

Press Release: *Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities Announces 2026 Social Justice Award Recipient*

(For Immediate Release)

January 5, 2026

The Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD) is pleased to announce Dr. Elizabeth Cutrer-Párraga as the 2025 Social Justice Award recipient. This award honors individuals who embody DADD values and work to address and break down systemic inequities based on disability and other marginalized identities.

Dr. Elizabeth Cutrer-Párraga is an associate professor at Brigham Young University and earned her Ph.D. in Special Education and Literacy Intervention from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Prior to joining BYU, she served as Intervention Director for the Targeted Reading Intervention at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. Nominators describe Dr. Cutrer-Párraga as a scholar deeply committed to advancing social justice for individuals with autism, intellectual disabilities, and other developmental disabilities, while centering the voices of culturally and linguistically marginalized communities. Her work reflects a belief that all people can learn and deserve equitable opportunities for agency, belonging, and education, and she is widely recognized for her cultural humility and ability to build authentic, respectful partnerships with individuals with disabilities, families, educators, and policymakers.

Meilani Roan, a doctoral candidate at Brigham Young University, highlighted the impact of Dr. Cutrer-Párraga's work, noting that through qualitative research conducted in American Samoa and Samoa, she creates spaces where individuals with disabilities, their families, and educators feel valued, respected, and heard. Roan emphasized Dr. Cutrer-Párraga's ability to connect with compassion across differences in language and culture, fostering understanding and meaningful change in the communities she serves.

This distinguished award is presented by DADD, a special interest association within the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the largest international professional organization dedicated to supporting students with disabilities. Since 1963, DADD has been a leading voice in educating students with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities, contributing to research dissemination, developing professional practice standards, and fostering robust professional networking.

The award ceremony is scheduled for January 16, 2026, at DADD's annual conference in Long Beach, CA. For further information, please contact DeVoshia Mason Martin, DADD Awards Chair, at awardschair@daddcec.com. Additional details about the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities can be found at <http://www.daddcec.com/>.