



focus facts on community living

THE CENTER FOR LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP | OKLAHOMA'S FEDERALLY DESIGNATED UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (UCEDD)

October 2024

Access our website at: <https://ouhsc.edu/thecenter>

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

Each October, [National Disability Employment Awareness Month \(NDEAM\)](#) is recognized as a time to honor the contributions and talents that workers with disabilities bring to the nation's workforce and economy. The Department of Labor has made this year's theme: "[Access to Good Jobs for All.](#)" Check out some of the programs supporting people with disabilities in the workforces around Oklahoma including, [Project Search](#), [Department of Rehabilitative Services \(DRS\)](#), and [Dale Rogers Training Center](#). The Autism Foundation of Oklahoma also [provides a training for Oklahoma's employers called L.E.A.D. \(Learn. Educate. Accept. Develop\)](#). This training focuses on the benefits of hiring individuals with autism and I/DD and teaches businesses and employers how to foster inclusive work environments that include and respect individuals with disabilities. The Center for Learning and Leadership's [Employment Support Indicators](#) guide assists self-advocates, families, and professionals in their employment planning. This guide aims to help access to a person's preferences and support needs to help identify potential support needs in the working environment and to promote employment.

A Note of Thanks and Gratitude for Alison Barkoff, ACL Administrator

Alison Barkoff, [Administration for Community Living \(ACL\)](#) Administrator and Assistant Secretary for Aging, recently announced that she will be leaving the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in early October. Since joining ACL on the first day of the Biden-Harris Administration, Barkoff has led the agency with a strong commitment to disability and aging advocacy, working closely with advocates and federal partners to enhance civil rights protections and improve access to essential services and supports to people with disabilities.

At the [Center for Learning and Leadership | UCEDD](#), we want to express our deepest gratitude to Alison Barkoff for her leadership of the federal organization that plays such a crucial role in funding our work in Oklahoma through the UCEDD grant. Her dedication to advancing the rights and well-being of individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities has made a profound impact, and we are thankful for her support.

Support Oklahoma Family Support 360° Center Families This Holiday Season

Each year, the [Family Support 360° Center](#) offers a Holiday Assistance Program to support families in need during the winter season. Donations help provide winter clothing, culturally relevant toys, food baskets, and emergency supplies to families with children who have disabilities or special health care needs. [Please consider donating through the OU Foundation](#) to support this cause, as your contribution may be tax-deductible and will help fill gaps where federal or state funds cannot be used. Thank you for your generosity!

CLL Staff/Faculty Highlight: Erica Herrera

CLL's [Family Support 360° Center's](#) lead Family Support Coordinator, [Erica Herrera](#), received recognition for her 20+ years of service dedicated to serving Hispanic families in Oklahoma. [State Representative Arturo Alonso Sandoval](#) recognized Erica during Sooner SUCCESS's Minorities with Disabilities coalition Hispanic Inclusive Dance event in September. We are proud to serve with Erica and are grateful for the work she does to support Hispanic families who have family members with disabilities and special health care needs. Congratulations, Erica!

Free COVID-19 Tests Available

[Free at-home COVID-19 tests are available](#), thanks to a partnership between the U.S. Department of Health and the Postal Service. These tests can detect the current COVID-19 variants and are good to use until the end of 2024. Each order includes four tests.

[One free option that is more accessible for some people with disabilities is the Orasure IntelliSwab test](#), which is easier to use for people who are Blind, have low vision, or have difficulty with hand movements.

OKC Contemporary Introduces Sensory Hour

[OKC Contemporary is launching a pilot program that will offer a Sensory-Friendly Hour](#) at the museum. Explore the exhibits and enjoy a hands-on art activity in the studio. November's activity will be printing your own city. OKC Contemporary's trained staff will be available to provide support and accommodations for a comfortable experience. Sensory-friendly packs will be available as well as a Pre-Visit Toolkit to help plan your visit. If you need a break, visit the Quiet Space. This free program welcomes all ages. Caregivers must accompany children under 14. [Reserve your spot in November as space is limited!](#)

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Oct. 28 | Adaptive Trunk or Treat | 6:30p-8pm | Sellers Rec Center Parking Lot, OKC

OKC Parks and Sooner SUCCESS presents an inclusive and adaptive trunk or treat event where all will be welcome. Enjoy games, treats, candies, vendors, and more! The event will be held in the parking lot of the Sellers Community Center at 8301 S. Villa Ave in Oklahoma City. For more information, contact Stephen.brooks@okc.gov.

Oct. 31 | Long-term Planning – Financial and Employment Options | 12-1:30p | FREE & Online

The Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD and the Oklahoma Disability Law Center invite you to the family and community training on Long-term Planning - Financial and Employment Options. This training is designed to help plan for the future by sharing options to assure the protection of long-term supports and benefits, including waiver supports and methods for saving money beyond the typical Medicaid asset limits. Learn about options for community integrated employment such as Ticket to Work and options to help secure funds for future needs such as OK STABLE accounts. Come learn about what could be available to you or your loved one with disabilities. The [Long-Term Planning virtual event is free and registration is required](#).

Nov 7th | Oklahoma Family Caregiver Conference | 10a-3pm | Free & multiple locations in OK

[OK Cares](#) invites you to the Oklahoma Family Caregiver Conference on November 7, 2024. Doors open at 9 AM, with programming from 10 AM to 3 PM. This **free** event celebrates caregivers with sessions on respite, stress management, and support across the lifespan, plus door prizes! **Locations include Tulsa, OKC, Ardmore, McAlester, Enid, and online.** To register, visit www.okcares.org or call 918-493-0604. Don't miss this chance to recharge, connect, and learn valuable caregiving strategies!

Nov. 14 | Writing Meaningful Individual Plans | 12-1:30p | Free & Online

The Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD and the Oklahoma Disability Law Center invite you to our newest training on writing Individual Plans (IP) for waiver services. In this training, you will learn how to be a part of writing the individual plan for yourself or your family member. We will cover some basics and help you better understand setting measurable goals. [The Writing IP virtual event is free and registration is required](#).

Nov. 7-8th | Oklahoma Autism Conference | Edmond Hilton Garden Inn and Conference Center

Join the [Oklahoma Autism Network](#) for this year's Oklahoma Autism Conference. This year's theme is "**Together We Thrive: Advocacy, Belonging, and Connection for All.**" [Visit the website to register and to learn more about attendance cost options.](#)

SAVE THE DATE: [Oklahoma Family Network's annual Joining Forces Conference will be held March 28th, 2025. Stay tuned for more details!](#)

We want to hear from you! Do you have a blog or an event to share? Please send all information including a link (if applicable) to learn2lead-ucedd@ouhsc.edu. All submissions should be in no later than the fourth Friday of the month before publication (ex: 4th Friday in June for July's newsletter).

Sign-up to receive our free monthly newsletter *focus facts on community living* <http://tiny.cc/focusfacts>

Or use your cell phone camera and point it to this QR code



The University of Oklahoma advances a diverse, equitable, and inclusive university community by embracing each person's unique contributions, background, and perspectives. OU Norman, OU Tulsa, and the Health Sciences Center recognize that fostering an inclusive environment for all, with particular attention to the needs of the historically marginalized populations, is vital to the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of our institutional mission and enhances the OU experience for all students, faculty, and staff. **focus facts** is published for the University Affiliated Developmental Disabilities Network members. Its purpose is to highlight specific information and data items relevant to developing and sustaining positive community environments. Individual information items are provided for use in this form, or for further circulation. When re-printing information please reference *focus facts* and the month of issue noted below the banner at the top of this page. The name of a contact person for additional information on items referenced in the newsletter is provided for your convenience. If you have data, information or a story to report relevant to community living, please send it to **focus facts** Editor at the Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD OU Health Sciences Center, PO Box 2690, Oklahoma City, OK 73126. Please include the information source, by title, a one paragraph (or less) description or story, a contact name who can provide additional information on the subject, and a daytime or evening telephone number for the contact.

If you have questions regarding the format for submissions, please call the Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD Headquarters Office at (405) 271-4500. The University Affiliated Developmental Disabilities Network is open to membership by any organization or individual who shares the interests of Network members. The Network is dedicated to identifying opportunities for collaboration and information exchange among its participating members, which leads to improving our statewide, regional or local capacity to provide a better living environment in Oklahoma for people with developmental and other disabilities and their families. The Network is partially supported through a grant from the U.S. Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Health and Human Services, and by the Offices of the Designated Representatives of the Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD Collaborating Partners.

If you have a disability (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, Blind/low-vision, mobility, cognitive, etc.), and require accommodations, please reach out to Learn2Lead@ouhsc.edu. It is helpful if you share what type of accommodations will be needed to ensure that you are able to use the resource materials.