

Trainees Assist in Parent-Directed Consultations | CPD

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Barb Fiechtl

A clinical activity in the Utah Regional Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (URLEND) program allows trainees to interact with the families they are learning to serve. URLEND is an interdisciplinary post-graduate training program at Utah State University's Center for Persons with Disabilities.

"We're trying to bring together a real interdisciplinary activity for the students," said coordinator Barb Fiechtl, a URLEND core faculty member. "A lot of times, all they get to do is observe."

Parent-directed consultations allow trainees to apply the knowledge and experience they've gained to help families of children with special health care needs.

"We've been doing this for 10 years," Fiechtl said. "The first few parents were URLEND trainees themselves. We have them write a list of concerns—'I need a ramp,' or 'what am I going to do about this,' or 'my child has no friends.' Then we send the list of concerns out to all the trainees, who volunteer to be on the committee. The committee compiles lists of follow-up information that is needed to address the concerns. The committee has five

days to research the concerns and check in with core faculty."

The parent meeting lasts 1 1/2 to 2 hours, and occurs in a distance format with one facilitator, the parents and committee members, who present the results of their research. After the meeting, a report containing all of the information is sent to the parents.

"Since this is meant to encourage interdisciplinary cooperation, we ask for feedback from the trainees: 'what did you learn that's outside of your profession?'" Fiechtl said. "The trainees really like it, and the parents think it's really valuable."