



***Division on
Autism and
Developmental
Disabilities***

Press Release: Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities Announces 2025 Social Justice Award Recipient

(For Immediate Release)

January 14, 2025

The Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities is delighted to announce Dr. Jamie Pearson as the recipient of the 2025 Social Justice Award. This prestigious award recognizes individuals dedicated to addressing and dismantling systemic inequities based on disability and other marginalized identities. Dr. Pearson's outstanding commitment to promoting social justice, both personally and professionally, has made a lasting impact on students with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities.

Dr. Pearson, an Associate Professor at North Carolina State University, is a dedicated advocate for racially marginalized families of children with disabilities. She developed the FACES caregiver empowerment program, which educates Black families about autism, disability stigma, and educational rights, and has studied its effectiveness in promoting caregiver advocacy, improving family dynamics, and enhancing child outcomes.

Dr. Pearson's work addresses critical disparities in autism diagnosis and service access for Black autistic children and their families. She has published over 20 scholarly articles and six book chapters, sharing her findings widely. Her research includes grants to explore autism education in Kenya and to expand the FACES program to improve outcomes for Black autistic children. Additionally, through the SPARC doctoral training grant, she mentors future scholars, further advancing the field.

This distinguished award is presented by The Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD), a special interest association within the Council for Exceptional Children—the largest international professional organization dedicated to supporting the needs of students with disabilities. Since its establishment in 1963, DADD has been a leading voice in the field of education for students with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities, actively contributing to research dissemination, the creation of nationally recognized professional practice standards, and fostering robust professional networking.

The award ceremony is scheduled for January 22, 2025, at DADD's annual conference in Clearwater Beach, Florida. For further information, please contact Dr. Melissa Savage, DADD Awards Chair, at mns029@uark.edu. Additional details about the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities can be found at <http://www.daddcec.com/>.