

Leading the Charge: How USU's Institute for Disability Research is Advancing Disability Research and Policy in Utah

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For individuals and families, navigating the complex world of disability systems and services can feel overwhelming, confusing, or impossible to access. Yet, disability is a part of everyday life — more than a quarter of Utahns meet the federal definition of having a disability. This Blue Plate Research event introduced the statewide resource designed to help: the Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice (IDRPP) at Utah State University.

Dr. Matthew Wappett, the institute's Executive Director, lead the conversation by tracing the evolution of disability services in America, from the early institutions that were once central to public life to the landmark legislation and community-based movements that shape how support is delivered today.

As Utah's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, IDRPP has been at the forefront of disability services since 1972. Its mission is to connect research with real-world needs so that evidence-based practices can reach the people who need them. Dr. Wappett shared examples of that work in action, including early intervention services for infants and toddlers, assistive technology programs, mental health

training across the state, and long-term research on child development and disability.

You can also learn more from the [Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice](#).

