

Our PENT Forum 2010 Leaders



Elena Alvarez, M.A.
PENT Leadership Team
School Psychologist
Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District
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Elena Alvarez obtained her PPS credential at CSULB. She works for the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District. Elena's passion lies on proper identification and services for minority students and their families. She has provided training to school psychologists, speech therapists and Resource teachers on second language acquisition, cultural differences, assessment and IEP development to address the needs of language minority students. Elena has held leadership positions on CASP and OCASP boards and received the "Woman of the Year" award for her work with the Latino community in 2002 from LULAC and the "Outstanding School Psychologist" award from CASP in 2002.



Judith Burkhartsmeier, Ed.S.
PENT Leadership Team
Assistant Director (Retired), School Psychologist
Diagnostic Center, Southern California

Judi previously served as a school psychologist and Assistant Director at the Diagnostic Center. She has extensive experience as a district-level school psychologist in California, Montana, and Colorado. She has worked with children with all handicapping conditions in settings as diverse as residential treatment, juvenile justice facilities and one-room schoolhouses. She is a past president of the Montana Association of School Psychologists, holds the National Certification for School Psychology from NASP, and is a licensed educational psychologist. Judith is known for developing innovative service models for preschool assessment and programming, autism, and the assessment and treatment of students with ADHD.



Vira Caro-Michel, M.S., LEP, BCBA
PENT Leadership Team
School Psychologist/Behavior Interventionist
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Vira Caro-Michel, M.S., LEP, BCBA has been an educator for 17 years, in an array of capacities such as Paraeducator, Special Education Assessment Team Assistant, Inclusion Facilitator/Special Education Teacher, and is currently working in the Lancaster School District as a School Psychologist/Behavior Interventionist. She is actively involved in developing and supporting behaviorally based programs within her school district, and conducting trainings for general and special education staff. In the continued quest to support individuals with disabilities she often finds herself in the classrooms directly supporting children and staff members. Her passion for teaching has led her to California State University Los Angeles where she is an adjunct faculty member for the Counseling/Special Education department. Vira is constantly seeking creative ways to foster a dynamic learning environment and to promote individualization to assure that every student reaches his/her potential.



Cindy Chacón, M.S., BCBA
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School Psychologist
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Cindy received her Masters in School Psychology from CSULA in 2003. She has worked in LAUSD as a classroom teacher in both special and general education programs. Through her work as a consultant with LACOE she helped develop Teaching Alternative Behaviors Schoolwide: A Resource Guide To Prevent Discipline Problems, and provided training on behavior and classroom management. Cindy is a Nationally Certified School Psychologist and Board Certified Behavior Analyst. She is currently working as a school psychologist for the Diagnostic Center, Southern California where her skills in behavior analysis and psychological assessment are used to assess students, consult with parents, and help school districts better understand the needs of diverse learners.



Clinton Eatmon, M.A.
PENT Leadership Team
Behavior Intervention Specialist
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Clinton Eatmon earned his BA with a Single Subject teaching credential and his MA with Special Education Learning Handicapped and Severely Handicapped teaching credentials from the University of the Pacific. While earning his MA, he worked as a Program Assistant at the Children's Home of Stockton Educational Program in a Behavior Change class for SED elementary age students. Clint's first teaching position (5 years) involved developing and implementing Special Education Behavior Change classes for SED adolescents at North Valley School/Regional Youth Services (RYS) formerly North Valley School/Regional Adolescent Treatment Program (RATP).

For 16 years, Clint has taught various classes for SJCOE; 2 years in an Early Identification preschool program, 6 years in Behavior Change Classes for ED students in grades K-8, and 8 years in Adolescent Day Treatment classes for ED students in grades 7-12. During this time he was an on-going member of the Behavior Committee, a Mentor Teacher for 5 years, a trainer of Management of Assaultive Behavior (MAB) for 10 years, and a part-time Behavior Intervention Specialist (BIS) for 3 years. He was also a Program Administrator for 3 years. Currently he is a full-time BIS focusing on training and supporting teachers in the development and implementation of behavior support plans (BSPs) and behavior intervention plans (BIPs), conducting functional behavior assessments (FBAs) and functional analysis assessments (FAAs), providing teacher support in positive classroom management, and training trainers of MAB.



Ann England, M.A., CCC-SLP-L
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Speech-Language Pathologist, Assistant Director
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Ann England received her M.A. in 1980 in Communicative Disorders and has a Clinical Rehabilitative Services Credential, Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech and Language (CCC-SLP) and is licensed by the State of California Speech Pathology Board.

In addition to being the Assistant Director at the Diagnostic Center, Northern California, Ann provides trainings to staff throughout northern California in the areas of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and positive behavior supports. She also consults with school district administrators and teaching teams as part of system change projects to develop evidence-based public school programs for students with special needs, especially those with an ASD and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Ann has served on several California Department of Education committees related to ASD and developmental disabilities including the Task Force on Education and Professional Development of The Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism. Presently, Ann represents CDE on the Interagency Autism Planning Group to participate with the National Professional Development Center (NPDC)-ASD in a supported collaboration to develop a system of statewide professional development and technical assistance to promote the use of evidence-based practices for individuals with ASD and early identification of these disorders in California; she is providing onsite consultation in collaboration with NPDC to develop a model public school program for students with an ASD.



Bruce M. Gale, Ph.D.
PENT Leadership Team
Clinical Psychologist
Certified NPA Provider, CA Dept of Education
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Bruce M. Gale, Ph.D., received his undergraduate degree from UCLA and Masters/Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Florida State University. He completed his internship and advanced training at Boston Children's Hospital while a Fellow at Harvard Medical School, Department of Psychiatry. Dr. Gale is former Chief Psychologist of the Division of Inpatient Psychiatry at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and teaches Abnormal Psychology at American Jewish University. Presently, he functions as an Independent Educational Evaluator for approximately 30 school districts in the Southern California area. Dr. Gale presents locally and nationally on the ethics of utilizing technology in clinical/behavioral assessment/treatment, plus its impact upon individuals. His most recent work is a book chapter discussing the use of technology in the stepped care treatment (similar to RtI) of oppositional defiant disorder (in press, in W.T. O'Donohue (Ed.), Stepped care and e-health: Practical applications to behavioral disorders). Perhaps what he enjoys most is running his program, LUNCH Groups® (www.lunchgroups.com), an empirically-supported, transdiagnostic social skills treatment program for students and adults with internalizing and externalizing challenges. Currently in its tenth year, the program serves 55 families. LUNCH Groups targets executive function skills, social language/competence, academic readiness, and environmental awareness in the context of a fun and stimulating learning environment blending technology, positive behavioral intervention, and home-based generalization.



Scott Gutentag, Ph.D.
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Scott Gutentag is a school psychologist at the Diagnostic Center, Southern California. He holds a Ph.D. in School Psychology with a specialization in Clinical Child Psychology from The Ohio State University. As a licensed educational psychologist, Scott holds the National Certification for School Psychology from the National Association of School Psychologists. Scott has provided psychological services in a variety of settings including schools, behavioral clinics, treatment programs, and hospitals. Additionally, he has taught undergraduate and graduate level university courses in psychology at several institutions. Scott has a particular interest in the assessment and provision of behavior supports for children with developmental disabilities and challenging behaviors.



Diane Hannett, M.Ed.
PENT Leadership Team
Program Specialist
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Diane Hannett received a B.S. in psychology, M.Ed. and Psychological Specialist degree in school psychology all from Brigham Young University. She worked eight years as a school psychologist before taking her current position as a program specialist for the Desert/Mountain SELPA. As a program specialist, Diane provides consultation and staff development training in the areas of classroom management, positive behavioral support and individual behavioral intervention for the 15 school districts comprising the Desert/Mountain SELPA. Current interests and efforts are focused in the area of school-wide positive behavioral support.



Valerie Johnson, Psy.D.
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Director, School Psychologist
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Valerie Johnson is the Director at the Diagnostic Center, Southern California. She holds a Psy.D. in School Psychology from Alliant International University. Valerie has worked as a general education teacher and a school psychologist in school districts throughout Southern California, and has taught graduate level courses in school psychology. Valerie has had extensive experience working with culturally diverse populations and has worked with special needs students of all ages.



Joan Justice-Brown, M.A., CCC-SLP
PENT Leadership Team
Co-Author, PENT Publication: Behavior Manual
Education Specialist
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Joan Justice-Brown, M.A. received her degree in speech pathology from California State University Stanislaus. She works for the San Joaquin County SELPA as an Education Specialist. She has been involved in behavior training programs for specialists to analyze, design and support behavior plans/intervention plans. She continues to receive ongoing behavioral training and assists teachers and psychologists in districts and SELPA with designing and implementing behavior plans/intervention plans.

As an Educational Specialist at the SELPA level, Joan currently provides training for teachers, designs individual educational programs for students and assists teachers with designing and implementing behavioral support plans/intervention plans.



Kimble Morton, M.A.
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Motor Assessment Program Specialist
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Kimble Morton attended University of the Pacific, UC Santa Barbara and received her M.A. in Adapted Physical Education from California State University, Los Angeles. She is a contributing author to the manual Positive Intervention for Serious Behavior Problems and is co-author of the Analysis of Sensory Behavior Inventory-R and the textbook, Making Connections: From Theory to Practice in Adapted Physical Education. She is a certified instructor of Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (Crisis Prevention Institute).

Kim has taught and/or assessed students at all grade levels. In her twenty years at the Diagnostic Center, Southern California, she has participated in assessments of students with a wide variety of learning needs and provided training to staff throughout Southern California on a variety of topics including positive behavior support.



Vanessa Patterson, M.A., BCBA
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Vanessa M. Patterson is an educational specialist at the Diagnostic Center, Southern California. She holds an M.A. in Special Education and is also a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. Vanessa has worked with individuals with developmental disabilities across home, school, and community settings, since 1999. She has expertise in autism, applied behavior analysis, programming for students with moderate to severe disabilities, and positive behavioral interventions. She is currently a member of the PENT Leadership Team, the California Association of Behavior Analysis, and the Association for Behavior Analysis International. Vanessa is also serving as a state trainer with the National Professional Development Center to implement evidence-based practices for students with autism spectrum disorders.



Valerie J. Samuel, Ph.D.
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Licensed Clinical Psychologist
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Valerie J. Samuel, Ph.D. attended University of California, Irvine and obtained her Ph.D. in Child Clinical Psychology from Southern Illinois University. She has spent over 15 years in clinical practice providing treatment to children, adolescents, and families. She also has extensive work in inpatient and outpatient psychiatric settings. Dr. Samuel was also the senior psychologist at the California Youth Authority treating high-risk youth. She helped developed and was the director of treatment for a specialized counseling unit.

Dr. Samuel also has clinical research experience in childhood psychiatric disorders. At Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School she was a clinical and research fellow. Dr. Samuel's specialty in the pediatric psychopharmacology unit was Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in African American Children. She has made numerous presentations on this topic as well as published several articles in Child Psychiatry journals.

Currently she serves as the team clinical psychologist for the Diagnostic Center, South. In this capacity she provides direct assessment, consultation to Center staff and interfaces with other treatment agencies. She continues to have an interest in high-risk youth, diversity issues and school-based intervention.
