

ABL Clinic Update 2019



Recent ABL Clinic
Trainees-

Top Row from L to R:

Daniel Leopold, Kerri
Woodward, Holly
Wakeman,
Rebecca Schneider,
and Laura Hink

Bottom Row from L
to R:

Jennifer Anders and
Maryn Case

*"I have to say . . .
the experience was
life-changing for us,
helping us to think
about our daughter's
needs in a new light.
She is in middle
school now, in the
TAG program, and is
thriving."*

*"ABL understood us
and listened every
step of the way. It
has meant the world
to have such a
knowledgeable and
kind team to guide
us through."*

Happy spring from CU's ABL Clinic!

If you are reading this newsletter, you have likely been involved with the University of Colorado's Attention, Behavior, and Learning (ABL) Clinic sometime in the past 15 years. Our clinic provides psychoeducational assessments to children in Boulder County and surrounding communities. We've even had families travel from out of state! Our goal is to understand children's needs and strengths, allowing them to learn and grow in

ways that are best for them as individuals. Though we are able to diagnose specific learning differences when appropriate (including dyslexia ADHD, and other childhood disorders), our goal is also to see each child's strengths. We also strive to connect children and families with appropriate resources in the community to support their learning and emotional needs. Helping youth to develop strong coping mechanisms, including relationships and passions, is also a key objective.

Our continued mission

ABL Clinic began in 2004 with a donation from an individual in rural Boulder County that felt high quality, yet affordable evaluation services were critical to youth in our community. In keeping with his mission, our evaluations are about 1/3 to 1/2 of the cost of similar evaluations in hospital or private practice settings. In addition, we provide scholarships to families who may not otherwise be able to access these services. Currently, about 25% of our families receive a scholarship that

allows them to be seen for a significantly reduced fee. Some families are even seen at no cost.

The University of Colorado Office for Outreach and Engagement has been pivotal in allowing us to provide these scholarship services. ABL Clinic has successfully obtained funding for scholarships every year since 2006. However, other than the Outreach funds, which are applied for annually, the clinic receives no university funding.



Nomita Chhabildas, ABL Clinic
Director, working with a volunteer
child.



Jennifer Anders and Maryn Case working with our database.

Ongoing Research Efforts

Though our main goal is to serve the community, our clinic also plays an important role in research on children's academic, behavioral, and socioemotional development. With family permission, all testing data is entered into a de-identified database, allowing us to study different aspects of children's learning and emotional functioning. Doctoral students, with the help of Dr. Erik Willcutt, a leading researcher on childhood learning and attention, have used the database to look into questions such as factors contributing to overlap in emotional and learning needs, as well as the overlap of attentional difficulties and autism spectrum disorders.

In addition, in conjunction with data from The University of Denver, data

from ABL were used to develop the Colorado Learning Disabilities Questionnaire, a free dyslexia screener available to schools and families. This measure is being used world-wide and has now been translated into Spanish. We've even had researchers from India contact us to let us know they are using it!

Graduate Training

Doctoral student training is a key part of our mission at ABL, and doctoral students are an integral part of our service delivery. Our clinic provides specialized training for doctoral students in the CU Boulder clinical psychology program who are interested in working with children. Through their experience in the ABL clinic, students develop expertise in assessment of children with a range of different developmental and medical needs. They also learn about research supported interventions and treatments critical for supporting children and their families. Given our strong reputation, we have also become a training site for students in the CU Denver School Psychology Doctoral Program, as well as the University of Colorado pre-doctoral internship program.

Students who have trained at ABL have gone on to work at Duke University Medical Center, Stanford School of Medicine, the University of California San Diego, and as school psychologists right here in Colorado! Many have let us know that ABL Clinic was one of their most important clinical training experiences.



Trainees Daniel Leopold and Rebecca Schneider, who went on to internships at Children's Hospital Colorado and Stanford School of Medicine.

Please consider supporting our ongoing efforts; donations to the clinic especially assist with allowing families to access services regardless of their economic circumstances.

<https://giving.cu.edu/fund/attention-behavior-and-learning-abl-clinic-fund>