**A person with the arms crossed

Description automatically generated with medium confidenceKasey Bedard received funding from The Prader-Willi Syndrom Association, USA, for her research entitled “*Behavioral Skills Training for Parents of Children with Prader Willi Syndrome: Development and Assessment of a Parent Training Program*.”**

Kasey Bedard, a third-year doctoral student in the Applied Behavior Analysis Online Department grant-funded project, will develop and evaluate a behavioral parent training program for parents of children with Prader Willi Syndrome (PWS) between the ages of 2 and 12.

Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS) is a complex neurodevelopmental syndrome often accompanied by severe maladaptive behavior, including aggressive food-seeking, skin picking, explosive tantrums, and compulsive behaviors, rigidity and hoarding, and difficulty with changes in routine, and other self-injury, including rectal digging. In addition to the physical and behavioral symptoms of PWS, individuals are also likely to present with mild to moderate intellectual impairment, delays in language and motor development, and psychiatric disturbances. Children with PWS often suffer from pervasive problem behavior. To date, medical and pharmacological interventions have had limited success in helping parents address these issues in their children afflicted with PWS. Because of the lack of medical interventions, children with PWS and their families are left to deal with dangerous and disruptive problem behavior that not only affects the health and well-being of the families but often prevents children from succeeding in school, attending community outings, and family events, and learning the skills necessary to become successful, productive adults. Kasey’s research study aims to provide behavioral support to families in programmatic ways to work in conjunction with medical management protocols. She will combine existing data with support from expert consultants on PWS and behavior analytic parent training programs to develop a PWS-specific parent training protocol, with the goal of teaching parents to prevent, reduce, and eliminate problem behavior displayed by their children with PWS. Prior to the implementation of her study, she will examine the acceptability and perceived feasibility of the study design, including caregiver buy-in. Revisions will be made to the program to address any identified concerns. Behavior analysis has been mostly under-researched as a treatment for children with PWS.

Kasey will work with her faculty mentor, Dr. Annette Griffith, and a team of consultants from across the United States. An exciting component of her program will be the inclusion of international participants. Part of her award funds will support 4-6 graduate students, who will implement the program with the participants during the project’s evaluation phase. This support will provide an excellent training opportunity for students in an area that behavior analytic professionals typically underserve.