

CIARA L. OUSLEY

University of Nebraska – Lincoln
363 Barkley Memorial Center; Lincoln, NE
cousley2@unl.edu

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Special Education, 2022

The Pennsylvania State University
Major: Special Education
Cognate/Focus: Augmentative and Alternative Communication &
Applied Behavior Analysis

M.S. Special Education, 2017

Saint Joseph's University
Major: Special Education
Endorsement: Autism Spectrum Disorders

B.S. Education and Human Sciences, 2015

The University of Nebraska – Lincoln
Majors: Elementary Education & Special Education K – 6

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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|----------------|---|
| 2023 – Present | Research Affiliate, University of Nebraska System
Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families, and Schools |
| 2022 – Present | Assistant Professor, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders |
| 2022 | Adjunct Faculty, Niagara University
The Jewish Colonization Association (ICA) ABA Graduate Program |
| 2016 – 2018 | Intervention Specialist, Beacon School
Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Athens, OH
Grades: 2, 3, 4, and 5 Severe Developmental Disabilities |
| 2015 – 2016 | Special Education Teacher, West Bay Elementary
Elkhorn Public Schools, Elkhorn, NE
Grades: 1, 2, 4, and 5 Mild to Moderate Disabilities |
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CERTIFICATIONS

Board Certified Behavior Analyst – Doctoral (BCBA-D) | Certification number: 1-22-59183
Ohio Resident Teaching Certification | Intervention Specialist K – 12 (expired)

Nebraska Teaching Certification | Elementary & Special Education K – 6 (expired)

GRANTS AND FUNDING

Current

- 2024 – current *Understanding how Children with Autism and Cerebral Palsy who Use AAC Interact During Play.*
 SECD Research Funds
 Amount: \$2,500
 Award Period: 2024 – funds expire
 Role: co-PI
- 2023 - current *The Effects of Embedding Augmentative and Alternative Communication within Storybook Reading and Play Time for Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.*
 Layman Seed Grant, Office of Research and Economic Development
 University of Nebraska – Lincoln
 Amount: \$10,000
 Award Period: 08/2023 – 12/2025
 Role: Primary Investigator
- Partnering with Nebraska Families to Understand their Experiences Parenting their Child who is Receiving Early Intervention Services.*
 Calvin’s Legacy Foundation Research Funds, NU Foundation
 Amount: \$25,000
 Award Period: 03/2022 – Present
 Role: Co-Primary Investigator with Dr. Susan Loveall
- RDFP Award: Research Dissemination at DADD Conference*
 Prem S. Paul New Faculty Scholar Award Fund, NU Foundation
 Award: \$2,000
 Award Period: 08/2023 – 07/2024
 Role: Primary Investigator

Submitted/Pending

- 2024 *Project AWARE: Autism Wisdom to Advance Research and Early Intervention*
 Institute of Educational Sciences (IES) – Early Career Development and Mentoring, NCSER
 Amount Requested: \$700,000
 Requested Award Period: 07/2025 – 06/2029
 Role: PI

Project SPROUT – Supporting PhD Recruitment, Outreach, and Training: Naturalistic Approaches for Autism and AAC with Underrepresented Scholars and Children
 Department of Education: Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities, OSERS-OSEP
 Amount Requested: \$3,504,634.41
 Requested Award Period: 08/2025 – 7/31/2030
 Role: Co-Project Director (UNL Site Director)

Completed

2021 *Coaching Families of Young Children with Autism and Minimal Speech in Naturalistic Developmental Behavioral Strategies Using Video Feedback.*
 Graduate Research Grant, The Organization for Autism Research
 Amount: \$2,000
 Award Period: 08/2021 – 05/2022
 Role: Primary Student Investigator
 Advisors: Tracy J Raulston and David McNaughton

Unfunded

2024 *Enhancing the quality of practice of the ECE workforce in parent-implemented interventions to promote the development of young children with disabilities (LOI)*
 Foundation for Child Development – Young Scholars Program
 Amount Requested: \$249,995
 Requested Award Period: 01/2025 – 12/2027
 Role: PI

Peeling Back the Layers of Parent Training and Coaching (LOI)
 Organization for Autism Research – Applied
 Amount Requested: \$50,000
 Requested Award Period: 01/2025 – 12/2026
 Role: PI

2023 *Partnering with Caregivers: Empowering Diverse Family Members to Promote Augmentative and Alternative Communication Use*
 Institute of Educational Sciences (IES)
 Amount Requested: \$2,000,000
 Requested Award Period: 07/2024 – 06/2028
 Role: Consultant (PI: J.B. Ganz)

HONORS, AWARDS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

2024 - 2025	<i>Empowering Voices: Advancing Emotion-Awareness in AAC at UNL</i> School of Computing Senior Design Team, Consultant
2024	Aspirational Teaching Institute Fellow CEHS, University of Nebraska – Lincoln
2023 - 2024	Grant Writing for Grand Visions Program Fellow CEHS, University of Nebraska – Lincoln
2023	Research SLAM Finalist ORED, University of Nebraska – Lincoln
2023	Single-Case Design Research Training Institute Fellow NCSER, Institute of Education Sciences (IES)
2022 – 2023	Research Development Fellows Program ORED, University of Nebraska – Lincoln
2022	Best Student Research Paper of 2021 <i>Augmentative and Alternative Communication</i>

MANUSCRIPTS

Published or In-Press (n = 17)

- Pitt, K., & Ousley, C. (2024). Reimagining AAC for children during dynamic social situations by leveraging smart device design. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*.
- Ousley, C., Gevarter, C., & D’Agostino, S. (2024). Aligning intervention for Autistic beginning communicators with language development milestones using NDBIs. *Young Exceptional Children*.
- Pitt, K. M., Mikuls, A., Ousley, C., Boster, J. B., Mahmoudi, M., McCarthy, J., & Burnison, J., & (in press). Considering whether brain-computer interfaces have prospective potential to support children who have the physical abilities for touch-based AAC access: A forum manuscript. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*.
- Raulston, T. J., Ousley, C., Hinton, E. M., Ramirez, A. M. (2024). Beyond trial counts: Considerations for measuring play and engagement during early intervention for autistic children. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*.
- Raulston, T. J., Ousley, C., & Gilhuber, C. S. (2023). A scoping review of playdate literature with children on the autism spectrum. *Early Childhood Education Journal*.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-023-01616-2>

- Ousley, C., Raulston, T. J., & Gilhuber, C.S.** (2023). Telecoaching for parents of young autistic children using strength-based video feedback. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disabilities*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-023-06199-w>
- Bhana, N. B., Raulston, T. J., **Ousley, C. L.**, & Bagawan, A. (2023). Sequential Analysis of Photographs and Parent Training to Support Conversations about Past Events between Caregivers and Children with Autism. *Advances in Neurodevelopmental Disorders*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41252-023-00333-6>
- Ousley, C.** & Raulston, T. J. (2023). A guide to incorporate augmentative and alternative communication into functional communication training. *Intervention in School and Clinic*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10534512221093785>
- Ousley, C. L.**, Raulston, T. J., & Gilhuber, C. S. (2022). Incorporating video feedback within a parent-implemented naturalistic developmental behavioral intervention package via telepractice. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02711214221117087>
- Coburn, K.L., Jung, S., **Ousley, C.**, Sowers, D. J., Wendelken, M., & Wilkinson, K. (2021). Centering the family in their system: A framework to promote family-centered AAC services. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07434618.2021.1991471>
- Raulston, T. J., Bhana, N., McIntyre, L., & **Ousley, C.** (2021). Brief Report: Collateral joint engagement during a playdate intervention for children with and at risk for autism. *Journal for Autism and Developmental Disorders*. 51(1), 357 – 363. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-020-04544-x>
- Jung, S., **Ousley, C.**, McNaughton, D., & Wolfe, P. (2021). The effects of technology supports on community grocery shopping skills for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Special Education Technology*. 1 – 12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162643421989970>
- Babb, S., Jung, S., **Ousley, C.**, McNaughton, D., & Light, J. (2021). Personalized AAC intervention to increase participation and communication for a young adult with Down Syndrome. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 41(3), 232 – 248. <https://doi.org/10.1097/TLD.0000000000000240>
- Bhana, N., McNaughton, D., Raulston, T., & **Ousley, C.** (2020) Supporting communication and participation in shared storybook reading using visual scene displays. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*. 52(6), 383 – 391. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00400059920918609>
- Ousley, C.**, & Raulston, T. J. (Commentary authors, 2020). Preliminary evidence suggests that functional reinforcement contingencies may result in more rapid acquisition of initial auditory-visual discriminations for some individuals with autism spectrum disorder.

Evidence-Based Communication Assessment and Intervention. 14(3), 152 – 159.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17489539.2020.1765472>

Ousley, C., Raulston, T. J., Gregori, E., McNaughton, D., Bhana, N., & Mantzoros, T. (2020). A comparison of single-case quality evaluation tools applied to functional communication training with augmentative and alternative communication supports for students with developmental disabilities. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*. 107, 1 – 14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2020.103803>

Laubscher, E., Raulston, T. J., & **Ousley, C.** (2020). Supporting peer interactions in the inclusive preschool classroom using visual scene displays. *Journal of Special Education Technology*. 1 – 9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162643420981561>

Under Review (n = 2)

Ousley, C., Raulston, T. J. (revisions submitted). “I became more confident and comfortable when playing with my son”: Parent perspectives following a strength-based video feedback intervention

Burke, K., **Ousley, C.**, Burke, S., Macy, M. (submitted). Enhancing inclusion in early childhood education: Strategies, challenges, and practical approaches.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

* indicates invited presentation; # indicates student presenter

National/International

2025 #Bellamy, M., #Kitsmiller, H., **Ousley, C.** (2025, January). *Additive effects of Visual Scene Displays as communication supports within a play-based NDBI for autistic children*. Poster presented at the International Conference on Autism, Intellectual Disability, & Developmental Disabilities (DADD), Clearwater, FL.

Ousley, C., #Bellamy, M., #Rogers, J., #Ericson, K., #Kitsmiller, H. (2025, January). *Educating student-athletes on how to interact with children with disabilities in sport*. Poster presented at the International Conference on Autism, Intellectual Disability, & Developmental Disabilities (DADD), Clearwater, FL.

2024 #Kitsmiller, H., Pitt, K., **Ousley, C.**, Pitt, A. (2024, December). *Investigating child-designed animated and static emotion symbols for AAC*. Poster to be presented at the annual ASHA Conference, Seattle, WA.

Pitt, K., Thiessen, A., **Ousley, C.**, Thistle, J., Orth, M., Washburn, T. (2024, December). *Visual Scene Displays: learning from how typically*

developing children and those with autism take photographs. Poster to be presented at the annual ASHA Conference, Seattle, WA.

***Ousley, C.** (2024, October). *Naturalistic, Developmental, and Behavioral? Oh My!: An Overview and Application-Focused Discussion Covering Naturalistic Developmental Behavioral Interventions for Young Children.* Invited Lecture Presented at the annual Richard L. Simpson Conference on Autism, Overland Park, Kansas.

Ousley, C. (2024, April). Coaching parents of young autistic children using flexible scheduling and strength-based video feedback. Seminar presented within Symposium titled, *Embracing Family Practices in Early Intervention for Young Autistic Children.* Symposia presented at the 56th Gatlinburg Conference, Kansas City, KS.

Ousley, C., Gilhuber, C. S. (2024, January). *Partnering with and Empowering Parents through Video Feedback.* Session presented at the 25th International Conference on Autism, Intellectual Disability, & Developmental Disabilities (DADD), Honolulu, HI.

#Willems, K., **Ousley, C.,** Loveall, S. (2024, January). *Review of Emergent Literacy and Phonics Interventions for Autistic Individuals.* Poster presented at the 25th International Conference on Autism, Intellectual Disability, & Developmental Disabilities (DADD), Honolulu, HI.

2023 Mikuls, A., Pitt, K., Mahmoudi, M., Burnison, J., Boster, J., McCarthy, J., **Ousley, C.** (2023, November). *Considering How Brain-Computer Interface Applications Can Support AAC Intervention for Children Without Physical Disabilities.* Poster presented at the Annual American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Convention, Boston, MA.

Ousley, C., Raulston, T. J., Gilhuber, C. (2023, May). Effects of a parent-implemented intervention using strength-based video feedback coaching during playtime. [Symposium]. Seminar presented within *Unique Application of Telehealth.* Discussants: Sarah Hansen [in place of Wendy Machalicek], at the 49th Annual Convention for the Association of Behavior Analysis International, Denver, CO.

2021 ***Ousley, C.** (2021, November). *Strategies and tools to empower parents and caregivers during playtime!* Lecture presentation presented at OCALICON Virtual Conference.

McNaughton, D., **Ousley, C.,** Baker, K., Bhana, N., Cherry, M., & Stroschein, B. (2021, July). *A scoping review of video modeling*

interventions to support community participation for autistic adolescents and adults. Paper presentation at The Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) National Conference.

Ousley, C. & Raulston, T. J. (2021, February). *DICE: A strategy for practitioners on how to decrease challenging behavior and replace it with appropriate communication.* Poster presented at The Council for Exceptional Children Virtual Conference.

Ousley, C. & Raulston, T. J. (2021, February). *The effects of functional communication training with augmentative and alternative communication supports on decreasing challenging behavior.* Poster presented at The Council for Exceptional Children Virtual Conference.

2020

Ousley, C., & Raulston, T. J. (2020, August). *Functional communication training utilizing augmentative and alternative communication supports: Who do we know about?* Poster presented at The Women in Behavior Analysis Virtual Conference.

McNaughton, D., Light, J., Babb, S., Caron, J., Jung, S., & **Ousley, C.** (2020, August). *Video with visual scene displays to support participation and communication for adolescents who require AAC.* [Seminar]. Accepted for presentation at the Biannual Conference of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, Cancun, Mexico. (cancelled due to COVID-19).

Ousley, C., Raulston, T. J., Gregori, E., McNaughton, D., Bhana, N., & Mantzoros, T. (2020, May). *Comparing single-case design quality appraisal tool outcomes: Functional communication training with communicative supports in schools.* Poster presented at the Association for Behavior Analysis International Virtual Conference.

Babb, S. & **Ousley, C.** (2020, May). The effects of speech-generating devices on the communication of adolescents with autism spectrum disorder during social interactions. [Symposium]. Seminar presented within *Teaching the use of different speech-generating device displays to individuals with autism during natural routines.* Discussants: Cindy Gevarter C and Elizabeth Lorah, at the 46th Annual Convention for the Association of Behavior Analysis International, Virtual Presentation.

Jung, S., **Ousley, C., Wolfe, P., & McNaughton, D.** (2020, February). Using technology supports to teach shopping skills to students with developmental disabilities: A systematic review. Presentation delivered at the Council for Exceptional Children Conference, Portland, OR.

Babb, S., McNaughton, D., O’Neill, T., Jung, S., & **Ousley, C.** (2020, February). Supporting participation and communication with video visual scene displays. Poster presented at Assistive Technology Industry Association, Orlando, FL.

Jung, S., & **Ousley, C.** (2020, January). Supporting participation and communication in community shopping using video VSDs. Poster presented at Assistive Technology Industry Association, Orlando, FL.

State/University

- 2024 **Ousley, C.** (2024, April). *Partnering with Parents Using NDBIs and Video Feedback*. Lecture presented at the 2024 Nebraska State Autism Network Conference.
- 2019 * Jung, S. & **Ousley, C.** (2019). Using Video Visual Scene Displays to Support Individual with Disabilities. Invited to present at The Pennsylvania State University College of Education Technology Committee Round Table, University Park, PA.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS, GUEST LECTURES, AND PANELS

- 2023 *Applied Behavior Analysis and Speech Language Pathology: Collaborating with Behavior Analysts through Common Practical Intervention Strategies*
Severe Disabilities and Autism: Communication Assessment and Intervention
University of Nebraska – Lincoln
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication in School Settings*
Augmentative and Alternative Communication
University of Nebraska – Lincoln
- 2022 *Coaching Parents of Young Autistic Children in Naturalistic Developmental Behavioral Interventions using Strength-Based Video Feedback*
Naturalistic Developmental Behavioral Intervention SIG – Free CEU
Applied Behavior Analysis International
- Using Video Feedback to Coach Parents of Autistic Children: Breaking Down the Experimental Design*
Single-Case Design Methodology
Niagara University

- 2020 *Assistive Technology and AAC*
Intervention for Students with Severe Disabilities
The Pennsylvania State University
- 2019 *Assistive Technology and AAC*
Intervention for Students with Severe Disabilities
The Pennsylvania State University
- Autism Spectrum Disorders*
Foundations of Special Education, Etiologies, Law, and Implications for Practice
The Pennsylvania State University
- Collaboration Between Special Educators and SLPs*
Introduction to Augmentative and Alternative Communication The Pennsylvania State University
- Experiences from Former and Current Special Educators (Panel)*
Family-School Partnership
The Pennsylvania State University
- What's the Big IDEA?: Working with Students with Disabilities and Their Families*
Parent Involvement in the Home, Community, and Class Instruction
The Pennsylvania State University

UNIVERSITY TEACHING

University of Nebraska – Lincoln

SPED 201: Introduction to Special Education (2025)

SPED 480: Educating Students with Low-Incidence Disabilities (2022 – 2023, 2025)

Niagara University

EDU 756ICAF: Advanced Principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (2022)

Pennsylvania State University – University Park and World Campus

SPLD 418: Assistive Technology for General Education Teachers (2021)

SPLD 419: Assistive Technology for General Education Teachers (2019 – 2022)

STUDENT MENTORING

Doctoral Students

Kendall Willems-Cygen (Special Education), Dissertation Committee Member (2023 – current)

Dissertation: *Teaching young autistic children letter-sound correspondences and decoding using a modified phonics intervention*

Melinda Henson (Special Education), Supervisory Committee Member (2023 – current)
Dissertation: *TBD*

Master Students

Jenna Rogers (Communication Disorders), Master's Thesis Co-Chair (2024 – present)
Masters Title: *TBD*

Hannah Kitsmiller (Communication Disorders), Graduate Assistant Supervisor; Master's Thesis Committee Member (2023 – present)
Masters Title: *Investigating child-informed considerations for animated picture symbols representing emotion for AAC use in those with ASD*

Darian Wilson (Literacy and Cultural Studies), Master's Thesis Committee Member (2024 – present)
Thesis Title: *“Re-Storying” the Pathologized Child: ADHD Tropes in Anne of Green Gables and Focused*

Undergraduate Students

Mallory Bellamy, Layman Seed Grant Student Researcher Supervisor (2023 – 2025)
Project: *The effects of embedding augmentative and alternative communication within storybook reading and play time for young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder*

Grace Fowler, UCARE Supervisor (2024 – 2025)
Project: *Exploring the self-efficacy of parents of children receiving Early Intervention*

Jenna Rogers, UCARE Supervisor (2023 – 2024)
Project: *Educating student athletes on how to interact with children with disabilities in sport*

Abbie Summers, UCARE Supervisor (2023 – 2024)
Project: *What are the differences in social communication of autistic males versus females?*

SCADD Lab Student Researchers

2024 – 2025 ($n = 5$)

2023 – 2024 ($n = 8$)

SERVICE

Discipline/Profession

Committee Member

Recommended Practices Committee – Research Synthesis, DEC (2022 – 2024)
Nebraska Autism Spectrum Disorder Network Committee (2023 – Present)

Conferences

Chair/Discussant, Poster Session on IDD, ABAI Conference (2023)
 Submission Reviewer, Family STRAND, DEC Annual Conference (2022 – 2023)
 Planning Committee, Richard L Simpson Conference on Autism (2024 – Present)

Consultant

NCLII-2 Content Expert, Autism and Communication Needs (2022 – 2023)
 CEC 5 – 7 Year Strategic Planning Focus Group Invitee (2021)

Manuscript Reviewer

Advances in Neurodevelopmental Disorders (2021 – 2022)
 Assistive Technology (2022 – 2023)
 Augmentative and Alternative Communication (2021, 2024)
 Behavioral Interventions (2021)
 Child: Care, Health, and Development (2023 – 2024)
 Discover Education (2024)
 Exceptional Children (2024)
 Folia Phoniatica et Logopaedica (2024)
 International Journal of Developmental Disabilities (2023)
 Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders (2023 – 2024)
 Journal of Early Intervention (2023)
 Journal of Physical and Developmental Disabilities (2020 – 2024)
 Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders (2020 – 2021)
 Topics in Language Disorders (2025)

Department/College/University

Committee Member

SECD Ad-Hoc SPED Ed.D. Planning/Development Committee (2023)
 SECD Ad-Hoc SPED Ph.D. Milestone Planning Committee (2023 – 2024)
 SECD Ad-Hoc SPED Ph.D. Planning Committee (2024 – Present)
 SECD Artwork Committee (2023 – Present)
 SECD Chair’s Advisory Committee (2024 – Present)
 SECD Department Chair’s Search Committee (2024 – Present)
 SECD Graduate Faculty Committee (2022 – Present)
 SECD Technology Committee (2022 – Present)

Proposal Reviewer

Grand Challenges Planning Grant Proposals (2024)
 UCARE Student Research Proposals (2023 – 2024)

Invited Guest

Early Career Faculty Representative – New Faculty Orientation (2024)

Community/Society

Participant

Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department LCEN Access of Care Environmental Scan (2023)

Professional Development Presenter

Head Start of Lancaster and Saunders Counties ($n = 4$; 2024)

Topic: Autism Spectrum Disorders in early childhood: What it is, what it isn't, and how to best support.

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Association for Applied Behavior Analysis International

Naturalistic Developmental Behavioral Intervention Special Interest Group

The Council for Exceptional Children

Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities

Division for Early Childhood
