Researchers Present At National Conference
Sue Reeves
04/29/2014

Mark Innocenti and Lori Roggman presented at an international conference in Turkey in early April.

Two researchers from Utah State University’s Center for Persons with Disabilities recently were invited presenters at the International Congress on Early Childhood Interventions in Antalya, Turkey. Mark Innocenti, Director of the Research and Evaluation Division, and Lori Roggman, a professor in the Family, Consumer and Human Development Department and a CPD Faculty Fellow, attended the five-day conference in early April.

About 400 people attended the event, which included one day of workshops and a four-day conference, Innocenti said.

“It was a nice mix of folks,” Innocenti said. “There were invited speakers from the United States, Europe and Turkey.”

Innocenti and Roggman have attended conferences in Turkey in the past, and have developed relationships with a couple of colleagues who worked on the Turkish PICCOLO (Parenting Interactions with Children: Checklist of Observations Linked to Outcomes) project.

Innocenti and Roggman presented the keynote address on April 5 entitled, “Respect, Emphasize and Empower: Early Parenting for Children with Disabilities.” The also presented “Providing Services in the Home: A Focus on Parent-Child Relationships and Practitioner Behavior” at a one-day workshop with Dr. Ibrahim Diken, a conference organizer, and colleague Birgul Bayoglu.

Innocenti also presented a plenary session on using PICCOLO with children with disabilities.

“It holds up very strongly the importance of parent interaction,” Innocenti said. “That comes through very clearly. We used that to raise a challenge on how we deliver services and what do we do when we’re in people’s homes.”

Innocenti and Roggman received positive feedback from both conference and workshop participants.

“As a result of the conference, we had requests to use and/or translate and use PICCOLO in services for parents of young children in Moldova, Croatia, and Iran with additional interest in using PICCOLO from scholars from India, South Africa, Iceland, Portugal, Spain,” Roggman said.

After the conference, Innocenti and Roggman toured Turkey for a few additional days.

“Turkey is really nice as a place to visit,” Innocenti said, adding that hotel and restaurant staff goes the extra mile to provide good service in an effort to increase tourism, a significant source of revenue for the future.

“Turkey is economically in pretty good shape,” Innocenti said. “They are supporting, very strongly, services for children with and without disabilities. There are a large number of programs for at-risk families, in cities and further flung areas where the refugees are coming from.”
Innocenti said there has been an increased interest in young kids and early childhood in Eastern Europe.

“They’re trying to improve services for orphans and children in foster care, and services for kids in general,” he said. “They’re really stepping out and doing it.”