

# SPEED

Improving Lives

The Department of Special Education



VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY



Peabody College



*“Special education at Peabody has a threefold mission. We seek to improve the lives of persons with disabilities by preparing exceptionally competent teachers and researchers, by conducting research that informs and improves educational programs and behavioral interventions, and by leadership at all levels in the development of educational programs and professional association advocacy.”*

DAN RESCHLY  
Professor of Special Education and Psychology  
Chair, Department of Special Education



**R**anked as the number one special education program in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*, Peabody College's Department of Special Education (SPED) has long been a leader both in research and practice.

The department has a tradition of conducting groundbreaking research, establishing innovative practices, and developing widely-used methods and materials to provide practitioners, researchers, parents, and policy-makers with information to act on behalf of children and youth with disabilities. The department offers graduate students a wide range of curricular and research possibilities, along with the abundant resources of Peabody College and Vanderbilt University. In addition, the Nashville community provides an impressive variety of internship and practicum sites.

Graduates of the department's master's and doctoral programs are among the nation's most prominent special education researchers, university faculty, administrators, policy-makers, and practitioners. Their success and the quality of our graduate and professional programs are directly related to the quality of our faculty, its prominence in the field, and faculty members' commitment to mentoring students and directly involving them in research.

During your studies, you will have the chance to participate in many professional activities. Both master's and doctoral students join in field experiences, research projects, collaboration with faculty and other students on important initiatives, colloquia with experts from many disciplines, and supervision of undergraduate students' field experiences. Advanced students are encouraged to conduct research and disseminate findings by writing articles for publication and presenting at local, regional, and national conferences.



# Programs in SPED

As a student in SPED, you will work in consultation with your advisor to design a highly individualized program that combines coursework, fieldwork, and written projects. Your program will prepare you for a career as a practitioner or researcher whose emphasis is on problems related to special education.



*"The best part of the program is being surrounded by experts who work next door to graduate students. Professors have had years of field work with children; they are in academia now, but they are experts due to their life experiences," says Anne Cuneo, of Duluth, Minnesota. Cuneo is a master's student in the early childhood special education and applied behavior analysis programs.*

*The department offers the following degrees and concentrations:*

DEGREE	SPECIALIZATION	CONCENTRATIONS
<b>M.Ed. in Special Education</b>	<b>High-Incidence Disabilities</b>	Learning Disabilities Behavior Disorders
	<b>Low-Incidence Disabilities</b>	Severe Cognitive Visual Impairments Multiple Disabilities
	<b>Early Childhood Special Education</b>	
<b>Applied Behavior Analysis</b>		High Incidence Low Incidence Early Childhood Special Education
	<b>Ph.D. in Special Education</b>	High Incidence Low Incidence Early Childhood Special Education Learning Disabilities Severe and Multiple Disabilities Visual Impairments

## Master's Degree (M.Ed.)

The master's degree program offers individualized preparation for students who have completed undergraduate programs in special education or such allied areas as psychology, elementary or secondary education, rehabilitation, physical education, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language pathology, sociology, social welfare, or vocational education. Basic requirements include a core of courses and field-based competencies common to all areas of special education yet flexible enough to meet your needs and career goals.

You will be encouraged to develop competencies in all categories of disability and to specialize in one of the following areas: early

childhood special education, high-incidence disabilities (with concentrations in learning disabilities or behavior disorders), low-incidence disabilities (with concentrations in severe cognitive disabilities, visual impairment, or multiple disabilities), or applied behavior analysis.

The comprehensive examination or a thesis, used to evaluate competence and knowledge in the field of special education, will be the culminating experience of your program. You may choose to do one or the other. You can learn more about our master's programs by visiting [peabody.vanderbilt.edu/sped/graduate\\_programs.htm](http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/sped/graduate_programs.htm).

### Doctor of Philosophy in Special Education (Ph.D.)

The Ph.D. degree in Special Education is conferred through Vanderbilt's Graduate School ([www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool/)). This degree program, which prepares students for leadership positions as special educators in schools, colleges, universities, research settings, and human service agencies, is competency based and specifically emphasizes research and teaching. Your program of study will consist of core requirements and an individually designed series of courses and competencies. Through the core requirements, you will acquire fundamental research methodology skills requisite for advanced positions in special education. You can select your focus of study from high or low-incidence disabilities, early childhood special education, learning disabilities, severe or multiple disabilities, or visual impairments. Learn more about doctoral study in SPED at: [peabody.vanderbilt.edu/sped/graduate\\_programs.htm](http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/sped/graduate_programs.htm).

## Faculty

Peabody's special education faculty is the basis for its number-one ranking among graduate programs in special education. Faculty interests are wide ranging, covering all ages and all categories of disabilities, and their commitment is to develop and validate the effectiveness of "recommended practices." The SPED faculty is made up of nationally-recognized experts in all areas of special education, including a number of holders of named endowed professorships. SPED faculty members are committed to mentoring students who will become the next generation of leaders in the field. We encourage you to explore information about our faculty, including their individual Web pages, at: [peabody.vanderbilt.edu/sped/faculty.htm](http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/sped/faculty.htm).

### SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER LICENSURE

Students pursuing doctoral or master's degrees also may complete requirements for teacher licensure in special education. Licensure frequently requires work beyond normal degree requirements. Students seeking initial licensure complete courses in history or philosophy of education; human growth and development; assessment, evaluation, and planning; instruction; consultation and communication; professional development; and fieldwork. Students who already have licensure may add endorsement areas during their graduate program. You can learn more about teacher licensure at [peabody.vanderbilt.edu/licensure/index.htm](http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/licensure/index.htm).



*Lynn and Doug Fuchs (right) received the Earl Sutherland Prize from Chancellor Gordon Gee (left), in 2005, for their achievement in research. The Fuchses, who share the Nicholas Hobbs Professorship in Special Education and Human Development, are also recipients of the Career Research Award from the Council for Exceptional Children.*

### DID YOU KNOW?

According to a study conducted by the National Institutes of Health, Peabody faculty, alumni, and students are responsible for one in five publications in the entire literature in the field of mental retardation and psychology.

*Current research projects in SPED include:*

- Cooperative Learning and Social Skills
- Early Communication Interventions
- Educational Support of Children with Cochlear Implants
- Effective Instruction of Children with Autism
- Language Intervention
- National Research Center on Learning Disabilities
- Peer Assisted Learning
- Positive Behavior Support
- Preventing Conduct Disorders in Children's Social Behavior
- Providing Access to the Visual Environment
- Reading Comprehension Outcomes for Children with Disabilities
- Reading Needs of Struggling Readers in Late Elementary School
- Sibling Assessment Support and Intervention

## Resources

Few institutions offer the wealth of resources available to students at Peabody College and Vanderbilt University. Outstanding libraries, research centers, clinics and institutes, and an extensive network of placement sites in and around the city of Nashville will help support you during your graduate studies. Strong school-community collaborations between Vanderbilt and local public school systems will provide you numerous opportunities for practica, internships, and field experience.

*A few of the resources of significant interest to you as a student in SPED include:*

**THE JEAN AND ALEXANDER HEARD LIBRARY**, an essential research resource for students and faculty and one of the major academic libraries in the U.S., has collections of more than 2.6 million volumes, 2.8 million microfilm items, and 22,000 serial subscriptions in nine library units including the Peabody Library. Acorn is the electronic link to Vanderbilt libraries and provides access to the library catalog, reserves, periodical indexes, and other databases through a World Wide Web interface. Acorn also provides links to resources outside the libraries. Learn more about the Library at: [www.library.vanderbilt.edu/](http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/).

**THE VANDERBILT KENNEDY CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT** is one of only 14 national centers for research on mental retardation and related aspects of human development. The Center's mission is to improve the quality of life of persons with disorders of thinking, learning, perception, communication, mood and emotion caused by disruption of typical development. As a trans-institutional center, the Kennedy Center draws investigators from several Vanderbilt schools, including Peabody. Learn more about the Kennedy Center at: [kc.vanderbilt.edu/kennedy](http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/kennedy).

**PEABODY'S SUSAN GRAY SCHOOL**, housed on campus, is an early childhood program for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with and without disabilities. The School, which has a 35-year history, operates inclusive classrooms onsite as well as outreach services to the local community. It provides an excellent location for field-based experiences, demonstration of innovative practices, and research on child development and intervention. Learn more about the Susan Gray School at: [peabody.vanderbilt.edu/sgs/](http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/sgs/).

**THE LEARNING SCIENCES INSTITUTE** is a university-wide organization dedicated to stimulating and supporting research and development in



**The MRL building on the Peabody campus houses the Department of Special Education, the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development, and the Susan Gray School.**

learning, teaching, curriculum, assessment, policy, and educational design. The Institute brings together interdisciplinary teams of faculty to address basic and applied learning sciences in ways that create new knowledge, foster the development of the science of teaching, and improve pre-K-16 education. The LSI's Experimental Education Research and Training program (ExpERT) offers an interdisciplinary curriculum and fellowships to select doctoral students who have a special interest in rigorous, field-based, experimental research. Learn more at: [www.vanderbilt.edu/lsi/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lsi/).

The community of Nashville and the surrounding area comprise another important resource for off-campus research and practicum sites such as preschools for the study of the communicative and social development of children, elementary and secondary schools for learning and technology, medical clinics for the study of adolescent mental health problems such as depression, hospitals for the study of newborns, and churches and agencies such as United Way for the study of community psychology and community integration.

## Peabody College of Vanderbilt University

Peabody College, Vanderbilt University's college of education and human development, seeks to maximize human potential by fostering lifelong learning. The College's efforts are international in scope and focus on learners of all ages and abilities. Named for the



*"The department has given me the opportunity to reflect on my practice as a special educator and to develop skills to be an excellent researcher. In addition, I'm developing friendships with future colleagues who are supportive and respect a diversity of ideas and interests. This support and respect foster a spirit of collaboration," says Nitasha Clark, doctoral student in severe disabilities.*

19th century education philanthropist, George Peabody, the College's roots actually date back more than 200 years. *U.S. News & World Report* routinely ranks Peabody among the top ten graduate schools of education.

Peabody enrolls more than 660 graduate or professional students and more than 1,100 undergraduates. The College's education programs, including special education, are situated in the context of human and community development, psychology, organizational leadership, K-12 and higher education administration, and public policy. Peabody offers nearly 30 graduate or professional majors and 8 undergraduate majors. Most academic programs include a strong research-to-practice orientation.

The full-time teaching faculty numbers approximately 130. Many faculty members are nationally recognized for their research and serve in capacities such as editors of scholarly journals and leaders of professional organizations. The faculty is organized into five departments: Human and Organizational Development; Leadership, Policy and Organizations; Psychology and Human Development; Special Education; and Teaching and Learning.

A research institution, Peabody disseminates findings through dynamic partnerships with K-12 schools, higher education peers, government, and non-profit organizations, as well as through its 30,000 graduates.

Vanderbilt University is a comprehensive national research university that provides innovative programs, state-of-the-art facilities, and a supportive environment for interdisciplinary inquiry. The University comprises ten schools, a public policy institute, a distinguished medical center, and The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center. Vanderbilt offers a full range of graduate and professional degrees as well as undergraduate programs in the liberal arts and sciences, engineering, music, and education and human development. For more information about Peabody and Vanderbilt, visit us on the Web at: [peabody.vanderbilt.edu](http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu) or [www.vanderbilt.edu](http://www.vanderbilt.edu).



*Stacy Butterfield, B.S.'02, M.Ed.'04, worked with Professor Joseph Wehby on a grant for children with emotional disturbance. Butterfield, who now teaches in Columbus, Ohio, describes her education as "an incredible, life altering experience." Direct participation in both research and practice is one of the hallmarks of special education at Vanderbilt.*

## Nashville, Tennessee

Nashville is the state capital of Tennessee, with a population of more than one million. Internationally known as the home of country music and related entertainment industries, Nashville offers residents and visitors a thriving and diversified economy and a wealth of cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities. In 2005,



Nashville was named the Hottest City in America by *Expansion Management* magazine.

Concerts and festivals for every musical taste—classical, jazz, blues, bluegrass, country, pop, and rock— are held by well-known artists all over town in clubs and other venues and often on campus. Many are free. Classical music, dance, opera, and live theater are performed at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center (TPAC).

In addition to galleries at Vanderbilt and other universities in the area, outstanding art exhibits can be seen at the new downtown Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Cheekwood Botanical Gardens and Fine Arts Center, the Parthenon at Centennial Park, and the new downtown public library.

Nashville is home to the Tennessee Titans NFL team and the Nashville Predators NHL hockey franchise. Metropolitan and state parks and recreation areas in and around Nashville are exceptional and can be enjoyed year-round. Atlanta, Memphis, Chattanooga, Louisville, Knoxville, and the Great Smoky Mountains are all just a few hours drive.

There are 11 public school systems in and around Nashville, the largest being Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools. The system includes 67 elementary schools, 31 middle schools, 11 high schools, and 4 special education schools. There also are a number of private schools, each with its own curriculum, environment, and emphases.

A good place to learn more about Nashville is the Nashville Chamber of Commerce Web site: [www.nashvillechamber.com](http://www.nashvillechamber.com).

## Hear from our graduates

*"I chose Peabody because of the department's long reputation for excellence. Throughout the program, I was equipped with the skills needed to become an excellent teacher and researcher, mentored and supported by first-rate professors, challenged and encouraged by an outstanding cohort, and prepared to undertake a successful career."*

ERIK CARTER, Ph.D.'04, assistant professor of education, University of Wisconsin-Madison, School of Education

*"I participated in research projects directed by some of the leading faculty in the field. These allowed me to be competitive in seeking employment at quality research universities and have strengthened my ability to conduct research on my own. The education and opportunities I received at Peabody were better than I ever hoped for."*

MICHELLE HOSP, Ph.D.'02, assistant professor, University of Utah, College of Education

*"The doctoral program in special education at Peabody was a truly rich experience forming many of my professional and personal foundations in the field. With a world-class faculty, the John F. Kennedy Center, and Vanderbilt University, the opportunities to engage in high-level research and teaching were enormous and, I think, critical to ensuring a program of depth and breadth."*

FRANK SYMONS, Ph.D.'96, associate professor, University of Minnesota, College of Education and Human Development

# Admissions and Financial Aid

Peabody College accepts applications for admission throughout the year. However, for priority consideration for admission with financial aid, your application for the fall semester should be completed by December 31. Applications received after this date will be evaluated for admission and financial aid on a space- and funds-available basis.

*“My experiences at Peabody changed the way that I think and work. I now believe that it is the depth of knowledge, not the breadth, that enables professionals to work with children and families to promote more positive individual and systemic outcomes. Peabody faculty challenged me to critically analyze the professional literature and develop my research questions in response to the gaps between what is known and what must be learned. My own work now focuses on helping parents and teachers translate research into everyday practice.”*

ELIZABETH DELANEY, Ed.D.'97, executive director,  
Chicago Charter School Foundation

*“With guidance and direction from all the faculty, particularly my advisor, I was able to examine multiple topics which allowed me to critically analyze and evaluate best practice from both a pragmatic and empirical perspective.”*

LESLEY CRAIG-UNKEFER, Ed.D.'99, assistant professor,  
University of Minnesota

A completed application for admission to SPED includes the following:

- Online application or traditional application form
- Official transcripts showing degree conferral
- Letters of recommendation (3-5)
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores.
- TOEFL scores if you are an international applicant, unless English is your first language or you have completed a degree at an American university.
- Scholarly writing sample (Ph.D. program only)

We encourage you to apply online for admission. Both master's and doctoral students can apply online by pointing your Web browser to [peabody.vanderbilt.edu/admissions/apply.htm](http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/admissions/apply.htm). There is no fee to apply online. For additional information, paper application materials, or to arrange a campus visit, please call, write, or e-mail:

Ms. Lynda Wyatt  
Administrative Assistant  
Peabody College of Vanderbilt University  
Peabody #328  
230 Appleton Place  
Nashville, TN 37203  
615-322-8195  
E-mail: [lynda.wyatt@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:lynda.wyatt@vanderbilt.edu)

## Financial Aid

Peabody annually awards more than \$3 million in financial aid in addition to low-interest loans to qualified students in graduate and professional programs. The largest form of institutional funding is through graduate and research assistantships. Other types of financial aid include scholarships, student employment, and work/study opportunities. Many students in SPED, including master's students,

are supported through federal training grants. New students are eligible for honor scholarships. You can learn more about financial aid opportunities at [peabody.vanderbilt.edu/admissions/financial\\_aid/](http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/admissions/financial_aid/).

To obtain general information about financial aid programs, please contact Lynda Wyatt at the address above. For detailed information on need-based aid, contact:

Office of Student Financial Aid

Vanderbilt University

2309 West End Avenue

Nashville, TN 37203-1725

(615) 322-3591

[www.vanderbilt.edu/FinancialAid/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/FinancialAid/)

E-mail: [askfinad@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:askfinad@vanderbilt.edu)

## Career Development

You will find that your academic training in SPED will help you develop a network of contacts in the field that will serve you well for years to come. In addition, valuable services are available through the Vanderbilt University Career Center. The high reputation of Peabody's special education program ensures that our graduates are much in demand. Visit the Career Center at [www.vanderbilt.edu/career/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/career/).

## Housing

Vanderbilt's location offers you the advantage of a wide range of living choices at an affordable price. Costs for housing, food, and other expenses are moderate when compared with other metropolitan areas. The supply of rental housing in the Vanderbilt area is adequate. Vanderbilt's Office of Housing and Residential Affairs maintains an off-campus housing referral service at: [apphost1a.its.vanderbilt.edu/housing/Main/](http://apphost1a.its.vanderbilt.edu/housing/Main/).



*Paul Morphy is a doctoral student in high incidence disabilities and a former speech pathologist for Easter Seals. "I came to Vanderbilt because rigor and reputation alone are not enough," says Morphy. "Making a difference implies both service and a certain devotion to children, education and to each other. I came for that attitude as much as for the knowledge that accompanies it."*

### NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In compliance with federal law, including the provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Vanderbilt University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or military service in its administration of education policies, programs, or activities; its admissions policies; scholarship and loan programs; athletic or other University-administered programs; or employment. In addition, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, consistent with University nondiscrimination policy. Inquiries or complaints should be directed to the Opportunity Development Officer, Baker Building, Box 1809 Station B, Nashville, Tennessee 37235. Telephone (615) 322-4705; Fax (615) 421-6871.

### SECURITY STATEMENT

In compliance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act and the Tennessee College and University Security Information Act, Vanderbilt University will provide you, upon request, an annual Security Report on University-wide security and safety, including related policies, procedures, and crime statistics. A copy of this report may be obtained by writing or calling the Vanderbilt University Police and Security Office, 2800 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, Tennessee 37212 or by telephone at (615) 343-9750. You may also obtain this report on our Web site at [police.vanderbilt.edu/secatvu.htm](http://police.vanderbilt.edu/secatvu.htm).

A complete list of legal disclosures may be found at: [peabody.vanderbilt.edu/disclosures.htm](http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/disclosures.htm).



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