

# Communication and Early Childhood Research and Practice Center



2017



## Mission of the Center

An expanding body of research supports the importance of early intervention/education for young children with special needs and their families. The Communication and Early Childhood Research and Practice Center (CEC-RAP) is designed to promote interdisciplinary contributions to the field of early intervention/education for young children with disabilities, communication disorders, and/or multiple risks for learning. CEC-RAP focuses on the continued expansion of research, personnel preparation, and service delivery through collaboration with interrelated projects in the College of Communication of Information, College of Education, and the Autism Institute in the College of Medicine.

## Goals of the Center

To be recognized as a major national source of research and personnel development in early intervention/education for children with developmental delays and disabilities, communication disorders or multiple risks, CEC-RAP will:

1. Have continuity, diversity and growth of funding sources from governmental and private sources for research and demonstration,
2. Offer funded personnel preparation programs for graduate students (master's and doctoral) that will foster recruitment of the best scholars,
3. Invest in undergraduate research, leadership and service learning opportunities that promote the future of the Center,
4. Foster interdisciplinary and interagency collaboration in early childhood policy and program development within an engaged community, and
5. Develop and maintain model programs for research and professional development.

## Spotlight - Eva Černíková

Exchanging ideas, information and friendship! Welcome Eva Černíková to CEC-RAP!

Eva Černíková joined CEC-RAP as a Fulbright Scholar in January 2017 from Czech Republic. Eva worked with children with visual impairments as well as other developmental disabilities as a master's level early intervention provider in the Olomouc region of the Czech Republic. She chose FSU and the CEC-RAP Center to study FGRBI and Caregiver Coaching, but was also interested in learning more about US early intervention policies and practices. It was enlightening to see the similarities and differences in our service delivery systems... both what works and what doesn't.

During her study period, Eva participated in a variety of research and practice activities based upon her goals for implementation within her practice in the Czech Republic. Eva's interests were in supporting families to increase their participation with their children's intervention especially with mental health concerns such as maternal depression, poverty, or domestic abuse. Eva researched strategies for integrating family capacity building practices with those used clinically to support families in crisis. Her goal was to promote family decision making. She attended professional development activities at FSU, DMM sites, and the University of Florida. She also participated in FSU coursework. We're excited to see Eva's implementation of her new approach with the families she sees. Thanks for joining us Eva.



# Personnel and Professional Development

2017 has brought many new exciting accomplishments and activities for the new and ongoing projects at CEC-RAP.

**Autism Spectrum Specialized Education and Training (ASSET)** had five graduating students accept positions to be SLPs this past year throughout Florida and the US. Jessica Clark from FSU, Alisebeth Sandoval from UW-Madison, Jessie Gortema from GVSU, Michelle Picket from Northwestern, and Taylor Gwin from UF joined our returning students in the fall of 2017 as our last cohort of Autism Spectrum Specialized Education and Training (ASSET). Meredith Kurtz, Emily Bratek, Erin Travis, and Teresa Viteri continued practicum in public schools supporting students with ASD. (<http://asset.fsu.edu>)

**Training in Research, Autism and Interdisciplinary Leadership (TRAIL)** is a collaboration between CEC-RAP and the Autism Institute with Juliann Woods and Amy Wetherby as Principal Investigators for the five year leadership training project. Abby Delehanty, Ciera Lorio, Jess Hooker, and Iris Davis continue their progress toward completion of their degree. (<http://trail.med.fsu.edu/>)

**Developmental Disabilities Certificate (DD)** The Developmental Disabilities Certificate is celebrating its 15th birthday at FSU. It has grown from five students to almost 50 each semester! Students enroll in the 12 credit certificate program from Psychology, Child and Family Studies, Music Therapy, Communication Science and Disorders, Pre-professional training for Occupational and Physical Therapy, Education and more. To enroll, students must complete nine credits in approved interdisciplinary courses from eight different departments that engage students in learning about individuals with various types of developmental disabilities of all ages. They also complete a 45 hour community practicum at over ten different settings from early care and education, to adult supports and geriatric services. This year the Growing Room joined the program to provide more opportunities for our students to learn about inclusive programs. The diversity of students involved, their career goals, and what they share they have learned is amazing at the end of each semester. (<https://commdisorders.cci.fsu.edu/academic-programs-admissions/interdepartmental-developmental-disabilities-certificate/>)

**Distance Mentoring Model (DMM)** promotes the implementation of family guided routines based intervention (FGRBI) for families of children eligible for Part C services and supports. Incorporating evidence-based practices for professional development with technology strategies and supports, DMM engages early intervention providers, service coordinators and program administrators in a systematic change process to increase the use of recommended practices with children and families. In addition to Iowa, collaborations with New Mexico and Pennsylvania resulted in over 500 early intervention providers participating in training activities. In addition to state level participation, agencies or programs across the country use materials and coaching strategies from DMM. New videos were added to the collection on the FGRBI website (<http://fgrbi.fsu.edu>). (<http://dmm.cci.fsu.edu>)





# Distance Mentoring Model for Iowa's Early ACCESS System

Next steps for sustainability were initiated with a new six-year contract for Iowa DMM to focus on the development of internal coaches and online professional development system. This project, with the IA Department of Education, Early ACCESS program will expand the development of a statewide system of early intervention providers supported internal coaches able to sustain the implementation of FGRBI and SS-OO-PP-RR. Statewide practice change involves multiple components benefit from sustained coaching, opportunities for reflection, and problem solving (Salisbury et al., 2017).

Building a culture of coaching is a logical next step Early ACCESS. The use of internal and external coaches (Hawkins, 2012) is recommended for scale up and is integral to sustainability. Both themes resonate with the development of regional implementation teams as a component of implementation frameworks and the focus on sustainable innovations, flexible to emerging evidence and the changing needs of families and society. We are looking forward to our next contract.



In 2017, we began our 6th cohort of professional development for Early ACCESS providers in the state of Iowa. The 2017-2018 cohort has 24 new providers and six new internal coaches. Support will continue for the nine internal coaches that began last year in Cohort 5. This year are continuing to provide feedback to the providers and internal coaches on their implementation of FGRBI and use of the SS-OO-PP-RR coaching approach across the state with the previous participants. Trio members share their videos with each other, observe, and comment on the practices during the home visit. Working along with the trio members, is an internal coach from the same AEA. The role of the internal coach is to build on their own capacity as a practitioner to coach others in FGRBI.



This year, DMM launched the Exemplar Library in order to continue and expand the DMM professional development toolkit. The Exemplar Library houses video examples of “Recommended Practices” and “How-to” examples that are great for training purposes. Both SS-OO-PP-RR and 5Q examples are available, along with “Check Your Learning” examples where viewers are able to watch clips with and without comments. The library can be found through account holders of the Torsh TALENT CEC-RAP Network.



DMM is excited to welcome Mari Therrien as a new external coach. Mari is a pediatric physical therapist and the owner of Lil' Explorers Pediatric Therapy in Tallahassee. She moved to Tallahassee in 2016 with her wife, Michelle and their three children from State College, PA where she worked as a pediatric PT for Easter Seals. Mari's continued passion for technology made her a perfect fit for DMM as a new external coach.



# Distance Mentoring Model for New Mexico's Fit Focus Program

Over the past year, Fit Focus began the process of developing teams and peer coaches who could promote the expansion of their practices across teams, agencies and the state. Program supervisors participated in the trainings to learn about the Key Indicators and the SS-OO-PP-RR coaching practices. This allowed them to understand both the implementation and intervention procedures in the model and what to do to support their providers to be able to achieve them with fidelity. This was an interesting adaptation of the FGRBI coaching approach to match the Fit Focus system of management. Supervisors engaging as



coaches support the implementation across the agency. It also integrates coaching as PD to address their vision as well as to support personnel management and evaluation. It was important however, to ensure coaching was not confused with evaluation. The use of their model of reflective supervision supported the providers while also ensuring the fidelity of implementation was a program expectation. In their final year of Race to the Top funding, Fit Focus expanded the number of programs participating as well as furthering the scale up for implementation for the pilot sites. Agencies across the state were identified to participate in both face to face trainings and on-line modules and webinars. Even though the professional development calendar was much shorter, the participants developed teams and began to coach each other to use the Key Indicators and begin to change their practice with understanding and increased skill.

Upon completion of the project, Larry Edelman produced three videos that have been posted on the Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program Video Library (<http://www.cdd.unm.edu/ecln/FIT/fit-focus-video-library.html>). These videos are the culmination of several years work conducted by the FIT Program under the federal Race To the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant, and are part of New Mexico's focus on supporting quality evidence-based early intervention practices as part of New Mexico's FOCUS TQRIS (Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System). The videos demonstrate how Fit Focus is using video technology for reflection and coaching to improve practices utilizing the Family Guided Routines Based Intervention and Caregiver Coaching.

We want to send a special thank you to the providers we had the pleasure to work with this past year. Clarissa Franco, Stephanie Hurbina, Sonya Spencer, and Laura Sarabia from La Vida Felicidad, and Jessi Stockwell, Delia Acosta, and Jackie Keith from ENMRSH Early Childhood Program. Their enthusiasm was amazing! We will miss seeing our friends in New Mexico on a regular basis. Onward and upward!

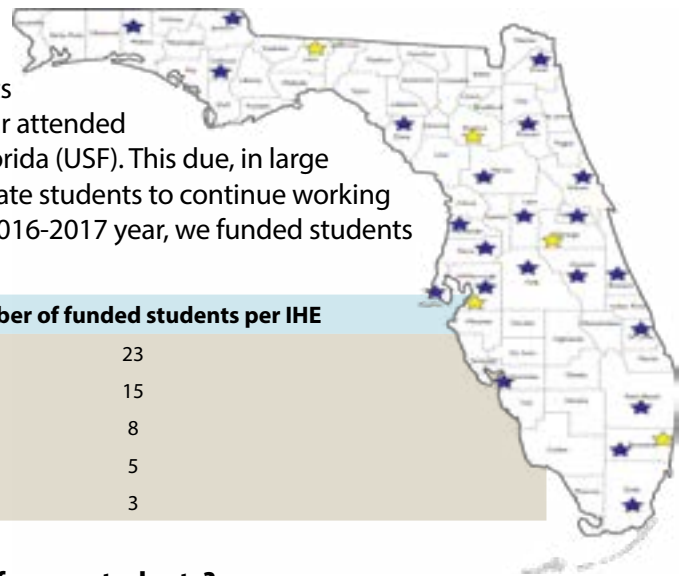


# Florida Department of Education

Recruiting and retaining highly qualified SLPs to serve in public schools is a challenging priority. To meet this need, the FL-DOE Tuition Support program funds students to obtain their Masters degree and continue working in the Florida public schools. Fifty-four students were funded during the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Twelve graduated from their programs in May and in August 2017, and are beginning to work in the Florida public schools this fall. Four of those graduates are working in small and rural districts. The table below reflects the student demographics, detailing their universities and school districts.

## Who did we fund?

Our students attend multiple universities across the state in both public and private programs. We aim to recruit students from across the state, though most students funded this year attended Florida State University (FSU) and the University of South Florida (USF). This due, in large part, to the format of those two programs that allows graduate students to continue working in the schools as they pursue an advanced degree. For the 2016-2017 year, we funded students from every university that had an applicant!



IHE	Number of funded students per IHE
Florida State University	23
University of South Florida	15
Nova Southeastern	8
University of Central Florida	5
Other online, out of state programs (e.g., NYU)	3

## What support and professional development did we offer our students?

Throughout the 2016-2017 year, tuition support participants were offered resources to support their development as speech-language pathologists (SLPs) serving the Florida public schools. The first means by which they were offered professional development was through webinars conducted by the statewide coordinator. Topical webinars aligned with state priorities as well as the needs identified by the participants. Webinars this year included “Feeding Challenges in the Public Schools”, “Social Communication Interventions for Older Students”, and “Social Skill Interventions for Children with ASD.” These hour-long webinars were offered a minimum of once a semester. Each webinar offered content, opportunities for discussion, and reflection on student’s practice. Participant evaluations of the webinars indicate that the students felt that the content matched their needs as school-based SLPs.

## What did participants think about the program?

In an end of the year survey, participants rated the program and its components highly, and gave feedback to help guide the content that we share with them. 94 % felt like the project staff communicated with them regularly and in a way that enabled them to participate in the program activities, and 94 % reported that the project staff responded to their emails in a timely fashion. 100 % of the respondents reported that the webinar content related to their work either most or all of the time. This underscores the importance of recruiting directly with other academic program representatives from around the state.

## National visibility

This year we represented FL-DOE at the 2017 ASHA convention in Los Angeles, CA. We were excited to share our project with the other states and administrators.



## Early Steps Professional Development

CEC-RAP welcomes a new collaboration with the Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies at the University of Florida to develop and demonstrate the effectiveness of EPIC to expand social and emotional outcomes in young children participating in Early Steps in Florida. The thirty-month project will:

1. Provide ongoing and targeted professional development and technical assistance to the demonstration site team (ESSO Training Coordinator, model site project coordinators, coaches) and “in-field” implementation team members as they develop, implement, and evaluate the model demonstration approach and associated resources and materials at each of the three demonstration sites.
2. Deliver professional development, including workshops and ongoing implementation support for the demonstration site team and in-field team members focused on targeted and evidence-based home visiting practices to support young children’s social and communication development and learning, including practices from Embedded Practices and Interventions with Caregivers (EPIC, Woods, Snyder, & Salisbury, 2012; <http://epicintervention.com/>) and the Pyramid Model (Hemmeter, Fox, & Snyder, 2013). In addition, support will be provided to lead coaches and in-field team members to use an evidence-based, practice-based caregiver coaching model (Friedman, Woods, & Salisbury, 2012; Snyder, Hemmeter, & Fox, 2015).
3. Support the ESSO training coordinator and model demonstration sites to develop sustainable and replicable professional development focused on targeted and evidence-based home visiting practices to address young children’s social and communication development and learning as reflected in the Demonstration Site Implementation Plan.
4. Support the ESSO training coordinator and model demonstration sites to collect and analyze implementation fidelity and child and family outcomes data to evaluate inputs, outputs, and outcomes from the model demonstration project.

Demonstration sites are located In South Dade, NW Florida, and North Central Early Access Regions. A total of 90 providers and three local internal coaches will participate in the initial demonstration project.



# Embedded Practices and Intervention with Caregivers (EPIC)

## Promise Study Summary from Embedded Practices for Intervention with Caregivers

Throughout 2017, data analysis and dissemination of the Embedded Practices for Intervention with Caregivers (EPIC) project continued. We analyzed the results of the promise study, a small-scale randomized comparison group design to compare the effects of the EPIC approach to those participating in their usual services, e.g. business as usual (BAU). Forty early intervention providers and 42 families of children with significant disabilities from Iowa and Pennsylvania participated in the study.

After completion of the EPIC training developed over the past three years based on the smaller studies, the EPIC providers worked with families in their region using the S-O-O-P-R coaching approach and the 5Q intervention for about 10-12 weeks. We collected video of the home visit and provided coaching sessions for the EPIC providers after every third session. We compared the BAU providers' and EPIC providers' use of coaching strategies and caregivers' understanding of the 5Q (children's learning targets, intervention strategies, routines for embedding, why targets were important, and how they would know intervention was working) at three points throughout the study. And what did we find? After three long years of hard work, we learned a great deal. First we found that EPIC providers used, on average, more than twice as many S-O-O-P-R coaching strategies as the BAU group (EPIC M = 8.88; BAU M = 4.07;  $p = .001$ ). EPIC caregivers demonstrated more knowledge of the 5Q (5Q for communication outcome: EPIC M = 2.81, BAU M = 1.93,  $p = 0.07$ ; 5Q for motor outcome: EPIC M for motor = 2.38; BAU M = 1.29,  $p = 0.01$ ) and embedded more correct instructional trials for their children during routines. Children were more likely to use their targeted skills in those routines (EPIC M = 3.22; BAU M = 0;  $p = .001$ ).

We also compared more distal child outcomes on three standardized measures: The Individual Growth and Development Indicators<sup>®</sup>: Early Communication Indicator and Early Movement Indicator (Greenwood & Carta, 2010; Walker & Carta, 2010), the Mullen Scales of Early Learning<sup>™</sup> (Mullen, 1995), and the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales<sup>™</sup> (VABS, Sparrow, Cichetti, & Balla, 2005). While both groups demonstrated some change on standardized measures, there were not statistically significant differences between the two groups. While disappointed, we were not surprised. Given the small group sizes, the inherent variability in children with significant disabilities, and short duration of the intervention (under six months), we did not predict the results on the standardized measures to demonstrate child change. We were pleased to see that the parents were able to identify new skills their child had learned using the 5Q.

Both providers and caregivers found the approach to be useful. Providers reported that the S-O-O-P-R practices and the 5Q were useful in helping them to be more systematic in their sessions with families. Caregivers in the EPIC condition reported that the 5Q helped them to "focus", "be more specific", "look for ways to apply" the Qs to their routines and priorities, and to serve as a reminder of what they were trying to do. The results of the study are encouraging for several reasons. First, the use of a consistent home visit checklist demonstrated that participation in a systematic coaching approach for providers enhanced the provider's quality and quantity of application of specific practices. The use of a defined process and visual model for caregivers increased the frequency and accuracy of embedded intervention in daily routines by caregivers, potentially leading to improved participation in daily activities for children with significant disabilities. While there is still more to learn, we are pleased with how far we have come using EPIC.





# Project A+

Project A+ is conducting research in academic libraries to address the retention and support of college students with ASD and will answer the following three questions:

1. What professional development strategies are more likely to lead to librarians' successful implementation of interventions and supports for students with ASD in different types of academic libraries?
2. How do students with ASD describe their experiences in these libraries?
3. What resources are being described as needed for implementing a successful library experience for academic library users with ASD?



A+ team members are working closely with a diverse group of academic librarians to provide twice-monthly coaching sessions using a situated learning model of coaching. In this approach, information on autism and its impact for college students is provided and discussed; video or participant observations occur, followed by reflection, problem solving and action planning. Changes made by the librarians as motivated by these sessions are being recorded through environmental observations, open ended prompts, and session feedback surveys. Project A+ began coaching for systemic change with FSU academic librarians in August and continued through January. A new topic was introduced each month. They included:



- Understanding ASD in college students,
- Environmental supports in the library,
- Communicating with students,
- Social interaction opportunities and supports,
- Technology, and
- Employment

Observations are also being recorded at partner libraries in which coaching is not provided to serve as comparisons. Data from students with autism is also being collected through interviews and surveys guided by the Library Anxiety Scale. Additionally, an advisory board of library experts, autism experts, and librarians on the autism spectrum are providing feedback that contributes to the project's success.

Development of an interactive web based replication manual is underway and will be field tested. The manual will serve as an online resource for academic libraries nationwide. Presentations on the project have occurred at national conferences and the University of Winnipeg, Alberta CA during 2017, with many more scheduled for 2018.





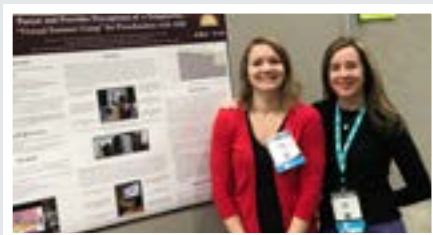
# Student and Faculty Research

## Coaching Parents of Preschoolers with ASD to Participate in a Telepractice Summer Camp



The 2016-18 ASSET students, Lindsey Thompson, Jessica Rishell, Emily Bratek, Meredith Kurtz, Erin Travis, and Teresa Viteri, explored the use of telepractice as a strategy to provide a summer camp experience for preschool children with ASD. They also examined the feasibility of parent coaching on the use of visual supports to encourage their participation during summer camp and everyday routines and activities. They were pleased (and a bit surprised) to learn that the children maintained a high level of attention to task during camp and coaching sessions. The children's responses generally increased across participants, a promising trend, that may support the use of telepractice coaching methods to increase responses for young children with ASD. Parents reported the visual supports were helpful at home.

## Parent and Provider Perceptions of a Telepractice "Virtual Summer Camp" for Preschoolers with ASD



Doctoral students, Ciera Lorio and Abby Delehanty, used qualitative and quantitative measures to evaluate the use of coaching and telepractice from both the graduate student and family perspective. Camp was a novel experience for the families and offered new opportunities. Coaching sessions were important to families because they were individualized for them and helped them to learn how to use visual supports throughout their day. The group sessions via telepractice gave them opportunities to practice with peers. Students skills in caregiver coaching improved through technology training and feedback. They felt they gained valuable skills in coaching caregivers and telepractice but also felt they could benefit from more experience clinically prior to feeling confident in these methods.

## Garnet and Gold

The Garnet and Gold Scholar Society facilitates involvement and recognizes the engaged, well-rounded undergraduate student who excels within and beyond the classroom in the areas of Leadership, Internship, Service, International, and Research. An undergraduate student who meets the criteria in three of the five areas and completes a Synthesis Reflection will qualify to graduate as a member of the Garnet and Gold Scholars Society.

## Developmental Disabilities Certificate

**Jane Katz, Maddie Sisco, Erica Kochis, Sam Shearer, Katie Smith, and Lucia Sanifel** participated in the Developmental Disabilities Certificate this year. Each student had the opportunity to explore services beyond the early intervention programs they spend their time researching. Learning about experiences across the life span was identified as a positive of the practicum.

## Undergraduate Student Research Assistants

In 2017, 18 undergraduate students joined CEC-RAP to gain experience with research at the Center. A variety of experiences were provided for the students including collecting video observations, coding video interactions, transcribing, data entry, data analysis, and helping to develop research training materials. Students learned to use a variety of software programs such as Noldus®, an observational coding system, Nvivo® to analyze qualitative research, and Articulate®, a presentation development package. They learned the developmental sequence of gestures, how coaching strategies increase caregiver confidence and how to embed intervention into various routines. Key to the research experiences are the lab meetings where students and faculty join together to discuss what everyone is doing, what the data tell us, what the next questions might be, and how the information can be used to improve the lives of children and families.

## Service Learning

Many students use their volunteer hours to earn service learning credits through the Center for Leadership and Social Change. The CEC-RAP Service Learning Volunteers for 2017 were: **Briana Acevedo, Mollie Bondra, Alex Bueno, Noelle Butler, Julianna Carretta, Kat Dykes, Hannah Eugenio, Caroline Hannon, Erica Kochis, Kate Manning, Sarah Manning, Alexis Martin, Sarra Merritt, Mallory Meuser, Lucia Sanifel, Sam Shearer, Katie Smith, and Jenna Wolff.**

# 2017 Publications and Presentations

- Bratek, E., Kurtz, M., Perez, T., Rishell, J., Thompson, L., Travis, E., Viteri, T., Lorio, C., Delehanty, A., & Woods, J. J.** (2017, November). *Coaching parents of preschoolers with ASD to participate in a telepractice summer camp*. Poster presented at the Annual Convention of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Los Angeles, CA.
- Delehanty, A.,** Lee, J., Cortese, J., & **Woods, J.J.** (2017, May). *Early social communication milestones and autism spectrum disorder: Using social media to engage families*. Poster presented at the Annual Conference of the International Communication Association, San Diego, CA.
- Delehanty, A., Lorio, C., & Woods, J.** (under review). Outcomes of a Community-Based Practicum Experience for Graduate Student Clinicians in Speech-Language Pathology Learning PBIS. *Communication Disorders Quarterly*. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Delehanty, A., Lorio, C., & Woods, J.J.** (2017, November). *Training graduate student clinicians to use telepractice for coaching caregivers of preschoolers with ASD*. Poster presented at the Annual Convention of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Los Angeles, CA.
- Goldstein, H., Haring, C., Kaczmarek, L., Buzhardt, J., Brown, J., Sandall, S., Gwin, R., **Romano, M., Windsor, K., Lorio, C.,** & Robertson, A. (2017, April). *Caregivers as interventionists in early childhood: Training methods and outcomes*. Presented at the Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting, Austin, TX.
- Lorio, C., Delehanty, A., & Woods, J. J.** (2017, November). *Parent and provider perceptions of a telepractice "virtual summer camp" for preschoolers with ASD*. Poster presented at the Annual Convention of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Los Angeles, CA.
- Lorio, C., & Woods, J.** (under review). Augmentative and alternative communication use by preschoolers with autism spectrum disorder and the professional development needs of educators. *Communication Disorders Quarterly*. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Ottley, J. R., Brown, J. A., **Romano, M. K.,** Coogle, C. G., & Lakey, E. (2017). Feedback to enhance families' competence and confidence. In C. M. Trivette & B. Keilty (Eds.), *DEC Recommended Practices Monograph Series: Knowing Families, Tailoring Practices, Building Capacity (2nd ed., pp.13-21)*. Arlington, VA: Division for Early Childhood.
- Romano, M.** & Walsh, M. (2017, November). *Florida's big picture: Recruiting and retaining school-based SLPs through a statewide tuition support program*. Poster presented for the 2017 ASHA Convention in Los Angeles, CA.
- Romano, M. & Woods, J.** (2017). Collaborative coaching with EHS teachers using responsive communication strategies. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*. doi: 10.1177/0271121417696276 .
- Romano, M., Woods, J., & Windsor, K.** (2017, November). Using a "learning cycle" as a framework to coach caregivers in early intervention. Presented at the 2017 ASHA Convention in Los Angeles, CA .
- Salisbury, C., **Woods, J.,** Snyder, P., Moddelmog, K., Mawdsley, H., **Romano, M., & Windsor, K.** (2017). Caregiver and provider experiences with coaching and embedded intervention. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*. doi: 0271121417708036