What is a LEND Program?

The Georgia Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (GaLEND) Program provides a one-year interdisciplinary training experience that incorporates both didactic and experiential learning in clinical and community settings. This program prepares future leaders to enhance the lives of children and families through culturally competent and family-centered services, more coordinated systems of care, and responsive social policies.

The GaLEND Program is funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) of the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA). GaLEND operates as part of the Center for Leadership in Disability (CLD) at Georgia State University (GSU), in collaboration with the Satcher Health Leadership Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM). GaLEND collaborates with a number of community partners, including the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These partners offer expert faculty and experiences that distinguish the GaLEND Program.

Collectively, the 43 LEND programs across the United States form a network that addresses regional and national issues of importance to children with special health care needs with a focus on children with autism and related disorders. LEND programs grew from the 1950s efforts of the Children's Bureau (now MCHB) to identify children with disabilities as a priority of Title V of the Social Security Act. LENDs are currently funded under the Autism CARES Act.

While each LEND program is unique, with its own focus and expertise, they all provide interdisciplinary training, have faculty and trainees from a wide range of disciplines, and include parents or family members as faculty and paid program participants. They also share the following objectives:

1. To advance the knowledge and skills of all child health professionals to improve health care delivery systems for children with autism and related developmental disabilities;
2. To provide high-quality interdisciplinary education that emphasizes the integration of services from state and local agencies, private providers, and communities;
3. To provide health professionals with skills that foster community-based partnerships; and
4. To promote innovative and effective practices that enhance cultural competency, family-centered care, and interdisciplinary partnerships.
5. To prepare future leaders from diverse backgrounds to improve health care access, quality of care, and outcomes for children, especially those from historically underserved racial and ethnic groups.

Who is a LEND Trainee?

A LEND trainee is someone who wants to make the world a better place – and understands the importance of gaining the leadership skills and perspectives to make that happen. Applicants for the position of LEND trainees have generally already demonstrated an interest in improving the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities and a commitment to pursuing leadership roles in policy, direct supports, education, and advocacy. Most GaLEND trainees are advanced master’s, doctoral, or post-doctoral students from GSU and MSM. GaLEND trainees also include individuals with developmental disabilities and family members as advocacy trainees, as well as early career professionals from CDC and community practitioners -- these individuals are not required to be enrolled as graduate students. An annual stipend is available for eligible trainees (stipends amounts vary by discipline, level of training, and whether the trainee is otherwise employed); stipend recipients must be US citizens or permanent residents.

Training Activities

The GaLEND Program develops competencies in seven domains: (1) leadership; (2) public health; (3) interdisciplinary clinical training and practice; (4) cultural competence; (5) family-centered care; (6) emerging issues in policy and practice related to children with neurodevelopmental disabilities; and (7) research. Learning experiences include weekly didactic seminars (Friday from 1pm-4pm), Wednesday evening leadership seminars (5pm-8pm, 2-4 times per month), interdisciplinary group activities, systems and policy trainings, clinical care coordination, a research practicum, and family mentoring. The program takes place over two semesters starting August 19, 2015 and ending April 30, 2016. An optional training experience on autism will be held over four weeks in May and June 2016.

Page 1 of 4
**LEND Disciplines and Coordinators for the 2015-2016 Academic Year**

**Youth Self-Advocates**
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**Audiology**
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**Family Advocacy**
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**Health Administration**
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**Medicine – Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics**
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**Medicine – Family Medicine**
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**Medicine – Pediatrics**
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**Nursing**
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**Nutrition**
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**Physical Therapy**
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**Psychology – Clinical**
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**Psychology – School**
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**Public Health**
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**Social Work**
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**Special Education**
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**Speech and Language Pathology**
Julie Washington, PhD, CCC/SP  
jwashington@gsu.edu

**Program Requirements**
GaLEND program trainees are required to complete a minimum of 300 hours or more of didactic, advanced clinical, community, and interdisciplinary leadership training. To the extent possible, we will work with individual trainees to accommodate personal and professional schedules and family and program requirements. All trainees are expected to:

- Attend GaLEND Orientation on Wednesday, August 19, 2015
- Attend Wednesday evening Leadership Seminars from 5PM to 8PM
- Attend weekly Friday afternoon courses on Neurodevelopmental Disabilities, Systems of Care and Health Policy that meet on Friday afternoons from 1PM-4PM
- Attend occasional all-day Friday sessions; these will be used for community experiences and field trips
- Attend one two-to-three-day training/leadership opportunity with the assistance of travel stipend from LEND
- Participate in clinical and community training and document hours in setting.
- Attend regular meetings of assigned project team (usually weekly or bi-weekly)
- Complete independent assignments related to family and self-advocacy mentoring, developing informational resources for families, providing technical assistance, and delivering community education programs
- Complete observations in community practice sites
- Demonstrate disciplinary and interdisciplinary competencies in community practice sites
- Meet regularly with assigned GaLEND Mentor
- Develop and present a collaborative research/leadership project related to LEND and MCH goals

**Admission Guidelines and Application**
If you are interested in applying for a position as a GaLEND Program trainee, please contact your discipline coordinator listed below. The application form should be completed following your discussion with your discipline coordinator regarding your qualifications, interests, and goals. Application materials should be submitted to your LEND discipline coordinator and to LEND Project Coordinator, Mark Crenshaw.

**Georgia LEND Program Leadership**
Daniel Crimmins, PhD, Director
Mark Crenshaw, MTS, Director of Interdisciplinary Training and Project Coordinator
Emily Graybill, PhD, Course Director for Neurodevelopmental Disabilities Course
Harry Heiman, MD, MPH Co-Course Director for Systems of Care Course
Akilah Heggs, MA, CCC/A Co-Course Director for Systems of Care Course
Stephen Truscott, PsyD, Course Director for Leadership Course

For further information about the GaLEND Program, please contact Mark Crenshaw at 404.413.1385 or email mcrenshaw@gsu.edu
Directions for Applicants

1. Include this page with your signature at the bottom to affirm that you understand the goals of the GaLEND Program and that you agree to meet all program requirements.

2. Attach the following: (a) current curriculum vitae or resume, and (b) typed, narrative responses to the questions below.

3. Submit names and contact information for two faculty members or supervisors who would be willing to speak to your qualifications for and fit with the goals of the GaLEND Program. This information may be included on the page with the narrative responses.

4. E-mail one copy of your application material to the faculty member from your discipline (listed on p. 3) AND a second copy to Mark Crenshaw, Project Coordinator at mcrenshaw@gsu.edu by Friday, April 24, 2015 for Georgia State University student applicants or Friday, May 15, 2015 if you are a community applicant*. If you represent a discipline that is not included on the current list, please contact Mark Crenshaw.

   * We observe a rolling admissions process for GaLEND applicants. We will contact all Georgia State student applicants regarding admission decisions prior to May 1, 2015. Community applicant admission decisions will be communicated prior to June 1, 2015.

Narrative Questions

Please address each of the following in one or two paragraphs. Please type your responses and attach the pages to the application packet. (Limit 1 page total)

1. The GaLEND Program focuses on family-centered, culturally competent practices in providing supports and services to children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families. What experiences have you had with individuals with disabilities and their families?

2. What are your career goals related to children with disabilities, family members, and community health services?

3. What are your goals for participation in the GaLEND Program?

Declaration of Intent to Participate in the GaLEND Program

By signing below, you acknowledge 1) your understanding that the purpose of the GaLEND Program is to prepare trainees from diverse professional disciplines to assume leadership roles in their respective fields, 2) your commitment to the goal of improving the health of individuals with disabilities and the responsiveness of the systems that support them, 3) your interest in developing your own competence in policy, advocacy, research, and clinical skills needed to affect positive change, and 4) your understanding and commitment to completing all program requirements and fulfilling all leadership competencies of the GaLEND Program.

Applicant Signature ______________________________________ Date ___________________