

NIDCAP Nursery Certification Program (NNCP)

NNCP Site Review Team



Karen M. Smith, MEd, BSN, RNC

Ms. Smith received her graduate degree from the University of Idaho in Adult Education. She is the Co-Director of the NIDCAP Training Center at St. Luke's Children's Hospital in Boise, Idaho. St. Luke's newborn intensive care nursery is the first recognized NIDCAP Certified Nursery. Ms. Smith is a Master NIDCAP Trainer and a Clinical Developmental Specialist and Developmental Care Educator. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the NIDCAP Federation International and is Chair of the NIDCAP Nursery Certification Committee. Ms Smith has 37 years experience as a professional nurse in the areas of adult intensive care, oncology, newborn intensive care nursing and newborn developmental follow-up clinic. She has provided NIDCAP Training to a variety of settings in the USA, Europe, and Asia. Ms Smith's areas of interest are respiratory care, sleep, pain management, staff development and education, family education and support, and Kangaroo Care. She has lectured and published in these areas of interest.



Roger E. Sheldon, MD, MPH

Dr. Sheldon is Emeritus Professor of Pediatrics in the Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine Division and was Assistant Dean for Continuing Medical Education at the Oklahoma University College of Medicine. He trained in Bloomington, Illinois, Chicago, Boston, and Denver, and was on the faculty of the University of Colorado before coming to Oklahoma in 1979. Dr. Sheldon completed his Master's Degree in Public Health (emphasizing Epidemiology and Biostatistics) at OU in 1995. He has served the University of Oklahoma as Neonatal Section Chief, and as Medical Director of the Children's Hospital in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. In Colorado and Oklahoma, he innovated, trained nurse practitioners, and published a book on "The Expanding Role of the Nurse in Neonatal Intensive Care." He was one of the first to formalize this model of care stimulating the development of advanced practice nursing and the Neonatal Nurse Practitioner model, now standard in most NICUs throughout the USA. In addition to his responsibilities as an attending physician in neonatal intensive care and in CME, he was Medical Director of the Neoflight newborn transport program of MediFlight Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Infant Transition Program (a referral, support and education program for families graduating from neonatal intensive care), the Sooner NIDCAP Training Center (the state's resource for training NICU professionals in family-centered, developmentally appropriate care of preterm infants and their families) , and the Oklahoma Areawide Services Information System (OASIS) (the state-wide 800 number hotline and directory for services to children with disabilities). He currently serves as a member on the NIDCAP Federation International Board of Directors. He retired from the University of Oklahoma in 2010.



James M. Helm, PhD

Dr. Helm received his doctorate in Special Education at the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina in 1987. He currently is an Infant-Family Development Specialist at WakeMed, Neonatology, Raleigh, North Carolina and is a NIDCAP Trainer and Director of the Carolina NIDCAP Training Center and the Hospital to Home Program serving infants and their families as they transition from the Newborn Intensive Care Unit to their home and community. Dr. Helm currently serves on the Board of Directors of the NIDCAP Federation International. His most recent academic appointments include: Clinical Associate Professor, Pediatrics, University of North Carolina Medical School, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Adjunct Assistant Professor, School of Education, Department of Special Education, UNC at Chapel Hill; and Adjunct Assistant Professor, Allied Health Professions, Division of Physical Therapy, UNC at Chapel Hill. Dr. Helm is also a Trainer in the administration of the Brazelton Neonatal Behavioral Assessment Scale (BNBAS) and is the Director of the BNBAS Training Center at WakeMed, Raleigh, North Carolina.



Gretchen Lawhon, RN, PhD

Dr. Gretchen Lawhon is a clinical nurse scientist who has worked in the arena of newborn intensive care for 31 years and has 35 years experience as a nurse. Currently she is Vice President of the NIDCAP Federation International and Director of the Mid-Atlantic NIDCAP Center at The Children's Regional Hospital at Cooper University Hospital in Camden, New Jersey. She was a cofounder of the NIDCAP program and co-investigator in several of the early research supporting an individualized developmentally supportive approach to care of infants and families in the newborn intensive unit. Dr. Lawhon's own dissertation was Facilitation of Parenting within the Newborn Intensive Care Unit at the University of Washington School of Nursing. Dr. Lawhon was co-investigator of the NINR funded Stability of Infant Responses to Painful Procedures study. She has extensive experience as a clinical nurse scientist and has authored numerous articles in her areas of expertise.



Deborah Buehler, PhD

Dr. Buehler received her graduate training at Harvard's Graduate School of Education (Master's Degree in Human Development, 1986) and at Boston University (Doctorate in Developmental Psychology, 1993). She is currently the Associate Director of the West Coast NIDCAP and APIB Training Center at the University of California in San Francisco. She is a Master NIDCAP Trainer and an APIB Trainer. Dr. Buehler serves as a Founding Member and Secretary of the Board of Directors of the NIDCAP Federation International. She serves as Chair of the Design and Aesthetics Committee, with responsibilities for assuring the integrity, consistency and quality of materials for the NFI and NIDCAP. She is an Associate Editor of the NFI's Developmental Observer. Dr. Buehler holds an Instructor in Psychology appointment at Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts.