

Listening and Spoken Language Interdisciplinary Graduate Training Program Faculty and Staff

Claire Annis, M.Ed.
Sound Beginnings Teacher
435-797-9235 [Email](#)



Claire Annis is a preschool teacher in the Sound Beginnings program. She graduated with her Master's in Deaf Education, with a license to teach Special Education. Claire loves working with children and has enjoyed working previously in Lewiston, UT as an inclusion preschool teacher. She is originally from Las Vegas, NV but came to USU for her journey in Deaf Education. Claire has a brother-in-law with a profound hearing loss that inspired her to follow this path through Listening and Spoken Language. Claire loves hiking, swimming, and going to all new movies with her husband, Devon. She loves the team at Sound Beginnings, including the families and looks forward to great growth with the children we serve.

Sharon Fairborn, MS., CCC-SLP, LSLS Cert-AVT
Speech-Language Pathologist
Early Intervention Provider

Cass Fogelstrom, M.Ed., LSLS Cert-AVEd
Tele-Intervention Provider
[Email](#)



Cass Fogelstrom provides tele-intervention services for families throughout the country. She has a Master's Degree in Education from the John Tracy Clinic/University of San Diego. Additionally, Cass has a certification as a Listening and Spoken Language Specialist, Auditory Verbal Educator (LSLS Cert. AVEd). Cass has focused her time and career coaching parents in their home, either in person or through video-conferencing. She has a passion for instilling confidence within the family as they navigate their journey of having a child with hearing loss. She believes in a team approach, noting that parents and family members are the number one teachers and experts in their child's life. Cass is always looking forward to meeting new families and learning about their unique and special circumstances. The possibilities of bringing every child to his or her full potential are endless!

Nicole Jacobson, MS, CCC-SLP, LSL Cert-AVEd
Sound Beginnings Director
435-797-9235 [Email](#)



Nicole Jacobson is the Director of Sound Beginnings, a nationally certified Listening and Spoken Language Specialist, and a Speech-Language Pathologist. She received a Bachelor's Degree at Brigham Young University in Special Education with a minor in music. She also received her second Bachelor's and Master's Degrees at Utah State University in Speech-Language Pathology. Nicole has loved working with the amazing children and their families at Sound Beginnings. She has also enjoyed working as a clinical supervisor with the graduate students from the Listening and Spoken Language program.

Sarah Law, M.Ed.
Clinical Assistant Professor
435-797-4464 [Email](#)



Sarah Law is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Communicative Disorders and Deaf Education. She supervises student practicum and teaches courses in the graduate training program for deaf education master's students. She went to University of Utah and received her Bachelor's in Special Education/Deaf and Hard of Hearing/K-12. She went on to attend University of San Diego where she received her Master of Education Degree in Special Education/Deaf and Hard of Hearing/Birth-21. Prior to joining Utah State University, she worked at Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind for 11 years in a Listening and Spoken Language elementary classroom, preschool classroom and as an Aural Habilitation Specialist. Sarah is passionate about sharing the skills she has learned from her experiences with the graduate students at USU.

Kali Markle, AuD, CCC-A
Clinical Assistant Professor and Audiologist
435-797-2507
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Dr. Kali Markle is a Clinical Associate Professor of Audiology and a Pediatric Audiologist. A majority of her time is spent in the clinic supervising graduate students and seeing patients; however, she also teaches graduate courses. Dr. Markle provides diagnostic evaluations on children birth to 21 years of age, fits hearing aids, bone conduction devices, FM systems and works with cochlear implants. She oversees the newborn hearing screening programs at two hospitals and helps fit and maintain FM systems at some of the charter schools in Cache Valley. Dr. Markle is a California native who is enjoying more time spent outdoors with her rescue husky, Logan.

Karen Muñoz, Ed.D., CCC-A
Professor and Department Head
435-797-3701

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Dr. Karen Muñoz, EdD, CCC-A is a professor at Utah State University and the Communicative Disorders and Deaf Education Department Head. She has focused on pediatric audiology since the mid 1990's and has worked extensively at the state level to support the development of effective newborn hearing screening and follow-up programs. She has also been involved nationally and internationally in providing continuing professional education on best practice to audiologists in the early identification and management of hearing loss for infants and young children. She is particularly interested in parent and professional factors that influence parent management of pediatric hearing loss. She moved from her position at Northern Illinois University to Utah in 2007 with her husband and son, to join in the development of the Sound Beginnings program. She has published in the areas of pediatric amplification, and factors that influence parent-professional partnerships.

Lauri Nelson, Ph.D.
Professor and Deaf Education Division Chair
435-797-8051 [Email](#)



Dr. Lauri Nelson is a Professor in the Dept of Communicative Disorders and Deaf Education and is the Director of the Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) Deaf Education Graduate Training Program. She also serves as the Deaf Education Division Chair. Dr. Nelson has a dual background as a pediatric clinical audiologist as well as a deaf educator. Her research interests are in the speech, language, and academic development of young children with hearing loss and the educational supports that benefit children and families. Her favorite part about being at USU is the interaction she has with graduate students. She loves watching them gain knowledge, skills, and confidence throughout their graduate program. Dr. Nelson is a Utah native and lives in Davis County.

Elizabeth Parker, M.Ed.
Clinical Instructor / Practicum Supervisor
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Liz began teaching children with hearing loss in 1980 at the Utah Schools for the Deaf & the Blind. For ten years, she taught preschool through sixth grade students in the Auditory/Oral program in a mainstream setting. In 1990, she began working for Utah State University as a Clinical Instructor, supervising student teachers and teaching classes in the Communication Disorders/Deaf Education Department. In 2001, she began traveling to Nakuru, Kenya and did volunteer work at Ngala School for the Deaf and continues to take groups of travelers with her non-profit group, RaFIKis. In 2005, she became the Director of the Deaf Central Division of USDB, serving over 200 families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing, using ASL/English or Listening and Spoken Language, preschool through high school. She is pleased to serve at USU once more where she hopes to share her experiences and knowledge with future teachers of the deaf.

Cache Pitt, Au.D., CCC-A
Clinical Associate Professor and Audiologist
435-797-9311

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Dr. Cache Pitt is a Clinical Associate Professor of Audiology and provides clinical supervision to graduate students in Audiology. He was born and raised in Lander, Wyoming. He went to the University of Wyoming where he earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Audiology. Dr. Pitt began his career in audiology at the California Ear Institute in Palo Alto, CA where he worked with adults and children with cochlear implants. He, his wife Suzanne, and their 2 sons Logan and Ryan and their daughter Lauren are very happy to live in Cache Valley where they are closer to family. Both Dr. Pitt and his wife enjoy hiking, cooking, movies, and playing the piano.

Marie Rood
Sound Beginnings Teacher Aide
435-797-9225

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Marie Rood is a Paraprofessional in the Sound Beginnings program. She studied at Ricks College, and Utah State University. In 2002 she earned her Oregon Paraprofessional Certification. In 2009 Marie and her husband Kevin moved to Logan, Utah from Coos Bay, Oregon where she had worked for 14 years as a Paraprofessional at a K-4 elementary school. Marie worked in Resource Room, Title 1, and Federal Indian Education programs. Marie and her husband Kevin have been married 33 years and have two married sons. Marie enjoys reading, traveling, family time, and taking her dog Stella for walks. Marie is excited to be starting her 8th year working at Sound Beginnings.

Lauren Smith, M.Ed.
Sound Beginnings Teacher
435-797-7455

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Lauren Smith is the teacher of the parent toddler class and early intervention home visits for Sound Beginnings. She is originally from Farmington, but she attended USU for both her undergraduate and graduate degrees, so she thinks of Logan as home. Before she came to Sound Beginnings, she worked for the Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind as an early childhood teacher meeting with families in their homes. Lauren is working on the auditory verbal educator certification through the Alexander Graham Bell Association. Lauren grew up in a family of musicians and she loves to incorporate music of all kinds into her sessions. Her professional goal is to create a partnership with each family that will create positive outcomes for every child.

Jeanette Smoot, MS, CCC-SLP, LSLs Cert-AVED
Speech-Language Pathologist
435-797-9229

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Jeanette Smoot is a graduate of Utah State University. She loves her work as a Speech-Language Pathologist and is nationally certified as a Listening and Spoken Language Specialist. Coaching families and mentoring graduate students are a key part of her role at Sound Beginnings. Jeanette enjoys finding creative ways to weave the children's language and speech goals into any setting or activity.

Wendy Thompson
Office Manager
435-797-9234 [Email](#)



Wendy Thompson is the Office Manager for the Sound Beginnings, Pediatric Audiology and Cochlear Implant Clinic. Wendy worked for medical facilities for over 20 years before coming to USU. Wendy grew up on the Oregon Coast and moved to Utah in 2009. She has been married to Bill for 21 years and they have a 20- year old. Wendy enjoys spending time with her family and being outside. She is taking piano lessons. Wendy enjoys reading and crocheting double sided blankets. The best part of her day is talking to the children as they come to school. Her personal motto is to follow the golden rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you".

Karl White, Ph.D.
Director, National Center for Hearing
Assessment and Management
435-797-3013 [Email](#)



Dr. Karl White is the Emma Eccles Jones Endowed Chair in Early Childhood Education, a Professor of Psychology, and the founding Director of the National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM). He was instrumental in the vision and development of the Sound Beginnings program and continues to play a key role in its funding and operations. Dr. White is nationally and internationally recognized as one of the world's leading authorities on early identification and treatment of hearing loss. He has hundreds of publications and presentations at scholarly meetings and has been an invited speaker to 35 countries where he has assisted in the implementation of newborn hearing screening and intervention programs. Dr. White and his wife Amy have lived in Colorado, New York, Washington, D.C. and Muenster, Germany, but think Cache Valley, Utah is the best place of all. They are the parents of 8 children and 29 grandchildren. They enjoy horseback riding, traveling, and spending time with their family.

