



## OAR Announces 2013 Applied Research Grant Recipients

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ARLINGTON, VA – At its annual meeting on October 8, 2013, the Board of Directors of the Organization for Autism Research (OAR) authorized funding for seven new applied autism research studies in 2014. Five of these studies have been confirmed; the remaining two are under consideration pending discussions with the researchers and a supplementary review. This additional \$210,000 in research grants will bring the total funds awarded by OAR to over \$3 million since its first grants in January 2003. These research studies, which will be conducted by professionals from across the country, will examine timely issues that affect the autism community every day.

The topics in this year's new batch of research studies, which will be completed in the next 12 to 18 months, include: parent-to-parent mentoring, improving sibling relationships, and building social skills for children and adolescents with autism. Each grant winner will receive up to \$30,000 in funding.

“It's remarkable that even in the eleventh year of this competition the quality of the proposals we see continues to rise. It makes the final review and selection process very challenging,” notes Peter Gerhardt, Ed.D., Chairman of OAR's Scientific Council. “But what remains consistent is how valuable the results of these studies can be for parents, teachers, caregivers, and medical professionals that are trying to improve quality of life for individuals affected by autism.”

The recipients of this year's Applied Research grants are:

**PI:** Jessica Dykstra, Ph.D.

**Institution:** Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina

**Project:** Improving Social-Communication and Engagement of Elementary Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

**PI:** Emily A. Jones, Ph.D.

**Institution:** Queens College, City University of New York

**Project:** Building Sibling Relationships: The Effects of Sibling Support on Siblings and Children with Autism

**PI:** Robert Koegel, Ph.D.

**Institution:** University of California, Santa Barbara

**Project:** A Peer-Facilitated, Multicomponent Social Skills Intervention for Adolescents on the Autism Spectrum

**PI:** Dorothea C. Lerman, Ph.D.

**Institution:** University of Houston, Clear Lake

**Project:** Improving Access to Care for Challenging Behavior Using a Parent-to-Parent Mentoring Approach

**PI:** Nachum Sicherman, Ph.D.

**Institution:** Columbia University

**Project:** Family Patterns in Diagnosis of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

OAR selected these studies from an initial group of 69 pre-proposals received in response to the Request for Proposals (RFP) published last year. From those 69 pre-proposals, OAR invited 36 researchers to submit full proposals, and 17 ultimately advanced to the final review; in the end, seven studies were chosen as the most outstanding.

The RFP for the 2014 Applied Research Competition can be viewed [here](#). The application is currently open and will close on March 31, 2014. Please use the [online application](#) to submit pre-proposals.

For inquiries regarding the Applied Research Grant Program, please contact Benjamin Kaufman, Director, Programs and Community Outreach at (703)243-9762 or e-mail [research@researchautism.org](mailto:research@researchautism.org).

**About OAR:** The Organization for Autism Research (OAR) is a national non-profit organization formed and led by relatives of children and adults with autism and Asperger Syndrome. OAR is dedicated to promoting research that can be applied to help families, educators, caregivers, and individuals with autism find much-needed answers to their immediate and urgent questions. To help fund this critical research, OAR operates the RUN FOR AUTISM, a charity endurance program whose participants have collectively raised over \$4 million since 2003. OAR also produces informational materials for the autism community, including the Life Journey through Autism guide series that addresses topics such as assessment, education, and transition to adulthood. OAR maintains the “Operation Autism” Web site ([www.operationautismonline.org](http://www.operationautismonline.org)) geared toward the unique concerns of military families, and makes awards to individuals with autism entering college or vocational school through its scholarship program. More information about all of these initiatives can be found at the OAR Web site ([www.researchautism.org](http://www.researchautism.org)).

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