



The New England Center  
for Children®  
*Autism Education and Research*

## **THE NEW ENGLAND CENTER FOR CHILDREN NAMES JACQUELYN MACDONALD EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR**

*Teacher Honored for Commitment, Leadership and Excellence in Autism Education*

**Southborough, Mass. – Oct. 3, 2018** – The New England Center for Children® (NECC®), a global leader in education and research for children with autism, announced today that Jacquelyn MacDonald, PhD, BCBA-D, LABA, has been named Educator of the Year. This award is bestowed upon an educator who exemplifies commitment, leadership, and excellence in autism education.

The award will be presented at NECC’s annual Children of Promise Gala, to be held on Friday, November 30 at the InterContinental Boston. ([www.necc.org/gala](http://www.necc.org/gala))

Dr. MacDonald, a long-time teacher and specialist in autism, is an Assistant Professor and Graduate Program Director of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) at Regis College in Weston, Massachusetts. She founded the Autism Center at Regis College and their integrated preschool program for children with autism. Dr. MacDonald is also a co-host of the popular ABA Inside Track, a podcast about applied behavior analysis and related research that offers continuing education credit for BCBA®s, BCBA-D®s, and BCaBA®s. Prior to Regis, she was employed at NECC for 11 years.

“I am honored to receive the Educator of the Year award from The New England Center for Children,” said Jacquelyn MacDonald. “For too long, children with autism and their families have struggled to find the help they need. Applied behavior analysis helps those with autism create meaningful change in behavior to improve quality of life. I am happy to have a career that allows me to use my knowledge to empower and educate those who teach children with autism, so we can help as many children and families with autism as possible.”

“Jacquelyn is an accomplished educator who not only has transformed the lives of children with autism, but whose influence in ‘teaching the teachers’ has spread the benefits of applied behavior analysis across the country,” said Vincent Strully, President and CEO of The New England Center or Children. “Jacquelyn exemplifies the integrity, passion, and excellence that is NECC.

We are delighted that Jacquelyn and her talents were able to flourish at NECC, from her degrees earned in our graduate partner program to her teaching skills to her outstanding work in many departments at the school. She is an exemplary educator who truly deserves the Educator of the Year award.”

At Regis College, Dr. MacDonald trains graduate students in ABA, and is widely acknowledged for her leadership, talent, and excellence in teaching. Her students routinely pass the BCBA exam on the first attempt, with a 100% passing rate for first-time testers this year, and have gone on to manage and start their own ABA programs across the country, from Massachusetts to Hawaii.

Dr. MacDonald started her career at The New England Center for Children in 2003, where she was a teacher, day coordinator, and specialist in the residential and day school. During her 11 years at NECC, Dr. MacDonald also worked in other NECC departments including the ACE<sup>®</sup> ABA Software System and in Professional Development.

While at NECC, Dr. MacDonald earned her master’s in ABA from Northeastern University, in a graduate program partnership between the two schools that enabled NECC employees to attain degrees for little to no cost. She also earned her PhD in ABA through Western New England University’s graduate partnership with NECC, under the guidance of Dr. Bill Ahearn, NECC’s Director of Research.

Dr. McDonald has written and contributed to many research papers on ABA, including “Stimulus Salience in Autism: A Social Learning Disorder,” “Teaching Observational Learning to Children with Autism,” and “Persistence During Extinction: Examining the Effects of Continuous and Intermittent Reinforcement on Problem Behavior.”

“I’m so proud of Jacquelyn for receiving this tremendous honor,” said Laura Burke, dean of the Regis School of Health Sciences. “Her expertise in teaching, the field of ABA and dedication to children is an asset to Regis and the School of Health Sciences.”

### **About Regis College**

Regis is a leading Catholic coed university in greater Boston with more than 3,000 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students in the arts, sciences and health professions devoted to engage, serve and advance in a global community. With a strategic graduate focus on health care, Regis was recently named a Center of Excellence in Nursing Education by the National League of Nursing for the third time. The intergenerational Weston campus includes a Children’s Center, named 2017 Program of the Year by the National Coalition for Campus Children’s Centers, and a Lifelong Learning program (LLARC) for senior adults with a passion for learning. Regis North, a satellite campus in Lawrence, Mass., in partnership with Northern Essex Community College (NECC), offers nursing, public health, sports management and health sciences bachelor degree

completion programs to students in the Merrimack Valley. Regis is also an Apple Distinguished School for 2016-2018. Visit Regis at [regiscollege.edu](http://regiscollege.edu).

### **About The New England Center for Children**

The New England Center for Children® (NECC®) is a world leader in education, research, and technology for children with autism. For more than 40 years, our community of teachers, researchers, and clinicians have been transforming lives and offering hope to children with autism and their families. NECC's award-winning services include home-based, day, and residential programs; public school partnerships and consulting; the John and Diane Kim Autism Institute; the ACE® ABA Software System ([www.acenecc.org](http://www.acenecc.org)) currently used by more than 6,100 students and teachers in 27 states and 10 countries; and ABAPlus, an online professional learning platform for educators. NECC received the 2017 Award for International Dissemination of Behavior Analysis from the Society for the Advancement of Behavior Analysis (SABA). A 501c3 non-profit, The New England Center for Children is based in Southborough, MA, and operates a center in Abu Dhabi, UAE. More information is available at [www.necc.org](http://www.necc.org).

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