Division Spotlight: Developmental Pediatrics

The increasing identification of behavioral and developmental disorders (e.g., autism spectrum disorder [ASD]) has led to high demand for developmental-behavioral services. The Division of Developmental Pediatrics, located in the Munroe-Meyer Institute, has an interprofessional staff of clinicians with varied backgrounds and areas of expertise. We have two full-time, board-certified Developmental/Behavioral Pediatricians (2 of the 4 Board Certified DBPeds in NE), two part-time nurse practitioners, a child psychologist and a clinical nurse specialist and a nurse manager.

We provide interdisciplinary clinical services for children, adolescents and young adults with a range of developmental and behavioral conditions and/or special health care needs. These services include initial consultations for diagnostic evaluation, assessment, and treatment planning as well as ongoing follow-up for implementation of treatment plans. This may include medication or behavioral treatments as well as coordination of care across multiple disciplines. Children at risk for developmental and behavioral disorders are also evaluated and monitored.

In addition to clinic-based services, our faculty and staff are involved in a number of community based efforts to inform public policy that promotes the optimal development and behavioral health outcomes for all children. For example, our faculty and staff provide leadership for the Nebraska State Autism Collaborative and collaborate with faculty from MMI, the Department of Psychiatry, and the College of Nursing to provide Child Mental Health Consultative Services for Nebraska LB 556.

Developmental Pediatrics Faculty & Clinical Staff

Cynthia Ellis, M.D.
Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry
Board Certified: Pediatrics; Developmental/Behavioral Pediatrics; Neurodevelopmental Disabilities

Cynthia Ellis, MD completed residency training in Pediatrics followed by fellowship training in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. In addition to over 25 years of clinical and research experience in DBPeds, she is the
Howard Needelman, M.D.
**Associate Professor of Pediatrics**
Board Certified: Pediatrics; Neonatology; Developmental/Behavioral Pediatrics

Howard Needelman, MD has 30 years of experience as a neonatologist and 18 years of experience in DBPeds. He is the co-director of the Nebraska Neonatal TIPS (Tracking Infant Program Statewide) Program, which currently has one of the largest NICU follow up databases in the country. Dr. Needelman has been a member of the Nebraska DHHS Newborn Child Death Review Team since 1994 and was appointed to the Executive Board, Provisional Section of Child Death Review of the American Academy of Pediatrics in 2015.

Therese Mathews, Ph.D., APRN
**Assistant Professor of Psychology**

Therese Mathews, PhD, APRN was a pediatric nurse practitioner for 15 years prior to completing a PhD in clinical child psychology 10 years ago and psychiatric nurse practitioner training last year. Dr. Mathews provides clinical services in the DBPeds clinic and is on the teaching faculty of the UNMC College of Nursing. She received the 2015 March of Dimes Nurse of the Year Award Academic Excellence Award.

Megan Neemann, Ph.D., LP
**Assistant Professor of Psychology**

Megan Neemann, Ph.D., recently completed a Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Psychology at MMI following 5 years’ experience as a school psychologist in Utah. She provides clinical services in the DBPeds clinic, clinical supervision of MMI psychology trainees, and is involved in ongoing evaluation research in the field of ASD and early intervention. In addition, Dr. Neemann is the Coordinator of the LEND Autism Leadership Academy.

Sandy Houser, MSN, APRN

Sandy Houser, MSN, APRN has about 30 years of experience in developmental nursing and is involved in many community organizations.

Caroline Tolley, BSN, RN, CPN

Caroline Tolley is the Nurse Manager for the MMI 412 Clinics and provides nursing support for the DBPeds practitioners. In addition to over 20 years of experience in nursing, she has over 10 years of experience in the management of clinic operations and healthcare administration.

Brigette Vaughan, MSN, APRN

Brigette Vaughan, MSN, APRN has over 20 years of clinical experience in mental health field. She divides her time as a part-time, psychiatric nurse practitioner in the DBPeds clinic and a study coordinator for the UNMC Department of Psychiatry. She is very active in the Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska (BHECN).

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**Developmental Pediatrics Clinical Programs**
Interdisciplinary Clinics:

- Neonatal Follow-Up "TIPS" (Tracking Infant Progress Statewide) Clinic
- Neurobehavioral Clinic
- ASD Management Clinic
- Cardiovascular Follow-Up Clinic
- LEND Interdisciplinary Training Clinic

Outreach Clinics:

- Columbus Behavioral Health Clinic
- Rushville Behavioral Health Clinic
- Children's Hospital Autism Diagnostic Clinic
- "TIPS" Clinics at Children's Hospital and the Methodist Women's Hospital

Developmental Pediatrics Clinics:

- Dr. Ellis: Expertise in psychopharmacology in neurodevelopmental disabilities, ASD, and ADHD; dual diagnosis (MH & DD/ID)
- Dr. Needelman: Expertise in high-risk neonatal follow-up; developmental assessment; neurodevelopmental disabilities and ASD
- Ms. Vaughan: Expertise in treatment of psychiatric disorders; ADHD; psychopharmacology; mental health services
- Dr. Mathews: Expertise in behavior management; ASD and social skills; combined medication/behavioral management

Developmental Pediatrics Educational Programs

- DBPeds Pediatric and Family Medicine Resident Rotations (Howard Needelman, Rotation Director)
- MMI LEND Interdisciplinary Training Program (Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities) - a MCH-funded program providing interdisciplinary leadership training, autism-specific training, technical assistance and program development for graduate-level students, faculty, practicing professionals and families (Ellis - LEND Director)
- Project DOCC (Delivery of Chronic Care) - a parent-driven course with a structured curriculum using parents of children who have chronic illness or disability as the teachers; enhances the education of residents and students by offering a perspective that faculty usually do not have and promoting provider/patient partnerships
- Clinical practicum site for UNMC COM psychiatric nurse practitioner students
- Clinical supervision of MMI Psychology trainees

Developmental Pediatrics Contact Information