to do both. I have been working at the *CeDIR Library* as a *Reference Assistant* since January 2007. I help people find what they are looking for, whether that be a book on autism or a phone call from someone wanting to know how to modify their home for accessibility. Although I believe I have been able to help people through the information I can provide, I think I have learned more from them than they have from me. I know I will use the knowledge and experiences I have gained here with whatever I do in life.