

Welcoming Wendy!

We are so proud to introduce a new member of the Project BRAIN team. Wendy Ellmo joined us in November and is already collaborating with us in upgrading our training sessions and materials and providing direct support to families and students.

Wendy is a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) board certified in neurologic communication disorders and sciences by the Academy of Neurologic Communication Disorders and Sciences (ANCDS), as well as a member of the American Speech Language Hearing Association's (ASHA) Neurologic Communication Disorders Special Interest Group.



In addition to 20 years of treating clients with traumatic brain injury, she is also published in the field. Her publications include: standards of care in TBI, a book of treatment activities and a cognitive-linguistic assessment battery. She has also given numerous presentations at the state and national levels. Wendy is bringing her passion and skills to our program as our Education Specialist.

Wendy is available to:

- Educate families & schools about their students with concussion/TBI
- Develop child-specific classroom interventions
- Support transition back to school
- Problem-solve classroom behavioral issues
- Prepare the family for IEP meetings
- Assist the IEP team in "translating" medical goals to the educational setting
- Help the IEP team & rehabilitation personnel better understand the uniqueness of TBI

As a fairly new transplant from North Carolina and New Jersey, Wendy and her husband, Frank, are thrilled to be living and working around Nashville and are always looking for new things to do. Feel free to reach out and say hello as she gets to know everyone in the TBI community here in Tennessee. Wendy is located in Middle Tennessee, but she can be of assistance to Project BRAIN families, partners and colleagues across the map!

Email: wendy_e@tndisability.org

BITL Process Update

As of November 30, the number of families in our Brain Injury Transition Liaison (BITL) process has reached **7,772!** We would like to thank our partnering hospitals, including: Methodist Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, Monroe Carell Jr., Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt and Children's Hospital at Erlanger. We could not have reached this growing number without the education and support for families by staff at each hospital. Thank you!

TBI Updates in Special Education

The new **TBI Evaluation Guidance** was released this summer and can be downloaded at:

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/special-education/eligibility/se-traumatic-brain-injury-evaluation-guidance.pdf>. Project

BRAIN, the TN TBI Program, TN Disability Coalition, and educators were among those who collaborated on these updates.

The new guidance includes concussion and references the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for signs and symptoms that should be watched for closely by school professionals. It explains the nature of TBI in children and how new deficits can emerge when a child is older. For example, a student's deficits nearer the time of injury with executive function may be more pronounced later when those skills do not develop at the same rate as his same-aged peers.

Other topics include:

- Helpful information when considering a referral
- Comprehensive Evaluation
- Reevaluation
- English Learners
- Eligibility

We are excited to see that the new guidance references the TN Department of Health's **Return to Learn/Return to Play Guidelines**, released in June of this year.

Continued

West TN

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Recommended Webinar: Transition

Post-Secondary Transition and Students with TBI: Hearing the Student Voice
Could you use some support in your work with students in transition? The Center on Brain Injury Research and Training (CBIRT) offers a thought-provoking hour of training hosted by Sue Hayes, SLP. The thoughtful content emphasizes the importance of listening more than talking and respecting the student's choices. Think of "Person-Centered Planning."

Sue references the Transition Toolkit, which is designed to be useful for anyone with or without experience in transition planning. It includes a Community Integration Tool, Sociogram, Action Plan, Student Map and directions with samples to help you with how to use these with students with TBI.

The content is research-based and will keep you on your toes thinking of more questions and ideas. It is easy to picture yourself using the practical suggestions. You will want to save the toolkit for working with students and will likely benefit from the listening and life planning skills yourself.

You can view the archive and access the slides and handouts here:
<https://cbirt.org/tbi-team/webinar-recordings-and-handouts>

Tennessee Disability Coalition

Tennessee Disability Coalition is an alliance of organizations and individuals joined to promote the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of life.

To support this mission, the Coalition offers the following programs:

- Public Policy
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Network
- Family Voices
- Benefits to Work
- Project BRAIN
- Discretionary Small Grants Program

Project BRAIN staff often connects families with other programs of the TDC for assistance. Please take a look at the Coalition's website and get to know more about these programs!

Happy Holidays!

<http://www.tndisability.org>



TN Disability Coalition's Tree in the Festival of Trees

TBI Evaluation Guidance continued...

The concussion management guidelines are a compilation of concussion management material produced by Colorado and Nebraska that has been adapted for Tennessee with information on returning to school after concussion, classroom strategies, school accommodations, when and how to write a 504 plan and more. Another familiar website, "Get Schooled On Concussions", includes a favorite Project BRAIN resource, one-pagers, which are quick topics of TBI covered in one page.

Tennessee's Concussion Law, The Center for Brain Injury Research and Training (CBIRT) and the Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey (BIANJ) were also among the resources for this update. With such time and thought given by so many, 2017 has been a year for systems change in education about Traumatic Brain Injury in students.

2018 Upcoming Events

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| Feb 2-5 | Partners in Education Statewide Conference, Music City Center, Nashville http://www.cvent.com/events/2018-partners-in-education-pie-conference/event-summary-6028aaf7fc0140058b8d63e0290d2f8b.aspx |
| Feb 14 | Disability Day on the Hill, Cordell Hull Building Nashville, http://www.tndisability.org/article/disability-day-hill-2018 |
| March 12 | Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council Mtg. Smyrna, TN Rehabilitation Ctr. Admin. Building |
| March 21 | Chattanooga Area Brain Injury Assoc. (CABIA) Conference, The Colonnade, Ringgold, GA http://www.cabiainn.org |
| April 13-14 | Update in Acute & Emergency Pediatric Care Conference, Knoxville Convention Ctr. https://www.tnemsc.org/TNEMSCMeetings |



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