

UT Southwestern Medical Center®

Search for the Director, Center for Autism Care
University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center
Dallas, TX

THE SEARCH

The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center (UT Southwestern) seeks a respected and visionary leader to become its Director of the Center for Autism Care (the Center). The Director will have a broad range of responsibilities, including strategic planning, clinical leadership and vision, and program administration in collaboration with UT Southwestern and Children's Medical Center. The missions of the Center are to: provide state-of-the-art medical and behavioral intervention for pediatric autism spectrum disorders and related neurodevelopmental disabilities; to provide clinical education for trainees to prepare them to deliver services to individuals with autism spectrum disorder and other intellectual and developmental disabilities; and to support clinical research aimed at developing new knowledge about the etiology, pathophysiology or behavioral phenotypes associated with autism while working to improve the early detection and diagnosis of autism and to develop novel therapeutic interventions for this population.

UT Southwestern is known for its excellence in [research](#) and [clinical](#) care, commitment to interdisciplinary research, and rigorous scientific training in basic and clinical research. With a distinguished faculty including six Nobel Laureates, 26 National Academy of Sciences members, and 19 National Academy of Medicine members, UT Southwestern contributes to groundbreaking research spanning from the microscopic level to comprehensive patient care. The institution receives significant funding, totaling approximately \$640 million annually, from federal agencies, foundations, companies, and private donors.

The O'Donnell Brain Institute and Children's Medical Center are together making a major investment to advance the Center for Autism Care. The two institutions have forged a partnership, providing the autism program with a clear governance structure that, together with dedicated resources, will provide a unique opportunity for a new leader to have a major impact. The care team is comprised of psychologists, psychiatrists, pediatric neurologists, licensed social workers, and behavioral therapists, who provide over 6,000 patient visits annually. The program includes one of only six [Neurodevelopmental Disabilities](#) residencies in the country, a postdoctoral fellowship, a parent education series, and a parent support group, all of which provide a rich environment for clinical research and care.

The Director is responsible for engaging, leading, and energizing the Center, uniting the team of clinicians in support of collaboration, integration, and innovation in clinical research and clinical care for autism and neurodevelopmental disorders across the systems. The Director will work closely with researchers and

clinicians at UT Southwestern and Children's Medical Center to support the growth of the Center, including facilitating strategic relationships with clinical and community partners to develop and implement innovative, evidence-based interventions. The Director must be an internal and external leader and champion of the Center, enhancing the visibility of the impactful research and clinical care emerging from the Center and identifying strategic priorities for investment. The Director will possess either an MD, DO, MD/PhD, PhD, PsyD, board certification, and be eligible for professional licensure in Texas.

UT Southwestern has engaged Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the search. A complete list of the qualifications and characteristics desired in the Director can be found at the conclusion of this document, along with information on how to apply.

THE CENTER FOR AUTISM CARE

The [Center for Autism Care](#) is a multidisciplinary hub comprised of 12 UT Southwestern faculty members providing comprehensive clinical care while mentoring residents and fellows in their respective fields. The Center is further supported by a dedicated team of 30 Children's Health staff, including a clinic director. Currently housed in an 8,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility near the UT Southwestern Medical School, the Center is designed to enhance clinical services and facilitate integrated clinical research. In 2024, UT Southwestern and Children's Health broke ground on the [new Children's Medical Center facility](#), which will significantly expand access to a full spectrum of pediatric services. This cutting-edge facility aims to create a unique academic and clinical hub, enabling advancements in research, training, and the development of lifesaving medical technologies.

The Center for Autism Care adopts a multidisciplinary team approach to deliver comprehensive care. Expert providers in [neurodevelopmental neurology](#), [psychiatry and psychology](#), [social work](#), [speech therapy](#), and [occupational therapy](#) collaborate to offer an array of services, including [diagnostic evaluations](#), [educational support services](#), and behavioral intervention services such as [Applied Behavior Analysis](#). Beyond its focus on autism spectrum disorders (ASD), the Center for Autism Care addresses a wide range of neurodevelopmental and intellectual conditions, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), brain injury (TBI), cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, epilepsy, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), fragile X syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, and other developmental delays.

A major focus of the Center's mission is advancing clinical and translational research to uncover the underlying causes of autism and related disorders while developing innovative treatments. The research team conducts multiple ongoing studies targeting autism and neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs), aiming to understand their genetic and environmental underpinnings and improve therapeutic approaches. By integrating clinical studies with foundational research in genetics and treatment, the Center ensures that laboratory discoveries are rapidly translated into diagnostic and therapeutic innovations, enhancing outcomes for affected individuals. The Center's research initiatives have garnered support from a number of organizations, including the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the

Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), Autism Speaks, the Department of Defense, and the Once Upon A Time Foundation.

THE ROLE

The Director of the Center for Autism Care will have a dual reporting structure: the Director of the [Peter O'Donnell Jr. Brain Institute](#), Dr. Bill Dauer, and the leadership of their department based on specialty. The Director of the Center for Autism Care will be the strategic leader and architect of growth in the clinical, research, and educational domains, thereby overseeing both the direction and execution of such activities.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

To provide a successful future for the Center, the next Director must address the following key opportunities and challenges:

Promote the growth and development and set the strategic path for the Center

The Director will play a pivotal role in developing and articulating a clear vision for autism care within UT Southwestern and Children's Medical Center, formulating strategic goals and objectives aligned with the broader institutional missions. The Director will identify, prioritize, and expand care areas and initiatives within autism, considering emerging trends, patient needs, and clinical advancements utilizing savvy operational changes when possible. The Director will assess the existing strengths within the Center and evaluate potential areas for growth, maximizing the opportunities to improve autism care regionally, nationally, and internationally. This will include implementing strategies to open access to more patients and shorten wait times. Leveraging the strengths of the O'Donnell Brain Institute, the Director will collaborate with researchers and clinicians to build pathways that facilitate innovative interventions and leverage excellent clinical care to drive new lines of research.

Maintain, strengthen, and develop collaborations throughout UT Southwestern, Children's Medical Center, and the O'Donnell Brain Institute

As an interdisciplinary institute, the Center partners with clinicians and researchers from a variety of specialties. The director will maximize the success of the Center by bringing together and leveraging the accomplishments and talents across UT Southwestern and Children's, partnering with deans, hospital leadership, and department chairs to facilitate cross-institutional efforts. Demand for the services offered by the Center is high. The next Director will consider innovative models to expand access to diagnostic and interventional services from clinicians. There are also opportunities to grow the Center's influence and impact, and the Director will work closely with other Center Directors, department chairs, section chiefs, and clinical leaders to expand the breadth and depth of research and clinical care that will directly impact patients.

Continue the development and stewardship of impactful connections with community stakeholders

UT Southwestern Medical Center and Children's Medical Center play an important role in the greater Dallas-Fort Worth community. The Director will identify and implement creative approaches to collaborate with community partners, serving as a strong internal and external advocate as well as a broadcaster of the Center's accomplishments to a national and international audience. As the face of the Center, the director will champion its accomplishments as a center of excellence in autism care, making groundbreaking discoveries and conducting vital, impactful community outreach. In pursuit of growth, the Director will proactively establish collaborative partnerships with various entities, including research institutions, academic organizations, and industry stakeholders. These partnerships are aimed at enhancing research capabilities and broadening the overall impact of care for patients with autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders, fostering innovation and progress in the field.

Promote and support a culture of growth and development in autism research

The Director will play a pivotal role in supporting and facilitating the integration of autism clinical research within the Center, aligning research efforts with the broader missions of Children's and UT Southwestern. By collaborating with stakeholders to identify and prioritize key research areas and initiatives, the Director will help address emerging trends, patient needs, and scientific progress in autism research. Recognizing the evolving landscape of research funding across federal, state, local, and private sources, the Director will assist in connecting investigators with essential resources, equipment, and collaborative networks to enable meaningful discoveries in autism and related neurodevelopmental disorders. Additionally, the Director will support efforts to attract clinical investigators and researchers whose work aligns with the Center's mission.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

- An MD, MD/ PhD, DO, PsyD, PhD or equivalent degree is required;
- Academic rank will be commensurate with academic accomplishments and experience;
- A demonstrated commitment to and excellence in the care of children with autism;
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to engage the community broadly and transparently;
- A strong commitment to innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, clinical and translational research, and education;
- A demonstrated skill in medical program administration and program development in autism and related neurodevelopmental disorders;
- Experience in overseeing and mentoring trainees, medical students, and fellows;
- A record of funded research and publications in the areas of autism and/or related developmental disabilities.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-texas-southwestern-medical-center/director-center-autism-care>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Ariannah Mirick, Partner
Katie White, Senior Associate
Madeleine Ruth, Managing Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

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