

**Post-Doctoral Training Program
in
Pediatric Rehabilitation**



POSTDOCTORAL POSITION IN PEDIATRIC REHABILITATION RESEARCH APPLICATION INFORMATION

Location: West Orange, New Jersey

Kessler Foundation, in collaboration with Children's Specialized Hospital in New Brunswick, New Jersey, is seeking an applicant for a Postdoctoral Fellowship in Pediatric Rehabilitation Research. This two-year program prepares scientists for a career in rehabilitation research and disability studies with a focus on the specialty areas of pediatric rehabilitation and outcomes research.

Required Qualifications

- PhD in a field relevant to medical rehabilitation or disability studies, such as psychology, occupational therapy, vocational rehabilitation, public health, or a related discipline. Doctoral candidates planning dissertation research in these fields are also encouraged to apply. The dissertation defense must be completed prior to beginning fellowship.
- An expressed interest in pursuing a career research focused on the health, well-being and community integration of children with special health care needs.
- Strong research skills. Proficiency in quantitative methods preferred.
- Excellent academic record. History of publication and presentation of original research preferred.
- Human subjects research experience. Experience with children and/or people with disabilities preferred.
- Eligibility to work in the United States

Application Instructions

To apply, please submit the following materials:

1. cover letter detailing research, background, and training experience
2. curriculum vitae
3. three letters of recommendation
4. copy of graduate program transcripts
5. copies of publications or manuscripts that illustrate your research

Please send your application materials and any questions to:

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Please visit us at:

<http://www.kesslerfoundation.org>

<https://kesslerfoundation.org/researchabout-our-research/postdoctoral-fellowship-program>

POSTDOCTORAL POSITION IN PEDIATRIC REHABILITATION RESEARCH PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The pediatric rehabilitation post-doctoral fellowship is administered by Kessler Foundation and Children's Specialized Hospital. Fellows spend at least 75% of their time working on research projects starting from inception (e.g., study formulation, grant writing, etc.) to manuscript publication. Fellows also receive an academic appointment in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Rutgers University.

Didactic Curriculum

Several of the didactic experiences are required of all postdoctoral training participants to ensure that all fellows receive consistent and comprehensive education. These experiences include:

1. Bi-monthly Fellows Didactics Seminar:
 - Faculty lectures on a variety of rehabilitation and research topics.
 - The core areas are rehabilitation populations (e.g., Stroke, Spinal Cord Injury), research methodology, rehabilitation outcomes, and rehabilitation engineering.
 - Presentations on professional issues and ethics.
 - Fellows' lectures on special topics of relevance to their individual training program.

2. Weekly Team Meetings
 - Presentations and discussions on research activities and study findings specific to pediatric and outcomes research.
 - Forum for all members to discuss and receive feedback on new research ideas, interpretation of data, and professional issues.
 - Fellows are expected to present on topics of interest, grant proposals, and research findings.

There are a multitude of educational opportunities at Kessler Foundation, Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation Rutgers University, and Children's Specialized Hospital that allows postdoctoral fellows to individualize their didactic experience according to their interests and background. Some didactics that fellows have typically attended include: Resident Lecture Series, Neuropsychology Speaker Series, and Cognitive Neuroscience Colloquium Series. Lectures taking place at other local institutions (e.g. Columbia University, NYU) are also available for fellows to attend.

Special efforts are made to ensure understanding of ethical standards in pediatric rehabilitation research, and to ensure all fellows' competence in professional practice relevant to cultural and individual differences and diversity. In addition to specific lectures addressing these topics in the mandatory Fellows Seminar, all fellows are expected to complete training and certification in research ethics and human subjects' protection.

Mentoring

Each fellow is assigned a primary mentor, who works closely with them to develop an

individually tailored program that serves both the broader training goals and the specific interests of the fellow. The primary mentor will have at least weekly meetings with the fellow to assure adequate progress and address general issues that may arise in the course of training. Each fellow is additionally assigned one or more assistive mentors, with whom he or she meets bimonthly. The matching of the mentors with mentees is mutually agreed upon during the development of the fellow's initial training plan and is largely based on research interests and long-term career goals.

Fellows also receive group supervision from various scientists or other faculty, depending on the specific requirements of the individual fellowship plan and clinical or research involvement. The nature of the mentoring process is collegial and progressive, with increasing levels of responsibility expected of fellows as they pursue their program goals. Supervision is provided by the research faculty and is arranged as dictated by the training goals. Each fellow's primary supervisor provides evaluation of the fellow's progress every three months with a full evaluation at the end of each year.

Research Areas

The postdoctoral fellow is also given the opportunity to contribute to the active research programs of their mentoring team. The research programs affiliated with this postdoctoral fellowship include:

- **Return to School: A Mixed Methods Investigation of Community Integration after Pediatric Rehabilitation** (Principal Investigators: Amanda Botticello & John O'Neill, PhD). This NIDILRR-funded study is based on a successful pilot study that linked Children's Specialized Hospital medical records to New Jersey State Department of Education records of a large cohort of children with special health care needs. The research team is using a combination of medical and educational records, focus groups, and interviews to understand the experiences of returning to school after pediatric rehabilitation. Their goal is to develop a prospective process to identify the educational needs of these children that can be implemented across a variety of healthcare settings.
- **Understanding Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome Treatment in an Era of Addiction: A Pilot Investigation** (Principal Investigators: Amanda Botticello & John O'Neill, PhD). Researchers at Kessler Foundation researchers and Children's Specialized Hospital are collaborating to study the outcomes among infants treated for opioid withdrawal in the Hospital's Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) Program which is based on a combination of pharmacotherapy and environmental supports. The few existing studies of children with NAS suggest they are at increased risk for infections, sleep disturbances, and vision, motor, cognitive and behavioral problems. Detailing the infants' outcomes post withdrawal will enable researchers to understand the factors that influence the severity of NAS and responses to the treatment protocol. This information will enable clinicians at Children's Specialized Hospital to evaluate the effects of NAS treatment practices and tailor their interventions to achieve optimal outcomes for this vulnerable population.

Research Environment

Kessler Foundation is a non-profit rehabilitation research and education organization, with the primary purpose of promoting high quality rehabilitation research and development activities that will improve health, promote wellness and ultimately improve the quality of life for people with disabilities. The Kessler Foundation presently has a full-time staff of 152 individuals, with 2 locations in West Orange and East Hanover, New Jersey. Kessler Foundation scientists conduct a wide range of research activities across Centers for Stroke, Traumatic Brain Injury, Outcomes and Assessment, Spinal Cord Injury, Mobility and Rehabilitation Engineering, Neuropsychology and Neuroscience, and Employment and Disability research.

Children's Specialized Hospital is the nation's leading provider of inpatient and outpatient care for children from birth to 21 years of age facing special health challenges — from chronic illnesses and complex physical disabilities like brain and spinal cord injuries, to developmental and behavioral issues like autism and mental health. At 13 different New Jersey locations, Children's Specialized Hospital's clinicians partner with families to make our many innovative therapies and medical treatments more personalized and effective so each child can reach their full potential. The Research Center at Children's Specialized Hospital strives to advance pediatric rehabilitation by initiating and supporting evidence-based studies that explore innovative interventions, technologies and approaches to specialized care for children and adolescents. Children's Specialized Hospital research focuses on five core areas: Autism, Brain Injury, Chronic Health Conditions, Cognition, and Mobility.

Benefits and Stipend

The fellowship program offers a comprehensive benefit package including a group health plan, paid accrued vacation, sick time, and holidays. Salary is commensurate with NIH guidelines.