

NM-PASS (New Mexico-Preparing Autism Spectrum Specialists)
Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities
Combined Priority for Personnel Preparation
CFDA 84.325K

Focus Area D: Training Personnel in Minority Institutions to Serve Children, Including Infants
and Toddlers, with Disabilities

The Department of Special Education/Communication Disorders at New Mexico State University proposes a four-year project to prepare highly qualified educators using research-based curricula and pedagogy to provide services to students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in rural educational settings and to work effectively with their families. Because New Mexico does not offer a licensure endorsement in ASD, this project will provide coursework, with practicum experiences embedded in the courses, designed to recruit and retain culturally and linguistically diverse prospective and current special education teachers. The program will follow standards established by the Council for Exceptional Children for the Education of children with ASD in cooperation with the National Professional Competencies for teachers of Autism. Additionally, this project will prepare, mentor, and evaluate these educators with supervised assessments focusing on the provision of services to students birth to age 21 with ASD in self contained and inclusive educational settings. Participants in this project will earn a Specialization in Autism Spectrum Disorders, Master of Arts degree, and a special education teaching license. This four year personnel preparation project will prepare a total of 21 educators that will have the knowledge and skills required to provide a high quality education using research-based practices which will improve outcomes for culturally and linguistically diverse children with ASD and work effectively with their families.

Due to the rise in prevalence of ASD, an estimated 1:110 children, PK-12 education has its challenges in addressing the educational needs of these students. This increase has created an intense need for specialists who can serve this population of students by using research based practices that ensure high quality services are delivered to children with ASD and their families.

An intensive recruitment component will actively seek out applicants who represent the cultural and linguistic diversity that is present in southern New Mexico. Recruitment efforts will also focus on bringing individuals with disabilities to the program. Students will participate in four courses on ASD (Introduction to Autism, Behavior and Autism, Social Skills and Autism, and Communication and Autism), resulting in a Specialization in ASD, in addition to the coursework required for their Master of Arts and special education teaching license.

Project Goals:

Goal 1: To prepare 21 highly qualified special education professionals with interdisciplinary and collaborative knowledge and skills based on research-based practices to effectively intervene with culturally and linguistically diverse children with ASD and their families.

Goal 2: To manage, evaluate, and disseminate the activities and models used in NM-PASS to identify any problems and solutions and to share the results regionally and nationally to assist other programs.

NM-PASS will prepare teachers to work effectively with CLD students and families with ASD.