



Inaugural Director, Center for Specialized Education Innovation Kennedy Krieger Institute

Position Overview

Kennedy Krieger Institute seeks a visionary leader to serve as the inaugural Director of a new Center for Specialized Education Innovation. We envision a Center that harnesses scientific advancements to create individualized learning pathways and study innovative instructional approaches, all aimed at supporting every child's success. This Center will establish a new model of research on educational processes and clinical services for children with the most significant developmental disabilities and their families. The long-term goal of the Center is to generate evidence urgently needed to improve special education practices and outcomes to inform educational policies around the world.

The Director will establish and lead a center for special education research that leverages Kennedy Krieger Institute's unique position as a world-class medical, research and educational institution for children with disorders of the developing nervous system who are at risk for or experiencing learning challenges. With in-house educational programming for children of all ages (0-21), Kennedy Krieger provides an excellent opportunity for the Director to partner directly with educators and leaders in special education programming to develop real-time evidence generation that includes immediate implementation of individualized practices. The Director will also have the opportunity to establish sustainable platforms for tracking outcomes in students with the most complex neurodevelopmental disabilities who cannot be adequately served in traditional education settings.

Under the Director's leadership, the Center will advance individualized special education by building on our clinical, scientific, and educational expertise. The Center will create sustainable, scalable solutions that address the foundational challenges facing families while advancing evidence-based knowledge in the fields of early childhood development, special education, and neuroscience through rigorous translational research that builds workforce capacity and transforms outcomes across the developmental spectrum from birth through post-graduation transitions.

Serving as an intellectual leader, the Director will bridge medical research, educational practice, and family advocacy. Collaboration with faculty, clinicians, educators, families, and community partners will be central to advancing the Center's mission. In addition, building strong external partnerships with school systems, universities, and policymakers will help drive broader impact. Acting as an ambassador and advocate, the Director will elevate the needs of students with complex disabilities on both state and national stages and help shape the national conversation about education policy and practice.

The Inaugural Director will assume leadership of a well-resourced and strategically supported Center at a pivotal moment in its development. The position carries an endowed chair which will provide a stable foundation for the Director's research program and scholarly vision. Kennedy Krieger Institute has identified the Center for Specialized Education Innovation as a cornerstone of its institutional strategic plan, with commitment to support the recruitment of faculty whose work spans the Center's priority areas. The Director will have access to Kennedy Krieger special education schools, including their nationally recognized instructional methods, individualized supports, and robust outcomes data collection. The Center will have a dedicated physical space in proximity to the Kennedy Krieger High School in Baltimore, positioning the Center for the kind of real-time, integrated research-to-practice implementation that few institutions in the country can offer.

Kennedy Krieger already has a robust network of university partnerships around special education and complex developmental disabilities initiatives. Faculty from the University of Maryland College Park, Johns Hopkins School of Education, and Towson University have expressed active interest in affiliation with the Center, offering immediate opportunities to build a collaborative, cross-institutional scholarly community. These partnerships, combined with the advisory committee's strong connections to state education leadership and policy, give the Inaugural Director a strong platform from which to launch high-impact research, workforce development initiatives, and national policy influence from day one.

Qualifications

To establish excellence in our Center for Specialized Education Innovation, the *ideal candidate* will have experience and skills in the following areas:

Academic and Research Expertise

- Advanced degree (Ph.D. or Ed.D.) in Special Education, Developmental Psychology, Neuroscience, or a related field
- Deep understanding of special education principles, particularly for students with diverse abilities and complex learning challenges
- Strong publication record in peer-reviewed journals
- Demonstrated leadership in developmental science and special education research
- Track record of successful grant writing and securing funding from federal agencies (NIH, NSF, IES, DOE)
- Experience in translating research findings into practical, evidence-based interventions and/or broader public policy
- History of interdisciplinary research collaborations

Leadership

- Progressive leadership experience in special education research, implementation science, or related fields

- Strategic planning experience with measurable outcomes in scientific or educational environments
- Proven ability to build productive collaborations with educational institutions, healthcare systems, and/or community organizations that will translate into building relevant partnerships around shared goals and a unified vision
- Knowledge of practical and effective classroom strategies, special education programming, and school policies required to develop processes to support rapid implementation of evidence-based practices and longitudinal supports for students with complex disabilities and their families

Personal Characteristics

- Intellectually curious with a passion for continuous learning, innovation, and advocacy
- Excellent communication skills and proven ability to listen actively to diverse stakeholders
- Action-oriented with the ability to make progress even amid ambiguity and complexity
- Transparent and authentic leader with unwavering integrity
- Persuasive and persistent in advocating for student and family needs and evidence-based practices
- Mission-driven with genuine commitment to improving the lives of students with disabilities
- Collaborative and able to build trust and motivate stakeholders around a unified mission and vision

Preferred Experience

- Experience in establishing or leading interdisciplinary research centers or initiatives
- Demonstrated success in translating research findings into scalable educational practices
- Background working with students across the developmental spectrum with complex disabilities
- Experience in medical or clinical research environments with educational applications
- Experience in family-centered care approaches and community partnership development
- Previous leadership in organizational transformation or large-scale program implementation
- Experience with technology integration in special education settings

About Kennedy Krieger

Kennedy Krieger Institute is an internationally recognized institution located in Maryland dedicated to improving the lives of children and adolescents with developmental and physical disabilities through patient care, research, special education and community services.

Kennedy Krieger's clinical programs offer an interdisciplinary approach in treatment tailored to the individual needs of each child. Services include over 55 outpatient clinics; neurobehavioral, rehabilitation, and pediatric feeding disorders inpatient units; plus several home and community programs providing services to assist families.

Kennedy Krieger School is a nationally recognized "Blue Ribbon School of Excellence", and is a leader in providing model programs of innovative education for children, adolescents and young adults with a wide range of learning, emotional, physical, neurological, and developmental disabilities.

Our researchers and clinicians are among some of the world's leading experts in this field and are attuned to the special needs of this population. Our scientists have made crucial medical discoveries leading to innovative treatments to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.

In addition to providing evaluation, rehabilitation, educational services and cutting edge research on behalf of children with brain, spinal cord and musculoskeletal related disorders, Kennedy Krieger also provides professional training by renowned experts dedicated to increasing the number of qualified specialists in the United States and abroad.

More than eighty years after its founding, the Kennedy Krieger Institute has evolved into an international resource for children with diverse special needs, from mild learning disabilities to rare genetic disorders. Thousands of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families come to Kennedy Krieger to receive the best possible medical care, schooling and benefits of cutting-edge research available. Individuals the world over have improved outcomes thanks to discoveries made and treatments implemented at Kennedy Krieger. Each year several hundred graduates and post-graduates on their way to becoming practicing professionals in this field, also receive exemplary training at Kennedy Krieger and go on to improve the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities worldwide.

Interested applicants should contact Beth Slomine, Ph.D., ABPP, Search Committee Chair, at slomine@kennedykrieger.org.