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Early Intervention Research Institute Extends Its Reach to the Middle East

Center for Persons With Disabilities

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Over the past summer, university faculty members from the country of Jordan got a taste of hands-on learning when they visited the Teton Science School in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Their visit was part of the Strengthening Early Childhood Education in Jordan project, coordinated by Dr. Vonda Jump Norman, a research scientist at the CPD’s Early Intervention Research Institute.

The faculty from Petra University and the University of Jordan also attended the National Association for the Education of Young Children Professional Development conference in Charlotte, North Carolina. Jump Norman said a partnership goal is to help students finish their degrees with exposure to a variety of teaching techniques and theories, a thorough understanding of child development, and applied practice working with young children.

She is also facilitating the translation of cutting-edge early childhood textbooks that are now unavailable in Arabic. "I think it will be a service not only in Jordan, but also in the rest of the Arabic speaking world," Jump Norman said.

She and her collaborators are planning a workshop in Jordan for next summer, to present innovative teaching techniques for current university students and practicing teachers.

The collaboration between the two Jordanian universities and EIRI began after Jordan's government sought help from the United States Agency for International Development to further develop its early childhood programs. The USAID grant that funds the EIRI project grew from that request.

Jordan’s government began offering voluntary Kindergarten classes in the last decade, where most Kindergarten programs are provided by the private sector. In recent years Jordan began an ambitious program to strengthen both the quality of its public early childhood education system and access for its young students.