

Michigan State University Autism Lab

Fall 2026 Newsletter

MEET OUR TEAM:



Left to right: Hannah Tokish (Graduate Student)
Ayesha Rehman (Lab Manager)
Dr. Brooke Ingersoll (Principal Investigator), and Lauren Duvall (Graduate Student)



Back row Left to right: Undergraduates Micheal Vu, Devan Nehal, Helen Hughes, Kristina Johnson, Layla Acosta, Taylor Brogan
Front row: Hannah Tokish (Graduate Student), Brooke Ingersoll Principal Investigator, Ayesha Rehman (Lab Manager), Undergraduate students Abby Plavnick, Nealy Patel, Lauren Duvall (Graduate Student)



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ABOUT THE LAB

The MSU Autism Research Lab, directed by Dr. Brooke Ingersoll, PhD, BCBA-D, focuses on the development and implementation of evidence based, community viable, interventions for young children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families.

IN THIS ISSUE:

About the MSU Autism Lab.....	1
Lab Member Shoutouts.....	2
PI Research Highlights.....	3
Graduate Research Highlights.....	4
Undergraduate Research Highlights.....	7
Current Projects.....	8
MSU Psychological Clinic Info.....	10
Our Contact Information.....	11

Lab Member Shout Outs!



Welcome to our new Lab Manager!

Ayesha Rehman, M.A., is the current MSU Autism Lab Manager. She graduated from Michigan State University with a masters in Child Development in 2026.

Ayesha's research interests include language development, social communication, and behavioral intervention in children with developmental disabilities and alternative and augmentative communication (AAC). She hopes to pursue a PhD in the future.

Farewells



Nicole Warren, BA, our former Lab Manager and provider liaison on the RISE Study, is starting a PhD in school Psychology at Michigan State University! We are so excited for her and wish her all the best in this next chapter.



Isabella Babore, BA, our former Research Assistant and caregiver liaison, is headed to Northwestern University to pursue a Master's in Speech and Language Pathology. Thank you for all that you did for us, we wish you continued success!

Kudos, Hannah!



Hannah Tokish, M.A., did a clinical practicum at the Genesee Health System Children's Center for Integrated Services in Flint in their assessment clinic. She primarily did neuropsychological assessments for children exposed to lead to understand their cognitive, attention, academic, executive functioning, and fine motor skills and to provide diagnostic clarification and intervention recommendations. She also provided autism spectrum disorder (ASD) evaluations for children with social communication concerns and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) evaluations for children with a history of prenatal exposure to alcohol.

Volunteering in our community

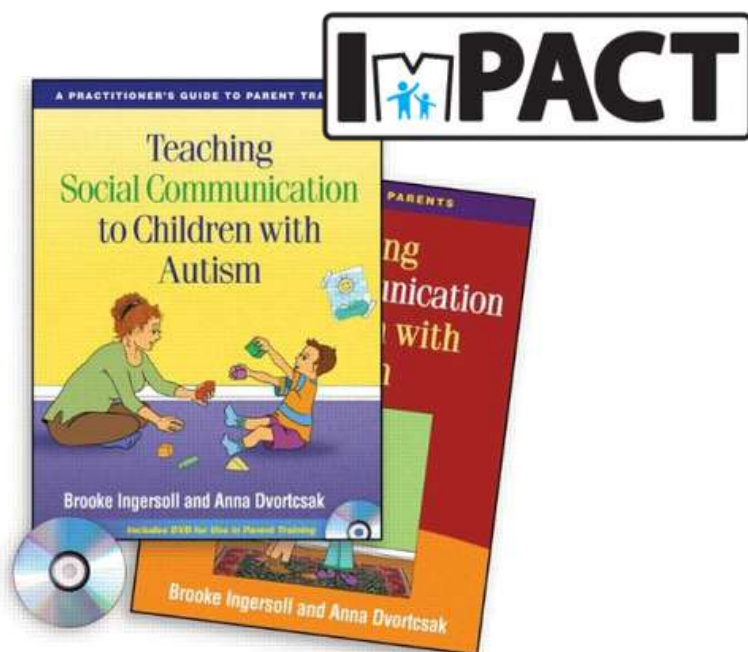


This past July, graduate students Hannah Tokish (left) and Lauren Duvall (right) volunteered with Thriving Minds' **Confident Kids Camp**, a 5-day intensive therapy program for children with Selective Mutism, aimed at helping them prepare for the upcoming academic year.

Hannah and Lauren worked with their campers on building confidence, reducing anxiety, and practicing their communication skills by encouraging them to practice their brave talking skills in school and community settings. We are so proud to have them on our team!



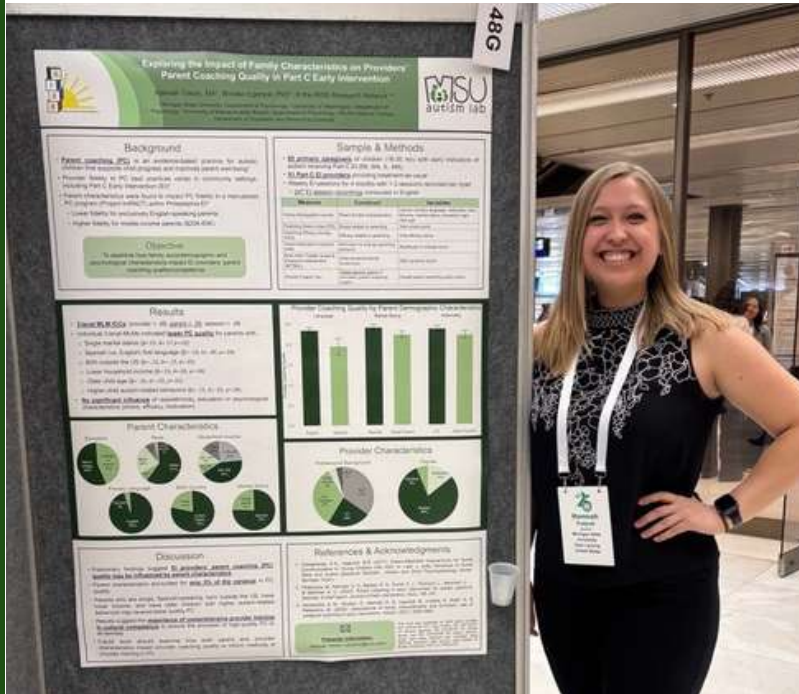
In July 2026, **Dr. Brooke Ingersoll, BCBA-D** and **Anna Dvortcsak, MS, CCC-SLP**, conducted an in person advanced course for Project ImPACT at the UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital. This course prepares providers to use the Project ImPACT curriculum with families. It was offered as a multi-day workshop using a combination of lecture, video review, role play, and small group discussion to help providers apply the concepts learned during the course.



In June 2026, **Dr. Brooke Ingersoll, BCBA-D** conducted a webinar titled “Overview of Project ImPACT” for the UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital’s staff. Project ImPACT is an intervention curriculum that teaches parents ways to enhance children’s social engagement, communication, imitation, and play skills, within meaningful activities and daily routines.

Graduate Research Highlights

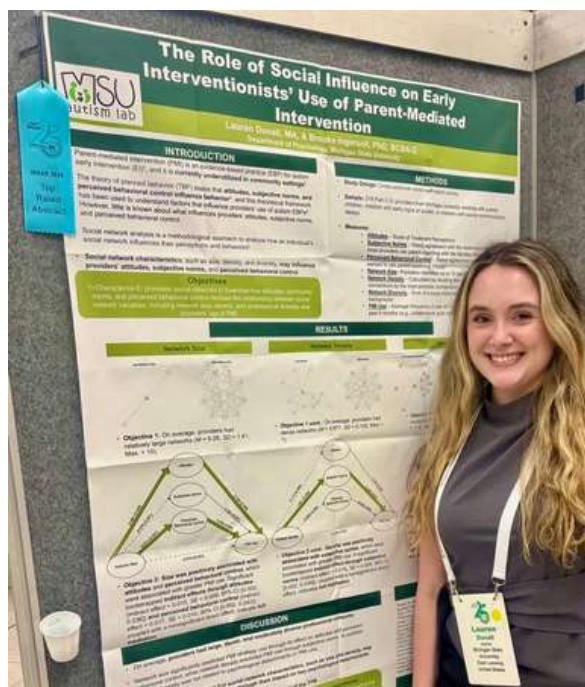
INSAR 2026: From April 22 - April 25, the International Society for Autism Research held their 25th Annual Meeting at the Prague Congress Centre in Prague, Czech Republic.



Hannah Tokish, M.A., fifth year graduate student, presented her poster titled "Exploring the Impact of Family Characteristics on Providers' Parent Coaching Quality in Part C EI". She examined whether parent sociodemographic and psychological characteristics impacted providers' parent coaching quality given that prior studies have suggested that the quality may vary for certain families. She found that single, Spanish-speaking, immigrant, and lower income parents received lower quality parent coaching, although the effects were small. These findings highlight the importance of comprehensive provider training in cultural competence to ensure the delivery of high quality parent coaching to all families.



Research Highlights - Graduate



Lauren Duvall M.A., third year graduate student, presented findings from her master's thesis research that evaluated how the structure and composition of early intervention providers' professional networks influence their beliefs about and use of evidence-based interventions. She found that the number of people within providers' professional networks and the number of connections between people within their networks were both related to their perceptions of parent-mediated intervention, an evidence-based practice. Her research poster was also awarded a Top Rated Abstract award at the conference, and I was awarded a Student Travel Award from the conference.



Nicole Warren, B.A., former lab manager presented her poster titled "Barriers and Facilitators to Implementing CI-RIT in Early Intervention: Insights from Group Consultations". Her findings suggest that training and consultation may be most effective when they support providers in addressing multi-level implementation challenges related to caregiver motivation and learning, navigating child engagement challenges, strengthening provider confidence, and adapting strategies to contextual constraints.

Research Highlights - Graduate

UCSF Webinar 2026: In June 2026, graduate students Hannah Tokish, M.A., and Lauren Duvall M.A., conducted a webinar titled “Creating inclusive environments for individuals with neurodevelopmental differences” at UCSF .



Graduate Students **Hannah Tokish M.A.**, and **Lauren Duvall M.A.**, co-led a **Neurodiversity talk** on how to create inclusive environments for individuals with neurodevelopmental differences for UCSF's Benioff Children's Hospital staff. Their presentation focused on increasing acceptance of neurodevelopmental differences and promoting inclusive practices in community settings. They discussed principles of the neurodiversity movement. They also reviewed considerations for environmental supports and modifications to support individuals with neurodevelopmental differences who may benefit from communication, social, visual, and sensory supports.

CRIEI 2026: In February 2026, Dr. Mehreen Hassan, was part of a panel that presented findings from the RISE at the Conference on Research Innovations in Early Intervention in San Diego, California.



Mehreen Hassan, Ph.D., along with other panel members findings from the Reciprocal Imitation and Social Engagement (RISE) study. Their talk titled “Understanding Caregiver Coaching Fidelity: The Role of Provider Characteristics and Training”, explored how provider characteristics relate to coaching fidelity, satisfaction, and long-term intent to continue using CI-RIT.

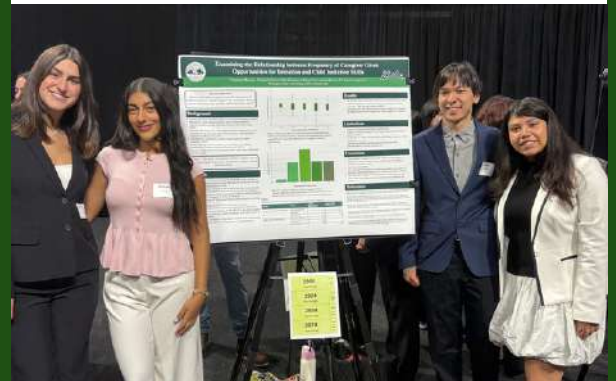
Research Highlights - Undergraduate

UURAF 2026: On April 17th Michigan State University hosted the 28th Undergraduate research and art forum at the Breslin Center and online at Symposium. Students from 14 colleges participated in the event. Several of our undergraduate students collaborated with one another and with other lab staff to represent posters.

Under the mentorship of **Nicole Warren, B.A.**, undergraduates **Kavya Jonnalagadda, Sarrah Sakir and Nealy Patel** (left to right) presented their research poster titled, "Family Centered Practices in Caregiver-Implemented Reciprocal Imitation Teaching (CI-RIT): Differences in Marginalized and Non-marginalized Caregiver Perceptions".



Under the mentorship of **Isabella Babore, B.A.**, undergraduates **Elizabeth Doran, Hala Shaaban, Michael Vu and Stephanie Barroso** (left to right) presented their research poster titled, "Examining the Relationship between Frequency of Caregiver Given Opportunities for Imitation and Child Imitation Skills".



With the help and mentorship of our graduate students and post-baccalaureate lab members, we work to prepare our undergraduates for their professional and/or academic career beyond their time at the MSU Autism Lab. [Congratulations, on all your hard work!](#)

Current Studies

Reciprocal Imitation and Social Engagement (RISE):



Michigan State University's Autism Lab is one of the four sites conducting research as part of the RISE Study. This study is a multi-site clinical trial examining effective early intervention methods for toddlers with early signs of autism.

Specifically, the study investigates the effectiveness of **Reciprocal Imitation Training (RIT)** in publicly funded early intervention programs in four states. The project will provide information on the effectiveness of parent-mediated RIT when delivered in community settings and may find moderators of outcomes and other factors that influence the quality of intervention. As of July 2025, recruitment of participants (both families and intervention providers) is complete! We are now in the data analysis part of the project.

Visit our website at [riseresearchnetwork.com](https://www.riseresearchnetwork.com) for more information and go to <https://www.riseresearchnetwork.com/contact> to learn more about the RISE study at our other research sites.



The RISE Project involves researchers from around the country. The MSU Autism Lab collaborates with researchers from the University of Washington, Rush University Medical Center, the University of Massachusetts Boston, and Boston University.

Current Studies

PEACE 4 ImPACT :

A collaborative study between Michigan State University and the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia focusing on their Early Intervention System. The study will evaluate the impact of the PEACE implementation toolkit and determine the level of support needed to improve early intervention providers' use of caregiver coaching with families of young children. Families receiving caregiver coaching will be assessed for both caregiver and child outcomes, as well as the cost-effectiveness of the implementation toolkit. The study aims to enhance the services provided to families of young children with developmental delays and improve their long-term outcomes.

To learn more, email

peace4impact@pennmedicine.upenn.edu.

or follow us on Instagram

[@peaceatpenn](https://www.instagram.com/peaceatpenn)



MSU Psychological Clinic Services:

Project ImPACT is recognized as one of the **most effective** programs for parents of young children on the autism spectrum or with social communication delays!

The MSU Psychological Clinic offers **autism assessment services and Project ImPACT intervention** services for young children with autism and related social communication delays.

Learn more about Project ImPACT by visiting: <https://www.project-impact.org/>

Learn more about the MSU Psychological Clinic by visiting: <https://psychology.msu.edu/clinic/>



Project ImPACT is an evidence-based parent coaching program where caregivers can learn how to use intervention strategies with their child to support social engagement, communication, imitation, and play skills.

MSU Psychological Clinic

General Information

The MSU Psychological Clinic aims to be:

1. A state-of-the-art training facility that provides high-quality evidence-based care
2. Accessible & reliable for those seeking mental health services in Greater Lansing
3. A distinguished referral source for our colleagues in the community



**WELCOME TO THE
MSU Psychological Clinic**

Our clinicians are trained in multiple treatments, including:

- Acceptance Commitment Therapy
- Behavior Therapy
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Emotion Focused Therapy
- Family Systems Treatment
- Parent Training/Coaching
- Psychodynamic Psychotherapy

MSU clinical psychology doctoral students, as well as other trainees or students enrolled in practicum, receive intensive and specialized training through the Clinic. The MSU clinical psychology doctoral program believes in providing its trainees opportunities to work with clients from diverse backgrounds (e.g., ethnic/racial/economic/religious/sexual) across the lifespan (child/adult). Clinicians treat and assess clients with a range of specific disorders and problems. Individual, family, and group interventions are taught. Students also receive exposure to different theoretical orientations and multiple therapeutic techniques.

**All trainees are supervised by licensed
psychologists who are also faculty at Michigan State
University.**



**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
Psychological Clinic**

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Stay Connected!

Website:



For more information on upcoming projects, research, workshops, and more, visit our website: <https://autismlab.psy.msu.edu/>

Contact Us:



Email Us: autlab@msu.edu



Call Us: 517-432-8031

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