



## 2026 Speech Pathology Applied Behavior Analysis (SPABA) Award Competition

*Now accepting proposals*

### THREE AWARD CATEGORIES

These categories represent the objectives of the SPABA award program:

- ***MN (Giri) Hegde Research Award*** – projects that strengthen the evidence base for behavior-analytic approaches to support for speech, language, communication, and feeding impairments.
- ***Barbara Esch Application Award*** – projects that demonstrate effective implementation of science-based behavioral analytic principles to speech-language pathology service delivery.
- ***Nikia Dower Dissemination Award*** – projects that addresses (a) accurate cross-disciplinary dissemination of knowledge and/or (b) collaboration between speech pathologists and behavior analysts.

### AWARD OUTCOMES

- Each award applicant will receive a free membership to the SPABA SIG for the current calendar year.
- Each award recipient will receive
  - **\$500.00**
  - Complimentary membership in the SPABA Special Interest Group of ABAI for the current and following calendar year
  - Complimentary admission to SPABA's 2026 virtual conference on November 6, 2026

### APPLICATION ELIGIBILITY

- **Research Award Applicants** must be students enrolled in a bachelors, masters, or PhD program in speech-language pathology, behavior analysis, psychology, special education, or a related field.
- **Application and Dissemination Award Applicants** must be graduate students *or* practitioners.
  - Applicants should pick the award category (application or dissemination) that best applies to their work
  - Note that application projects may also be research based (e.g., single-case research design).
  - Student applicants must provide a letter of support from their academic mentors whether applying for the application or dissemination award.
  - Practitioner applicants may only apply for the application or dissemination awards, not the research award.

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## DESCRIPTION OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- **Empirical Research Projects**
  - Research that addresses some aspect of behavior analysis (e.g., verbal behavior; elements of assessment or intervention; qualitative measures combined with single case experimental design)
  - Projects may be new, ongoing, or completed within the calendar year.
  - Ongoing projects may include thesis research or other research projects required for completion of an academic program
- **Application Projects:**
  - Projects must address topics consistent with the mission of SPABA (i.e., dissemination, application, education)
  - Projects must demonstrate effective application of behavioral technologies by SLPs
  - Projects can be new, ongoing, or completed within the calendar year.
- **Dissemination Projects:**
  - Projects must reflect the mission of SPABA (dissemination, application, education)
  - Projects can be cross-discipline dissemination of accurate information about speech pathology and behavior analysis.
  - Projects can be qualitative in nature but must be conceptually systematic and reflect the contribution to practice or science.
  - Projects can be new, ongoing, or completed within the calendar year.

## PROPOSAL CONTENT

1. Completed Application Form (see below)
2. Letter of support (required only if you are a student)
  - The letter should be written by your academic mentor.
  - It should be a maximum of 1/2 page in length
  - It should confirm that you are a full-time student and that you are the person primarily responsible for the submitted proposal (i.e., you are the principal investigator or the project coordinator).
3. Body of the proposal
  - **Formatting for all proposals**
    - Must be sent in PDF format
    - 5 pages maximum, not including references
    - Must be double spaced
    - Must have 1" margins
    - Must use 12-pt font in Times New Roman or Calibri
    - Must include all required information within a single document (i.e., application form, letter of support, and body of the proposal)
  - **Empirical Research Project: Content and Scoring**
    - The research plan must include:
      - Research question
      - Rationale

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- An experimental design appropriate for the research question
- 2 to 5 references that set the occasion for your study
- The methods must include:
  - A reliable system of measurement
  - Technological descriptions of all procedures
  - Descriptions of relevant principles of behavior
- If you are proposing a qualitative or mixed methods research project, you must use appropriate measurement of key perspectives/insights obtained through interviews and/or qualitative analysis.
- All research proposals must include a statement of how the results are expected to contribute to the science and practice of behavioral speech-language pathology
- Scoring of research proposals
  - For quantitative research proposals, scoring will consider the following:
    - Behavioral (precise behavioral definitions; reliable and frequent measurement)
    - Analytic (design sufficient to demonstrate functional relation)
    - Technological (description sufficient for replication by other professionals)
    - Conceptually systematic (goals or procedures reflect principles of behavior)
    - Contribution to practice or science
  - For qualitative research proposals, scoring will consider the following:
    - Contribution to practice
    - Technological (description of procedures sufficient for replication by others)
    - Complete, iterative, and thorough analysis of qualitative data
- **Application or dissemination projects: Content and Scoring**
  - Outline of project plans must include
    - Objectives
    - Rationale
    - 2 to 5 references used to develop the idea or materials.
  - Description of methods must include
    - behavioral goals
    - A reliable system of measurement
    - Technological descriptions of all procedures
    - Descriptions of relevant principles of behavior or SLP
  - Statement of how the project changed a client's behavior or contributed to the understanding of science-based principles of behavior among SLPs or vice versa.
  - A clear description of either (a) how you are disseminating information relevant to ABA and/or SLP or (b) how the application of your work applies to ABA and/or SLP
  - Scoring of proposals in the application and dissemination categories will consider the following:
    - Technological (Description sufficient for replication by other professionals in the case of qualitative research or mixed methods studies)
    - Conceptually Systematic (Goals or procedures reflect principles of behavior), and
    - Contribution to or Understanding of ABA by SLPs.

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4. Curriculum vitae – provide a copy of your current vitae.

Please see the Appendix of this document for titles of previous proposals that that were awarded in each category.

#### **SUBMISSION**

- Proposals are due on **Friday, July 31, 2026, by 11:59 PM EST**
- They must be submitted via email to Mareile Koenig, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BCBA ([MareileKoenig@Gmail.com](mailto:MareileKoenig@Gmail.com))
- The subject line should state “SPABA Proposal 2026-[CATEGORY].” The term [CATEGORY] should be replaced by the specific category of the award for which you are applying (i.e., research, application, dissemination). For example, if you are applying for a research award, the subject line should read, “SPABA Proposal 2026-Research”.

#### **REVIEW COMMITTEE CRITERIA**

- A panel of three reviewers will independently score each proposal on the following criteria:
  - Scoring criteria described in relation to each award category, above
  - Relevance to behavior analysis and SLP
  - Clarity and feasibility of project plan
  - Anticipated or documented contribution to behavior-analytic research or practice.
- For each award category, applicants whose projects receive the highest average score will receive a \$500.00 award.

#### **AWARD COMPETITION CHECKLIST**

- Completed Application Form
- Proposal (maximum 5 pages, not including references)
- Letter of Support
- Curriculum Vitae

#### **NOTIFICATION OF AWARDS**

Applicants will be notified via email if they are a recipient or non-recipient of an award by **Sunday, August 30, 2026**. If your email address changes after proposal submission, please notify Mareile Koenig ([MareileKoenig@Gmail.com](mailto:MareileKoenig@Gmail.com)) of any changes.

#### **REPORT BY AWARD RECIPIENTS**

If your proposal is funded, please prepare a 7- to 8-minute video recording describing your project. This will be presented to attendees of the SPABA Annual Conference, to be held virtually on BehaviorLive, on **November 6, 2026**.

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**2026 Award Application Form**

**PROPOSAL CATEGORY**

Research Project

Application Project

Dissemination Project

**PRINCIPAL APPLICANT**

---

Last Name

First Name(s)

---

Mailing Address

City

State/Province

Zip/Postal Cod

---

Phone Number

Fax

E-Mail Address

**CURRENT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION** ( Check if not applicable)

---

University

Program

Degree

Year of expected graduation

**OTHER RELEVANT AFFILIATION**

---

Job Title

Organization

**MENTOR** ( Check if not applicable)

*STUDENTS ONLY:* Designated advisor who will mentor this project: \_\_\_\_\_

**CO-AUTHOR(S)** ( Check if not applicable)

---

Last Name

First Name(s)

Affiliation

---

Last Name

First Name(s)

Affiliation

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**PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Award recipients must obtain participant consent and IRB approval to conduct and present their projects.

Do you have approval to conduct and present this project?  Yes  No  N/A

Will you seek approval to conduct and present this project?  Yes  No  N/A

Through which agency or institution will you apply for approval?

\_\_\_\_\_

If your project does not require approval, please explain.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**STATEMENT OF HOW FINANCIAL AWARD WILL BE USED**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix

### PAST WINNERS AND SAMPLE PROJECTS FOR THE SPABA GIRI HEGDE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AWARD

- **2025 Recipient** - Courtney Keleher, MEd | Endicott College, "The Effects of a Rule-Based, Problem-Solving Strategy on Analogical Reasoning in Children with Disabilities"
- **2025 Recipient** - J. Logan Gibson, PhD and Allison Alonzo, BS | University of North Texas, "Improving Dysphagia Assessment Through an Electromyography-Informed Reinforcement-Based Strategy"
- **2024 Recipient** - Grace Lafo, MS, CF-SLP | Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, "Using Behavioral Skills Training to Train Clinicians to Conduct an AAC Assessment"
- **2024 Recipient** - Lori Mastrogiacomo, MA, BCBA, LBA | Endicott College, "Effects of Contingent Parenteese and Vocal Imitation on Vocalizations of Infants at Risk for Autism"
- **2023 Recipient** - Jessica Tran, Munroe-Meyer Institute | University of Nebraska Medical Center, "Comparison of Mand Acquisition and Preference in Children with Autism who Exhibit Problem Behavior."
- **2022 Recipient** - Edward Sanabria | Speech Pathology Group and Rehab Services of Connecticut & Centria Healthcare, "Interdisciplinary Collaboration for Training Development: Examination of Process and Outcomes Rationale"
- **2022 Recipient** - Estefania Alarcon Moya | Florida Institute of Technology, "Effects of a Computer-Based Instructional Package Delivered Remotely to Teach Speech-Language Pathologists in Chile to Implement Mand Training"
- **2021 Recipient** –Videsha Marya | Endicott College, "Emergence of Untrained Language in Children with ASD Using a Speech Generating Device."
- **2021 Recipient** – Maya Fallon | UNMC Munroe Meyer Institute, "Teaching Children to Report Past Events."
- **2021 Recipient** – Nicole Murphy | University of Nevada – Reno, "Embedding The System of Least Prompts in a Dialogic Reading Intervention: Using Behavioral Skills Training To Improve The Early Clinical Skills of Novice Graduate Speech-Language Pathologists."
- **2019 Recipient** – Luiz Rodriguez | Idaho State University, "Development and Validation of a Probability Discounting Task of Verbal Disfluency for Adults who Stutter"
- **2018 Recipient** – Daniel Conine | University of Florida, "Variables Contributing to the Emergence of Intraverbal Responses after Listener Training"
- **2018 Recipient** – Sarah Frampton | Simmons, College &The May Institute, "A Preliminary Analysis of Procedures to Promote the Emergence of Untrained Responses Using Instructive Feedback"
- **2017 Recipient** – Billie Retzlaff | The University of Nebraska Medical Center, "Teaching Speech Language Pathologists to Interpret Functional Analysis Results Using Ongoing-Visual Inspection."
- **2017 Recipient** – Megan Pyles | Sacramento State University, "Teaching Children with Autism to Mand for Information Using "Why?"
- **2016 Recipient** – Scott Page | Sacramento State University, "Reduction of Rapid Eating in an Adolescent Female with Autism."
- **2016 Recipient** – Mirela Cengher | Queens College, "The effects of Social Interaction on Language Acquisition in Children with Autism."
- **2015 Recipient** – Bailey Devine | Texas Christian University, "Can Differential Observing Response Requirements Remediate Children's Failures to Acquire Tacts of Compound Stimuli?"
- **2014 Recipient** – Lauren Goodwyn | Caldwell University, "Effectiveness of Tact-before-Receptive and Receptive-before-Tact Training"
- **2013 Recipient** – Louis Leibowitz | Garden Academy, "Evaluating a Multicomponent Intervention to Reduce Rapid Eating in a Child with Autism"

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- **2012 Recipient** – Kerry Ann Conde | Western New England University, “Evaluation of the Quick Transfer Procedure for Teaching Children with Autism”
- **2011 Recipient** – Kate Koehler-Platten | St. Cloud State University, “Using a Lag Reinforcement Schedule to Promote Phonemic Variability in Children with Developmental Disabilities”

#### **PAST WINNERS AND SAMPLE PROJECTS FOR THE SPABA BARB ESCH DISSEMINATION-APPLICATION AWARD**

- **2024 Application Recipient** - Whitney Trapp, MS, BCBA, University of Nebraska Medical Center | Munroe-Meyer Institute, “Use of Asynchronous Training to Teach Clinicians to Deliver Direct Instruction to Children with Autism”
- **2023 Application Recipient** - Brittany Loder, Munroe-Meyer Institute | University of Nebraska Medical Center, “Response Restriction: A Path Toward Ensuring No Individual is Left Without Communication.”
- **2021 Application Recipient** – Shawna Fleming | Monarch House, “Intensive Aphasia Program: Collaboration Leads to Optimal Outcomes.”
- **2019 Recipient** – Geetika Agarwal | Ball State University, Stepping Stones Center, “Training Speech and Language Pathology (SLP) students in India to complete Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)”
- **2018 Recipient** –Julya Krasnopolsky | Melmark, NE, “Training Speech-Language Pathologists to Assess and Implement Function-Based Interventions during Speech Sessions in a Public Preschool”
- **2016 Recipient** - Lilith M. Reuter-Yuill, Li Teng Voon & Wayne Fuqua | Western Michigan University, “Western Michigan University’s Undergraduate Research Lab: A Model of Collaboration in Research and Practice”
- **2013 Recipient** – Melany Shampo and Amy Irwin | Behavior Analysis Center for Autism, “A Collaborative-Instructional Model for BCBAs and SLPs”
- **2011 Recipient** – Sara Vank | Portland State University, “Self-Guided Tutorial for SLPs on Assessment and Behavior Management”

#### **PAST WINNERS AND SAMPLE PROJECTS FOR THE SPABA NIKIA DOWER DISSEMINATION AWARD**

- **2025 Dissemination Recipient** - Linda Chow, MA | NYC Public Schools, “Integrating Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Speech-Language Pathology (SLP): A Collaborative Classroom Model for an Early Childhood Specialized Program for Students with Autism”
- **2024 Dissemination Recipient** - Kennedy Cloe, BS | Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, "Teaching Traveling to Speech Generating Device: An Extension”
- **2023 Dissemination Recipient** - Grace Lafo | Southern Illinois University, “Assessment of Augmentative and Alternative Communication Modalities for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.”
- **2021 Dissemination Recipient** – Kristin Albert | Florida Institute of Technology, “Taking Transcription to Improve Communication and Collaboration among Behavior Analysts and Speech-Language Pathologists.”
- **2021 Dissemination Recipient** – Carole McGuinness | Queen’s University Belfast, Child’s Play ABA, “The Use of Social Media to Disseminate Verbal Behavior Principles to Speech and Language Therapists in Ireland.”

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