

## Pre-Conference F



### Down Syndrome along with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Recognizing the Signs, Understanding the Diagnostic Process, and Exploring Intervention Approaches



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Approximately 20% of children with DS meet criteria for a comorbid autism spectrum disorder (ASD). However, less is known about the learning and behavioral challenges and effective intervention approaches for this group. This preconference workshop will describe the signs and symptoms of ASD in children with DS. It will review the diagnostic process, including the tests that are given and the developmental considerations involved with evaluating ASD in children with DS. Video material will be utilized to illustrate the diagnostic process and the signs and symptoms of ASD. During the workshop, research on the learning and behavior challenges that may be experienced by children with this additional diagnosis will be discussed. Suggestions for the types of interventions that may benefit children with DS and comorbid ASD will be provided. Additionally, information about empirically-supported interventions for ASD will be described in order to introduce attendees to the types of approaches that may be helpful for children with DS and comorbid ASD.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Understand key signs of ASD in youth with DS.
2. Understand learning and behavioral challenges that may be experienced by children with DS and comorbid ASD.
3. Understand several components of different ASD intervention approaches that may be helpful to draw from for children with DS and comorbid ASD.

#### Outline:

- I. Overview of common learning challenges faced by children with DS
- II. Overview of autism spectrum disorder including
  - A. Social-communicative challenges
  - B. Repetitive behaviors and interests
  - C. Characteristics of ASD that are shared with youth with DS without comorbid ASD

- III. Identification and diagnosis of ASD in children with DS including a description of
  - A. Symptoms and common behaviors with video examples
  - B. Diagnostic procedures with video examples
  - C. Developmental considerations when evaluating ASD in children with DS
- IV. Description of additional learning and behavior challenges faced by children with DS and ASD that may differ from peers with DS only
- V. Share information about intervention for children with DS and comorbid ASD
  - A. Clinical suggestions for intervention strategies that may be helpful for children with DS and ASD
  - B. A summary of different intervention approaches developed for children with a primary diagnosis of ASD that may be suitable for children with DS and comorbid ASD
- VI. Q&A throughout the workshop

### **About the Speaker:**

**Nancy Raitano Lee, PhD**, is a licensed psychologist and assistant professor in the Psychology Department at Drexel University. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in human development and family studies from Cornell University and her doctorate in child clinical psychology from the University of Denver. Her clinical training includes the completion of a pre-doctoral internship at the Children's Hospital of Colorado and a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Colorado School of Medicine's Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. As a post-doctoral fellow, she received specialized clinical training in the diagnosis and treatment of neurodevelopmental disorders with a particular emphasis on diagnosing autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in young children with genetic disorders associated with intellectual disability such as DS. Following her training in psychology, Dr. Lee completed a fellowship at the National Institute of Mental Health focused on the use of structural neuroimaging to study the developing brain in youth with DS and other genetic disorders as well as children with typical development.

Dr. Lee currently leads the LADDER (Learning and Developmental Disabilities Educational Neuropsychology Research) Lab at Drexel where she conducts both clinical and translational research on neurodevelopmental disorders with a particular emphasis on neurogenetic syndromes. She has published on executive function, language, and ASD symptoms in youth with DS and those with sex chromosome disorders. She has also published research on the developing brain in these groups. Dr. Lee's research has been funded by the Lejeune Foundation and the National Institutes of Health. The long-term goal of her research is to identify novel targets of treatment to ameliorate the cognitive weaknesses that characterize different neurodevelopmental disorders in order to optimize outcomes and quality of life for these groups.