

**University of Florida/Gainesville  
Center for Autism and Related Disabilities  
Final Report and Year End Summary**

**2021-2022**

Submitted by

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Director

September 1, 2022

**University of Florida (UF)/Gainesville**  
**Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD)**  
**Final Report and Year End Summary**  
**2020-2021**

**UF/Gainesville CARD Current Registry**

	<b>Registry Data as of June 30, 2022</b>	<b>Registry Data as of June 30, 2021</b>
<b>Registry Total</b>	<b>5,845</b>	<b>5,212</b>
Alachua	2,049	1,782
Bradford	141	132
Citrus	443	373
Columbia	315	287
Dixie	59	52
Gilchrist	115	103
Hamilton	40	37
Hernando	421	394
Lafayette	23	22
Levy	234	218
Marion	1,450	1,300
Putnam	271	249
Suwannee	185	172
Union	99	91
0-2	28	17
3-4	212	155
5-15	2,375	2,126
16-21	1,377	1,296
22+	1,853	1,618
<b>Annual New Registrations</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>383</b>
<b>Annual Registry Losses</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>62</b>

In accordance with section 1004.55, Florida Statutes (F.S.), and Rule 6A-7.0335, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), the University of Florida (Gainesville) CARD provided nonresidential resource and training services for persons of all ages and levels of intellectual functioning with a documented diagnosis of autism, a pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified, an autistic-like disability, a dual sensory impairment or a sensory impairment with other disabling conditions. Services were coordinated with local and state agencies and school districts in an effort to not duplicate services. UF/Gainesville CARD worked closely with its partner agencies across the state of Florida to ensure high quality and equitable local, regional and statewide service provision in accordance with Rule 6A-7.0335, F.A.C., and consistent with the long-standing mission and values of the Florida CARD, a Florida Department of Education (FDOE) program since 1993. UF/Gainesville CARD primarily provided services within its 14-county region in North Central Florida, but also collaborated with other CARD centers and state agencies/projects on regional (e.g., regional trainings, Partnership for Effective Programs for Students with Autism [PEPSA] program) and statewide initiatives (e.g., annual CARD conference, development of online training content, support of state performance plan indicators and support for the reading initiative). Service delivery was consistent with the other six Florida CARD centers and was coordinated in the collective development of our projects' annual service plans and via phone/video conferences with CARD directors and FDOE's CARD liaison. CARD UF/Gainesville participates regularly in many multiagency leadership activities in our community and throughout our region. Additional data are recorded in the statewide Project Tracking System (PTS).

This report is a summary of activities completed by UF/Gainesville CARD during the period of July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022.

An abbreviated quantitative summary which reflects UF/Gainesville's CARD activities across all relevant variables specified in our grant award agreement with FDOE follows. Detailed registry data, programmatic activity and constituent contact data can be found in the project tracking system (PTS) database. ***Please note that all planned activities were completed, and all deliverable goals were met or exceeded.***

In accordance with Rule 6A-7.0335, F.A.C., UF/Gainesville CARD implemented a plan that included the following:

- 1. A staffing plan with, at minimum, individuals with expertise in autism or autistic-like behaviors and individuals with expertise in sensory impairments.**

UF/Gainesville CARD prides itself on having a highly qualified multidisciplinary staff with impressive longevity in terms of years of service to the project. Our project staff members are professionals with expertise in the following discipline areas: education, psychology, speech and language pathology, and behavior analysis. Our director and associate director have been with the project since its inception in 1993. This continuity of leadership has contributed a high level of expertise and administrative stability to our project, which has certainly served to enhance our project performance and outcomes, despite budget constraints. Our project leaders are also extremely productive in terms of scientific and service grant writing, fundraising, publications and presentations, and are recognized locally, nationally and

internationally as experts in our fields. The success in securing external funding in past years has allowed us to maintain impressive levels of service delivery in response to increased demands for services. In FY 2021-22, CARD UF/Gainesville secured continuing professional development for our professional staff members without incurring any travel expenses through virtual platforms and facilitated their participation in our annual CARD statewide conference and other relevant meetings.

2. **A direct service plan that must address individual and family assistance in the home, community and school. The project shall not supplant responsibilities of other state and local agencies.**

UF/Gainesville CARD provided extensive individual and direct family assistance (IDFA) across contexts (home, school and community) in FY 2021-22. IDFA is defined by the CARD centers as any contact with any individual and/or family in reference to a specific CARD constituent. Included among these data, in addition to direct home, school and community-based family support, is participation in CARD-sponsored activity groups (e.g., CARD Adult Support Groups, My Friends social group, UF Impact Autism, Parent Support Group, etc.). Families are advised of the range of services provided by UF/Gainesville CARD and how to access those services when needed. Detailed information on how to access CARD services is also available on our website (<http://www.card.ufl.edu>). All new families are encouraged to come to one of our tele-conference or on-line family orientation sessions where constituent and family needs are assessed and individual assistance may be requested. Included in our assistance to individuals and families are visual supports to aid communication. IDFA contact data are collected regularly, entered into CARD’s uniform reporting database, summarized quarterly and entered into the FDOE PTS for quarterly and annual reporting.

**Summary of Annual IDFA Data**

Total IDFA contacts delivered	6,488
Total number of individuals served annually	12,682

3. **A technical assistance (TA) and consultation services plan for providing specific intervention and assistance, utilizing all available community resources, to clients of the project, the clients’ family, school districts, and other service agencies and individuals as appropriate.**

UF/Gainesville CARD provided substantial TA services throughout our community in FY 2021-22. TA is defined by the CARD centers as assistance requested by a school, agency or program and may or may not be related to a specific CARD constituent. Agencies requesting such services are directed to a TA request form on our website (<http://card.ufl.edu/formscontact/requests-from-schools/>). Once a completed form is received at our office, a CARD staff member with expertise relevant to the TA request is assigned to contact the agency, assess need and determine a plan of action. School support requests from

families are coordinated with our district contacts, the individual school administrator and the classroom teachers. TA contact data are collected regularly, entered into UF/Gainesville’s CARD uniform reporting database, summarized quarterly and entered into the PTS for quarterly and annual reporting. TA partnerships with Bradford, Citrus, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Suwannee and Union school districts continued and grew in FY 2021-22. In addition to TA and consultation to our local school partners and medical providers, UF/Gainesville CARD has continued its partnership with local Early Steps providers to realize our mutual goal of enhancing services for children under 3 years of age and their families.

**Summary of Annual TA Data**

Total TA contacts delivered	3,777
Total number of individuals served	7,305

**4. A professional training program plan that includes developing, providing and evaluating pre-service and in-service training in state-of-the-art practices for personnel who work with the populations served by the project and their families.**

UF/Gainesville CARD provided extensive local and regional trainings for professionals in FY 2021-22 in an attempt to ensure that all professionals working with CARD constituents are trained in state-of-the-art “best practices” and are highly qualified. Face-to-face or virtual meetings were held with ESE directors or their designees for all 14 districts served by UF Gainesville CARD in order to assess priorities and develop collaborative professional development plans. All UF/Gainesville CARD trainings are open to all interested parties in the community, including family members, at no charge. Schools and agencies requesting training are directed to a training request form on our website (<http://card.ufl.edu/formscontact/training-requests/>). Once a completed form is received at our office, a CARD professional with expertise relevant to the training request is assigned to contact the agency, assess the need and determine a plan of action. Many UF/Gainesville CARD professional development programs were offered online in FY 2021-22 to increase access for educators and families. Additional learning opportunities are available for viewing on our website. A new web page on Employment Resources was added to our website this year (<http://card.ufl.edu/resources/for-adults-with-asd/employment-resources/>). We continued to update our website Learning Opportunities this year and to package our training resources in a convenient and easy to use e-learning format. Professionals and families have access to professional development on a variety of topics related to ASD that they can complete at their own pace and in their own time. Training data, including participant demographic information and participant evaluations, are collected and reviewed regularly. Participant data from all professional development sessions presented in this report are inclusive of regional center staff (coded in PTS as Discretionary Project Personnel) and constituency board members (coded in PTS as either Parent/Guardian, Family Member, Caregiver or Adult with Disabilities), as well as other types of individuals served. Regional trainings conducted in collaboration with the Partnership for Effective Programs for Students

with Autism (PEPSA) began with our Summer Literacy Institute in July 2021 with follow up sessions in October 2021 and March 2022. Additional PEPSA training programs were offered in October 2021 and the UF Autism Annual Conference was offered in June 2022.

In FY 2021-22, CARD staff provided surveys to a sampling of professional development participants at 41 separate workshops. Those surveys received responses from 459 participants. The participants were asked four questions for them to rate on a 1 to 6 Likert scale. The questions and results were as follows:

1. To what extent did the training increase your knowledge?  
85% responded with a 5 or 6 (with 6 being “greatly”)
2. To what extent did the training meet its intended objectives?  
92% responded with a 5 or 6 (with 6 being “greatly”)
3. To what extent will you use what you learned from the training?  
89% responded with a 5 or 6 (with 6 being “always”)
4. To what extent will you recommend the training to others?  
92% responded with a 5 or 6 (with 6 being “always”)

**Summary of Annual Parent and Professional Training/Workshop Data: Local and Regional**

Total number of annual local trainings and workshops	144
Total number of participants	3,352
Collaborative planning meetings with district ESE personnel	14
Total number of annual regional trainings and summer institutes	6

**5. A public education plan to increase awareness of the public about autism, autistic-like disabilities of communication and behavior, pervasive developmental disorders, dual sensory impairments, and sensory impairments with other disabling conditions.**

UF/Gainesville CARD hosted or participated in numerous public education and awareness events throughout our catchment area in FY 2021-22, including regional community resource and health fairs, autism awareness events and many other opportunities to increase public education and awareness. Partnerships with schools and other community organizations including the Alachua County Library, the Santa Fe College Teaching Zoo and the UF Impact Autism club are vital to our public education mission. Specific events and related data can be found in the PTS.

**Summary of Annual General Public Education/Awareness Data**

Total number of general public education events	55
Total number of participants	5,970

**6. Description of its working relationship with and support of the constituency board, as defined in s. 1004.55, F.S.**

UF/Gainesville CARD continued its close collaborative relationship with its constituency board in FY 2021-22. The constituency board reviewed annual program goals and hosted quarterly meetings with staff to review programmatic and budgetary priorities. The constituency board operated in accordance with approved by-laws and board members participated actively in fundraising events to help support UF/Gainesville CARD operations. Finally, board members participated in relevant trainings related to their own and their family's needs and interests throughout the year, including the annual CARD conference. In January 2022, UF CARD board members met with constituency board members from all other CARD centers at the annual conference through virtual technology.

**7. Provide appropriate nutritional information to parents of children served by the centers in accordance with the requirements stated in General Appropriations Act 2015.**

In FY 2021-22, UF/Gainesville CARD disseminated appropriate nutritional information to constituents at least quarterly in various formats. Information on nutrition tips, food refusal, picky eating, events/resources for free or low-cost nutritious foods and related research projects at the University of Florida was sent to families via email, CARD e-news and social media on thirteen separate occasions reaching 5,311 individuals. Additional nutritional resources were provided through the UF/Gainesville CARD lending library for families to access. Further information on nutritional resources was made available through the University of Miami CARD VINE for ongoing viewing by families in our region of North Central Florida.

**Summary of Annual Nutrition Information Provided**

Total number of healthy nutrition information programs provided	10
Total number of participants/families served	5,311

**9. Community Leadership in ASD**

UF Gainesville CARD staff participated in community leadership activities throughout FY 2021-22. These activities included monthly videoconference meetings with other CARD Directors, quarterly meetings with our Constituency Board, and a variety of community interagency meetings. A total of 23 community leadership meetings with 290 participants were achieved and recorded this year. UF/Gainesville CARD maintained collaborations with the local medical community, particularly the UF College of Medicine and Shands Hospital. A resource and referral database of medical providers by discipline has also been maintained. UF/Gainesville CARD staff has participated in training UF medical students, psychiatry residents, pediatric residents and child psychiatry fellows and has provided assistance to families and physicians at the UF Child and Adult Psychiatry Autism Clinics and Developmental Pediatrics clinic throughout the year. Additionally, UF/Gainesville CARD

staff provides free ASD screenings throughout the year. UF/Gainesville CARD staff provided 27 ASD screenings in FY 2021-22.

**Summary ASD Leadership Activities**

Total Meetings	23
Total number of individuals participating	290

**School District Needs Summary for 2022-23**

Throughout the year, CARD UF/Gainesville surveyed educators and families from each school district in our region to determine anticipated professional development and technical assistance needs. District Exceptional Student Education Directors or their designees as well as representatives from other Discretionary Projects and agencies in our region were asked for suggestions related to CARD collaboration, and professional development needs for the 2022-23 school year. The following districts and agencies participated in our survey, and/or in our Zoom meeting on May 4, 2022: Alachua County Schools, Citrus County Schools, Columbia County Schools, Dixie County Schools, Gilchrist County Schools, Hamilton County Schools, Hernando County Schools, Levy County Schools, Marion County Schools, Putnam County Schools, Suwannee County Schools, Union County Schools, Florida Diagnostic Learning Resource System (FDLRS) Springs, Florida Department of Education – BEESS, UF Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment. Data shared in the meeting, specific survey results, and professional development requests for FY 2022-23 are presented below.

**Services to school districts July 1, 2021 – April 30, 2022.**

<b>UFG CARD Services 7/1/2021 - 4/30/2022</b>				
<b>School District</b>	<b>Professional Development Activities</b>	<b>Technical Assistance Requests</b>	<b>Students Registered with CARD</b>	<b>Total # of Constituents</b>
Alachua	6	47	1272	1966
Bradford	1	3	114	138
Citrus	4	20	395	425
Columbia	2	11	221	304
Dixie	7	5	34	57
Gilchrist	0	5	82	113
Hamilton	1	2	28	39
Hernando	1	21	297	409
Lafayette	0	0	16	22
Levy	2	13	159	228
Marion	4	14	994	1413
Putnam	1	10	182	266



Suwannee	0	1	147	182
Union	0	5	73	99
TOTAL	29	157	4014	5661

**Suggestions for ways that UFG CARD could further improve our collaboration with your agency or district in 2022 – 2023.**

In the past there has been a set schedule for the CARD Representative to go to each school. This works well because each school knew when CARD would be on the campus and could plan accordingly for their needs.
Perhaps more information given to schools, parents, etc. regarding modules, webinars, etc. to help with strategies, education, etc. Parent feedback has voiced concerns regarding their own experiences contacting CARD and not hearing back from them. Maybe a short presentation at faculty meetings to remind those less familiar with CARD what is offered, insights, tools, mission, etc.
I would like to schedule professional development for Paras working with ASD students as well as general education teachers. From sensitivity to 1:1 assistance that promotes independence over learned helplessness.
We have a wonderful relationship with CARD. I feel Dr Liso goes above and beyond when it comes to collaboration with our staff.
It would be beneficial if CARD could observe classrooms and work with local staff and FDLRS to help come up with a plan to serve the students. Heather Roy with FDRLS was able to make this happen at one of the schools this year.

**With which Professional Development activities or topics would you like assistance from CARD during the next year.**

- What is CARD? • 3.03%
- Peer Awareness & Acceptance of Individuals with Autism and Related Disabilities • 6.06%
- Overview of ASD and/or Related Disabilities • 3.03%
- Strategies for Teaching New Skills to Individuals with Autism and Related Disabilities • 15.15%
- Teaching Literacy Skills to Individuals with Autism and Related Disabilities • 12.12%
- Toilet Training/Picky Eating/Sleep/Safety (self-care) for Individuals with Autism and Related Disabilities • 9.09%
- Navigating Behavior Challenges with Individuals with Autism and Related Disabilities • 15.15%
- Promoting Communication with Individuals with Autism and Related Disabilities • 12.12%
- Using Visuals to Support Individuals with Autism and Related Disabilities • 9.09%

- Promoting Social Interaction of Individuals with Autism and Related Disabilities • 12.12%
  - Other – Inappropriate behaviors • 3.03%
- 

## 8. Summary of Supplemental Activities in Support of Program Objectives

UF/Gainesville’s CARD personnel have been very successful in supporting the ever-expanding scope of our project and our growing community needs, despite budgetary constraints. The past success of our staff in obtaining external funds has been a source of supplemental programmatic support. In FY 2021-22, we continued our collaboration with colleagues from the UF Departments of Kinesiology and Occupational Therapy on funded research projects. Previously successful fundraising events including our annual UF Stomp the Swamp and Elks Club Splash Day events were resumed this year with the help of our UF students and passionate community members. Our CARD UF/Gainesville Annual UF & Autism: Going Greater Conference was also successfully resumed in 2022 and plans are already being developed for our 2023 conference.

UF/Gainesville CARD continues to strengthen its program through the cultivation of strategic community partnerships. In FY 2021-22, we continued building on the close relationships we have with our school districts, expanded our efforts with our local Early Steps programs, continued our collaboration with local diagnosticians and enhanced our community outreach efforts through numerous CARD adult and teen social groups. Our website, e-news and social media provide current information on CARD activities and items of public interest on a regular basis. Monthly CARD orientation sessions for new constituents and support groups for parents are well received and appreciated. UF/Gainesville CARD continues to provides referrals to physicians, therapists and agencies as needed.

Throughout the year, UF/Gainesville’s CARD staff worked to further develop our collaboration with school districts, with exceptional student education directors and other agency representatives (e.g., Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System, Project 10, Florida Inclusion Network, SEDNET, etc.) to plan for professional development needs in our region. We were also pleased to co-sponsor the Annual CARD Conference and to facilitate a variety of family and professional development workshops. Many of our information and training sessions were made available on-line including new presentations recorded for future viewing and additions to the CARDcast (podcast) series on our website. On-line workshops focused on Alternatives to Seclusion and Restraint and ASD Information for School Administrators have been important offerings for educators.

Throughout FY 2021-22, our entire UF/Gainesville CARD team further developed our ability to reach educators, families and constituents through remote platforms using the University of Florida’s HIPAA compliant Zoom licenses. In addition to hosting family support groups to provide guidance on best practices for keeping their children safe and engaged meaningfully at home, we have continued our individual assistance to families and technical assistance consultations to teachers and other educational personnel. To this end, UF/Gainesville CARD staff video-conferenced with educators from the 14 districts in our region and conducted

numerous face-to-face and video classroom observations in public, private and charter schools. In conjunction with the 6 other CARD centers across all of Florida, our innovative team has continued to create useful resources for clients, families and school-based personnel to help them better meet the needs of those with autism and related disabilities during these challenging times. Our regular offerings including support groups for families, teens, adults with autism and college students have all continued without any significant interruption. Telehealth technology also allows CARD UF/Gainesville staff to deliver consultation and support with the North Florida medical provider community including UF Health Pediatrics and Psychiatry increasing the safety of all and increasing healthcare access to those at a distance from UF Gainesville.