Improving Language & Literacy Outcomes for Children with Communication Disorders in High Poverty Communities: A Personnel Preparation Grant

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, has funded a new project at Florida State University: Improving Language and Literacy Outcomes for Children with Communication Disorders in High Poverty Communities. Trainees will develop in-depth knowledge and skills in:

- Language and literacy development and evidence-based practices for populations at high risk for and with disabilities
- The influences of family, culture, linguistic diversity, and poverty on education and society
- Evidence-based assessment and intervention methods appropriate for children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- Interdisciplinary teamwork and collaborative consultation models for effective service delivery within natural environments

Trainees will be collaborating weekly with public school personnel in Professional Development School (PDS) partnerships or in early intervention agencies targeting high poverty communities to facilitate integration of research-validated practices into everyday educational practice. They will be mentored by project faculty members, doctoral students, and professionals from a community with an underrepresented population. Trainees will have multiple opportunities to integrate evidence-based practices into school, home, and community settings.

Trainees must meet departmental requirements for a master’s degree in speech-language pathology and for teacher certification in Florida and other states. Trainees must agree to fulfill the department research project requirement by completing a master’s thesis. Coursework and clinical experiences are provided to provide specialized training in the areas identified above. An example of a projected plan of studies is appended.

Stipends ($4000 per semester) and tuition waivers (for 9 graduate credits per semester) will be available for 4 trainees. Trainees also will be eligible for travel fund to attend and present at state and national conferences. Trainees should be aware that stipends and tuition waivers are considered forgivable loans as per the U.S. Department of Education. Forgivable loans can be repaid through training-related work whereby trainees perform full-time work related to their preparation in a setting serving children with special needs anywhere in the U.S. for a period of two years for every year of financial assistance.

Interested students should submit an application (see following page) to Jade Coston, Dept of Communication Disorders, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-1200. E-mail: jcoston@fsu.edu

Additional information available at the following website: http://pds.fsu.edu

Florida State University Communication Disorders Department participates in the Tallahassee Professional Development Schools Network
Application Process for Language & Literacy Grant

Interested students admitted to the Department of Communication Disorders at Florida State University are invited to submit an application for a traineeship by March 15th. Applications will be reviewed by project personnel and initial decisions about traineeships will be made by April 1st.

The application should include your name and contact information (mail, phone, and email), and three brief essays in response to the following three queries.

1. Describe your own experiences or interests that draw you to this training project.

2. In a true partnership, we are soliciting ideas from all participants. Select one of the goals below and describe one or two creative strategies that might advance that goal.

Four goals underlie our involvement in Professional Development School partnerships:

- Improved preparation of graduate student trainees
- Professional development opportunities for school personnel
- Action research as a basis for problem-solving and systems change
- Improved student outcomes

3. Participation in this project obligates you to employment in a school or other agency that serves children with special needs. What would you be looking for in your ideal job when you graduate?