FACULTY

Linda Watson, EdD, CCC-SLP, is a professor of Speech & Hearing Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and brings more than 30 years of clinical and research experience with children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Since 2007, she has been involved in the development and evaluation of an intervention to improve pretend play and social communication skills in preschoolers with ASD, carrying out research on this intervention within public school classrooms across four states. Watson’s keen interest in research that applies to “the real world” also is reflected in other projects, including the development and validation of a parent questionnaire to identify 1-year-olds who are at risk for later diagnoses of ASD and a study in which she and her colleagues used this questionnaire to identify infants at risk for ASD at 12 months of age and then evaluated the effects of providing in-home coaching to their parents on the use of responsive strategies to support their infants’ social communication and sensory-regulatory development. Watson enjoys serving as a research mentor to undergraduate, master’s degree, and doctoral students and teaching Introduction to Research Methods to graduate students in SLP and AuD programs, preparing them to evaluate the applicability of research findings to clinical practice questions.

Financial Disclosures
• Professor at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
• Grant funding from the Institute of Education Sciences, NIH/NICHD, Autism Speaks, and Cure Autism Now
• Financial compensation from ASHA for this presentation

Nonfinancial Disclosures
• ASHA member
Jessica Dykstra Steinbrenner, PhD, CCC-SLP, is a research scientist at Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has been working with individuals with autism spectrum disorder for more than 15 years. She has clinical or research experience in preschool, elementary school, middle school, and high school settings. She worked as a graduate research assistant on two research grants related to the Advancing Social-Communication and Play (ASAP) intervention with Dr. Linda Watson and then received a small grant to adapt the intervention for elementary school settings. Steinbrenner’s research interests are school-based interventions, social communication, engagement, and individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) with the most significant communication needs. Her current projects include studying a comprehensive intervention for high school students with ASD, developing online modules for paraprofessionals working with students with ASD, and updating a systematic review on evidence-based practices for individuals with ASD.

Financial Disclosures
- Research scientist at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Grant funding from the Organization for Autism Research
- Financial compensation from ASHA for this presentation

Nonfinancial Disclosures
- ASHA member
- International Society for Autism Research member