Mandy Ableidinger
NC Early Childhood Foundation
Policy and Practice Leader

514 Daniels Street #173 | Raleigh, NC 27605
919-412-2854

Mandy Ableidinger writes and blogs on state and federal policy issues impacting young children and their families. Mandy has more than 15 years of experience in the nonprofit and public sectors, focused on children’s issues. Prior to joining NCECF, she was an independent contractor in the early childhood, child welfare, and child mental health fields, including helping to guide the first year of the Pathways Initiative for NCECF. She has previously served as the Director of Policy and Budget Analysis at Action for Children NC (now NC Child), and as a fiscal policy analyst for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Ruqiyyah Abu-Anbar
DC Action for Children
Director of Early Childhood Policy and Programs

2480 16th St NW, 618 | Washington 20009
817-312-4896

Ruqiyyah Abu-Anbar is the Director of Early Childhood Policy and Programs at DC Action for Children. In her role, Ruqiyyah works with community partners to elevate the needs of the District’s young children so that all have equitable access to opportunity to meet their full potential.

Swati Adarkar
Children’s Institute
President & CEO

1411 SW Morrison St. #205 | Portland, OR 97205
503-219-9034

Swati Adarkar has a wealth of experience in research, communications, child advocacy, and public policy development, and is a champion for high-quality early care and education for children pre-birth to age eight. She helped found Children’s Institute and has shaped its growth since its inception, first serving as the organization’s vice president of research and communications. Under her leadership, the Institute has helped secure significant increases in public funding for Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten, Early Head Start, and Oregon’s newest preschool program, Preschool Promise. She is currently a member of the PBS Teacher Community Program Advisory Board, the Attendance Works Advisory Committee on Eliminating Chronic Absence, and the International Women’s Forum of Oregon.
Mimi Aledo-Sandoval
Alliance for Early Success
Policy Director
1875 Connecticut Ave, NW 10th Floor | Washington, DC 20009
703-346-5178

Mimi Aledo-Sandoval leads the family support portfolio of investments including child care and home visiting as a strategy for high quality infant toddler programs and services. Before joining the Alliance, Ms. Aledo-Sandoval was a Senior Associate on two Pew Charitable Trusts projects, the Home Visiting Campaign and the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative. She was a Senior Fiscal Analyst for New Mexico’s Legislative Finance Committee, a former Policy Analyst for the Albuquerque City Council, a Mayoral Fellow with the City of Chicago, an AmeriCorps volunteer, and a Congressional Hispanic Caucus Fellow. In 2013, she was selected as an NCSL Early Learning Fellow.

Debra Andersen
Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness
Executive Director
421 NW 13th Street, Suite 270 | Oklahoma City, OK 73103
405-429-4219

Debra Andersen is the Executive Director of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness, a state-level organization established to improve the quality and coordination of early childhood systems in Oklahoma.

Bruce Atchison
Education Commission of the States
Principal, Early Learning Institute
700 Broadway, Suite 810 | Denver, CO 80203-3442
303-299-3657

Bruce brings more than 35 years of experience working in the field of early learning and education policy. He was Chief of State for Colorado’s Lt. Gov. and a member of Governor Ritter’s cabinet, served as the Executive Vice President of the state’s child advocacy organization for eight years, worked in Governor Romer’s policy office as the Head Start State Collaboration Director, and worked as the Executive Director of the Early Learning Partnership focused on pre-K to 3rd grade alignment. Bruce has worked for Denver Public Schools as the Executive Director of the Family Resource Schools, was Director of the City of Boulder’s Children’s Services Division, and was the President and CEO of a private non-profit child care facility serving low-income single parent families with children 6 weeks to pre-K. Bruce was a K teacher for three years and a Pre-K teacher for another 7 years.
Leanne Barrett
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
Senior Policy Analyst

One Union Station | Providence, RI 02903
401-351-9400

Leanne Barrett works to improve early childhood policy statewide (Birth – Age 8). She is the coordinator of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council and a state leader in the early learning field. Leanne spearheaded the development of BrightStars, the state’s Quality Rating and Improvement System, managed the state’s Pre-K exploration and design process, and was the director for the state’s first evidence-based home visiting grant. She was the architect for the state legislation establishing tiered quality rates for child care and the Rhode Island Family Home Visiting Act. She has been a strong advocate to establish Rhode Island’s paid family leave program and earned sick leave policies. Prior to joining Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, Leanne was Vice President at United Way of Rhode Island and Program Manager at Work/Family Directions.

Shana Bartley
DC Action for Children
Executive Director

1609 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 400 Suite 1050 | Washington, DC 20009
202-234-9404

Shana Bartley leads DC Action’s efforts to ensure that the District of Columbia is place where all children have the resources they need to thrive. She most recently served as the organization’s Director of Programs and Legislative Affairs and managed DC Action’s technical assistance projects and policy and advocacy work. Prior to joining staff at DC Action, Ms. Bartley worked in DC as a youth organizer and advocate assisting teen women in their efforts to advocate for improved access to health education and services.

Angela Bass
Mississippi First
Deputy Director of Policy

146 Sugaloach Cove | Jackson, MS 39211
662-541-1144

Angela analyzes data, develops policy proposals, leads research projects, and drafts policy papers and presentations as Deputy Director of Policy at Mississippi First. She co-authored several of Mississippi First’s best-known reports, including the State of Pre-K in Mississippi and Understanding District and State Testing in Mississippi. Angela was a certified teacher in Forrest City, Arkansas, through Teach For America and also served in teaching roles in Tunica County and DeSoto County. She was the founding Dean of Students for KIPP Memphis Collegiate High School.
Ben leads the research and evaluation efforts for First Five Nebraska. He works closely with the Nebraska Legislature and state agencies to inform effective early childhood policy. Previously, Ben was a research and evaluation specialist for the Nebraska Department of Education where he worked extensively with the statewide longitudinal data system.

Ashley focuses on the firm’s US education strategy and investments. Prior to joining Omidyar Network, she was the founding director of finance, strategy, and operations at Bricolage Academy, an innovative, socioeconomically diverse, startup charter elementary school in New Orleans. Ashley began her career at Morgan Stanley as an investment-banking analyst focused on the real estate sector and as special projects associate working on a series of internal company projects.

Joan Benso is President and CEO of Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC), where she is responsible for the organization’s daily administration and effective functioning. PPC has championed many issues and led a broad array of coalitions during her tenure, including those which yielded the passage of state universal children’s health insurance law, the creation of a state pre-kindergarten program and a more rational funding system for public education. Ms. Benso also has served on various state and national boards addressing health care, school readiness, youth development, college and career readiness, and other critical children’s issues.
**Mindy Binderman**  
GEEARS: Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students  
Executive Director

3400 Peachtree Rd NE, Suite 1720 | Atlanta, GA 30326  
678-689-3482

Mindy Binderman leads GEEARS’ efforts to inspire and provide leadership for a statewide movement on early learning and healthy development for children ages birth to five. Ms. Binderman has had an extensive career in advocacy and government relations for nonprofits and corporations in Maryland and Georgia. She served as Director of Government Relations and Public Affairs for the Baltimore Jewish Council and as Vice President of Public Affairs for Planned Parenthood of Maryland before establishing her own successful lobbying firm based in Annapolis, Maryland. Prior to coming to GEEARS, Ms. Binderman served as the Advocacy Director of Voices for Georgia’s Children from 2007-2010.

**Brittany Birken**  
University of Florida Lastinger Center  
Strategy Officer

2-068 Norman Hall PO Box 117052 | Gainesville, FL 32611  
850-212-0408

Brittany is a developmental psychologist with more than 20 years of experience in early childhood development. As the former Director of the Office of Early Learning, she did extensive work in the development and implementation of a comprehensive, integrated system for Florida’s early education programs. She then served as the CEO of the Florida Children’s Council—the association of children’s services councils. Brittany now serves as the Strategy Officer for the University of Florida’s Lastinger Center, focused on innovations in education cradle to career. With the recognition of the critical linkages between educational investments and economic development, she works closely with business and decision makers to create policies that support the current workforce, promote economic vitality and develop a sustaining educational infrastructure. Brittany serves on the Florida Chamber Foundation and CareerSource Florida, Inc. boards.

**Helen Blank**  
NWLC  
Director, Child Care and Early Learning

11 Du Pont Circle Suite 800 | Washington, D.C. 20036  
202-319-3036

Helen Blank’s work focuses on child care and early education issues. She currently leads the federal Child Care and Early Learning Coalition and the Strong Start for America’s Children Campaign. She has authored numerous reports including an annual report on state child care policies and A Count for Quality: Child Care Directors on Quality Rating and Improvement Systems. Ms. Blank served 24 years as the Director of the Child Care and Development Division at the Children’s Defense Fund, where she spearheaded advocacy on a variety of efforts to improve early learning policies. She is on the Board of All our Kin and the Advisory Committee for the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood National Center and the CACFP Forum.
Ginny Blankenship
Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families
Education Policy Director

1400 W. Markham Union Station #306 | Little Rock, AR 72201
501-400-2394

Before re-joining the AACF team as education policy director in July 2016, Ginny Blankenship served as AACF’s Research & Fiscal Policy Director from 2007-2009. She has also served as a legislative analyst for the Arkansas General Assembly, communications director in the U.S. House of Representatives, and, most impressively, a 9th-grade English teacher.

Brigitte Blom Ramsey
Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence
Executive Director

271 W. Short Street, Suite 202 | Lexington, KY 40507
859-233-9849

Brigitte has worked in policy, research, and advocacy on issues related to education, poverty, and state taxes and budgets. Before joining the Prichard Committee, Brigitte was director of public policy for United Way of Greater Cincinnati focusing on state policy in Kentucky related to early childhood education. Ms. Ramsey spent a decade as an elected member of the Board of Education in rural Pendleton County, Kentucky and served as a governor-appointed member of the Kentucky Board of Education for six years.

Laura Bornfreund
New America
Director, Early & Elementary Education Policy

740 15th ST NW, Suite 900 | Washington, DC 20005
202-596-3381

Laura Bornfreund is director of early & elementary education policy with the Education Policy program at New America. Bornfreund has authored the reports “An Ocean of Unknowns: Using Student Achievement Data to Evaluate PreK-3rd Grade Teachers,” “Getting in Sync: Revamping Licensing and Preparation for Teachers in Pre-K, Kindergarten, and the Early Grades,” and was lead author on the reports, “From Crawling to Walking: Ranking States on Birth-3rd Grade Policies that Support Strong Readers” and “Beyond subprime Learning: Accelerating Progress in Early Education.” Before joining New America, she worked with several policy organizations in Washington, D.C., including the Institute for Educational Leadership, The Forum for Education and Democracy, and Common Core (now known as Great Minds).

Carol Brady
FL Association of Healthy Start Coalitions
Project Director, FL MIECHV

1311 N. Paul Russell Rd #A204 | Tallahassee, FL 32301
904-608-8046

Carol has led efforts over the last five years to improve and expand the delivery of home visiting and other evidence-based interventions for at-risk families. She previously served as Executive Director of the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition for 16 years. Carol is the recipient of the Florida March of Dimes Lawton Chiles Public Affairs Award, the CDC’s National MCH Epidemiology Award for Effective Community Practice, and the Florida Public Health Association’s MCH Leadership Award.
Charlotte Brantley
Clayton Early Learning
President/CEO

3801 Martin Luther King Blvd | Denver, CO 80205
303-355-4411

Charlotte joined Clayton Early Learning as president and CEO in 2006. Previously she taught preschoolers in model early childhood education programs; instructed teachers working toward AA and BA degrees; managed educational initiatives at PBS Kids television; and administered early childhood programs for the state of Texas and as an appointee in the Clinton Administration. At Clayton Early Learning Charlotte oversees the implementation of the national Educare model at Educare Denver and other direct services to low-income children and families. In addition, she oversees Clayton initiatives designed to improve early education opportunities for all Colorado children by providing effective teacher and leader preparation, offering evaluation services to identify and promote promising practices, and advocating for effective public policies. She is a member of the Governor appointed Early Childhood Leadership Commission and co-chairs the Data and Outcomes Committee. She has been honored by Denver’s Great Kids Head Start as the Outstanding Community Person of the Year.

Melanie Bronfin
Louisiana Policy Institute for Children
Executive Director

P.O. Box 13552 | New Orleans, LA 70005
504-228-0988

Melanie Bronfin is the Executive Director of the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children, which is a non-partisan, nonprofit that is a source of data, research, and information for policymakers, stakeholders and the public at large on issues related to young children in Louisiana. Since 2012, she has been at the forefront of policy and advocacy around the implementation of the Early Childhood Education Act, Act 3 of the 2012 Legislative Session, which mandated an overhaul of the entire early care and education system in Louisiana. Ms. Bronfin is a lifelong resident of Louisiana.

Elisabeth Burak
Georgetown University Center for Children and Families
Senior Fellow

3300 Whitehaven St, NW Suite 5000 | Washington, DC 20057
202-687-0883

Elisabeth Wright Burak directs projects focused on young children’s development and supports CCF’s work with national and state partners. She has more than 15 years of experience in public policy to support low-income children and families at the national and state levels. Before joining CCF in 2011, Elisabeth was Director of Health Policy and Legislative Affairs for Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families. Elisabeth previously served as the Director of Policy and Planning for Arkansas’s Department of Human Services, guiding a number of cross-system initiatives, such as the agency’s priority agenda to reform the children’s behavioral health system. Prior to work in her home state of Arkansas, Elisabeth worked with state leaders in early childhood policies at the National Governors Association and The Finance Project.
*Michael Burke*
Buffett Early Childhood Fund
Vice President

808 Conagra Dr. | Omaha, NE 68102
402-541-4143

Mike Burke focuses on building the coast-to-coast network of high-performing Educare schools while providing guidance on efforts to improve state and federal policies affecting young children and their families. He has more than 30 years of experience in politics, public relations and philanthropy. Before joining the Foundation, he oversaw public affairs and communications for several children’s organizations, including: Ounce of Prevention Fund, Voices for Illinois Children and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Mr. Burke managed media relations for two political campaigns in rural Illinois.

*Elizabeth Burke Bryant*
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
Executive Director

One Union Station | Providence, RI 02903
401-351-9400

Elizabeth Burke Bryant is the Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT since it began in 1994. She is Co-Chair of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council, serves on the board of the Partnership for America’s Children, and is actively involved in many local and national efforts including the United Way of Rhode Island and the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. She is the recipient of the Florette Angel National Child Advocate of the Year Award.

*Michelle Butcher*
NY Funders Alliance
Philanthropy and Public Policy Fellow

431 E. Fayette St. | Syracuse, NY 13202
315-565-0451

Michelle Butcher is the new Philanthropy and Public Policy Fellow for the NY Funders Alliance. One of the focus areas at the Alliance is early childhood health and education. Butcher is also a member of PEP.

*Beth Caron*
National Governors Association
Program Director, Early Care and Education

444 North Capitol Street NW Suite 267 | Washington, DC 20001
202-624-5332

Beth and the NGA education team provide information, research synthesis, policy analysis, technical assistance and resources to governors and their staff on education topics spanning early childhood through college and career. Beth has more than 25 years of experience in the field of early childhood special education and early learning, with an emphasis on policy. Prior to joining NGA, she worked at AEM Corp., directing the Early Learning Challenge Technical Assistance contract (ELC TA), which supported the 20 RTT-- Early Learning Challenge states in developing high-quality, comprehensive systems of early learning and development for young children and their families. Her experience ranges from direct service provision in home-based and center-based early intervention settings to serving for nine years the U.S. Department of Education,
Mike Carpenter
TQEE
Executive Director
2344 Wood Bridge Cove | Memphis, TN 38119
901-331-0153

Mike Carpenter has a diverse background that includes politics; appointed government official; lobbyist and advocate for education reform; president and CEO of a commercial construction trade association; and executive director of a private, family foundation. Most recently, Mr. Carpenter served as Executive Director of the Plough Foundation, a private, Memphis-based, family foundation. In that role, Mike managed more than $100 million in assets and the foundation granted an average $13 million annually. In 2011, he was hired by Students First, an education reform advocacy organization. Mr. Carpenter was named first state director of the nationwide group and established a solid track record of passing state legislation and winning legislative campaigns.

Brownie Carson
Maine state senate
State Senator
PO Box 68 | Harpswell, ME 04079
207-751-9076

Kelly Causey
Colorado Children’s Campaign
President & CEO
1580 Lincoln St Ste 420 | Denver, CO 80203
303-620-4529

Kelly has nearly two decades of experience in leading a large Colorado non-profit organization. She has devoted more than 25 years working with children and youth, from one of her first jobs in residential treatment to more than two decades engaged with youth conservation corps, where she also helped to launch a charter school. Ms. Causey holds has served as a sociology instructor at the University of Colorado at Denver. She has published on topics related to child custody and stigma. She has served on the Corps Network National Board of Directors, the Colorado Workforce Development Council, and the Denver Office of Strategic Partnerships Commission.

Barbara Chow
Heising Simons Foundation
Program Director
400 Main Street | Los Altos, CA 94022
650-887-0277

Barbara is the Director of the Education Program at the Heising-Simons Foundation. Prior to joining the Foundation, she completed an eight-year term as the Director of the Education Program for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Before that, she was the Policy Director of the House Budget Committee and the executive director of the National Geographic Education Foundation. During the Clinton administration, Ms. Chow served as Deputy Director of the Domestic Policy Council, Associate Director for Education, Income Maintenance, and Labor programs at the Office of Management and Budget, and Special Assistant to the president for White House Legislative Affairs. Previously, she also worked for the Senate Democratic Policy Committee and the Senate Budget Committee.
**Cindy Cisneros**  
Committee for Economic Development  
Vice President of Education Programs

1530 Wilson Blvd., Suite 400 | Arlington, VA 22209  
202-469-7817  

Cindy Cisneros is responsible for overseeing the portfolio of education program work, including early learning. She has led CED’s early childhood education initiatives for the past five years. Most recently, Ms. Cisneros served as Director of Member Practice at Public Education Network. Prior to her work at PEN, Ms. Cisneros was a Principal Research Analyst at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and Director of Stakeholder Engagement for the National High School Center. Before joining AIR, Ms. Cisneros worked as a Senior Research Associate at the Education and Development Center. Through Ms. Cisneros’ work at the U.S. Department of Education, including as a Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, she managed and provided oversight of several formula and discretionary grant school improvement programs. Before her appointment at the Department, Ms. Cisneros worked for Congressman Leon Panetta as a Senior Legislative Aide handling education issues, among others.

**Maggie Clark**  
Georgetown Center for Children and Families  
Senior State Health Policy Analyst

3300 Whitehaven Street Suite 5000 | Washington, DC 20007  
202-687-1527  

Maggie Clark is a Senior State Health Policy Analyst at the Center for Children and Families (CCF). Before joining Georgetown University, she was an award-winning health journalist in Florida covering all aspects of Florida’s health delivery system, with special attention to Medicaid for children. She also held various research positions at the Pew Charitable Trusts in Washington, D.C.

**Steffanie Clothier**  
Gary Community Investments  
Investment Director

1705 17th St Suite 200 | Denver, CO 80202  
303-454-3779  

Steffanie Clothier develops and manages a portfolio to promote school readiness that deploys a mix of capital types such as grants, PRI’s and for-profit investments. She leads a team that is designing and implementing innovative strategies to support innovators to have access to the support and capital they need to dramatically improve outcomes for young children. Prior to joining GCI she was Senior Policy Director for the Alliance for Early Success, providing strategic support to state and national organizations as they work to improve outcomes for young children in the early years. For nearly a decade, Ms. Clothier led early care and education initiatives with legislatures of the 50 states and territories as a program director with the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).
Katrina Coburn
ZTT
Senior Technical Assistance Specialist, Policy Center
19910 Fairmont Ct | Hagerstown, MD 21742
202-857-2284

Katrina Coburn is currently a Senior Technical Assistance Specialist for the State Policy Center at ZERO TO THREE. Prior to her position in the Policy Center, Katrina worked with both the National Center for Early Childhood Development Teaching and Learning and the Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Technical Assistance Coordinating Center at ZERO TO THREE. She spent several years in Pennsylvania, leading state workforce initiatives with the Pennsylvania Key under the direction of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning. In addition to her state and federal work, Katrina spent 10 years at a Maryland Resource and Referral Center and 5 years as a family child care provider.

Kathryn Colfer
Kennebec Valley Community Action Program
Director of Child & Family Services/Educare Central Maine
97 Water Street | Waterville, ME 04901
207-859-1618

Kathryn Colfer has contributed to the early care and education field for the past 20 years and has designed, developed and implemented programs for children, families, and providers in both the private non-profit sector and public sector, including center-based, home visiting, and family child care. She administers high-quality early care and education programs throughout northern Kennebec and Somerset Counties, encompassing 150 staff and 8 service locations. Kathryn is a member of the Maine Head Start Directors, the New England Head Start Directors, Maine Shared Services Advisory Committee, National Educare Leadership Council, past Co-Chair of Maine’s Child Care Advisory Committee and member of the Maine Children’s Growth Council.

Lori Connors-Tadros
Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes
Senior Project Director
6385 Hawk View Lane | Alexandria, VA 22312
571-239-5129

Lori Connors-Tadros, Ph.D. is the Senior Project Director for the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) at the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University. The National Institute for Early Education Research provides independent, research-based analysis and technical assistance to inform policy supporting high-quality, early education for all young children. The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) is one of 22 comprehensive centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Programs. Lori leads the work of CEELO to build capacity of state early education administrators to implement comprehensive early learning systems for children birth through third grade. Connors-Tadros brings a strong understanding of the major federal programs serving young children and has extensive experience providing consultation to state and local leaders.
**Abby Copeman Petig**  
Center for the Study of Child Care Employment  
Research & Policy Specialist  
1121 Main Street | Grinnell, IA 50112  
515-978-8283  

Abby has more than a decade of experience in the early childhood research and policy fields in both non-profit and academic settings, including extensive experience with program evaluation and secondary data analysis. Prior to joining CSCCE in 2016, Abby co-authored several briefs on the topics of childcare, school readiness, and the quality rating for the Child and Family Policy Center in Iowa.

**Marica Cox Mitchell**  
NAEYC  
Deputy Executive Director  
1313 L Street NW | Washington, DC 20005  
202-350-8851  

Marica Cox Mitchell is responsible for the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s (NAEYC) major efforts in accreditation and professional recognition. As Deputy Chief Executive Officer for Early Learning Systems, she coordinates and integrates a portfolio that includes public policy and advocacy, accreditation of early learning programs, higher education accreditation and the Power to the Profession initiative. Marica has over 18 years of diverse experiences in both early childhood classroom and administrative settings. These varied experiences and perspectives inspire her to focus on advancing professional practice, voice, and recognition. Before assuming her current role, she served in other leadership positions at NAEYC, the District of Columbia’s Office of the State Superintendent of Education, and the District of Columbia Public Schools.

**Jeran Culina**  
Talent 2025  
Education Research and Project Manager  
48 Logan St SW | Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
616-283-0152  

**Marilee Dal Pra**  
First Things First  
CEO  
4000 N. Central Avenue, STE 800 | Phoenix, AZ 85012  
602-771-5074  

Marilee Dal Pra is Chief Executive Officer for First Things First, Arizona’s early childhood state agency. Prior to joining FTF, Marilee was Vice President for Programs at Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, where she led the foundation’s community initiatives and strategic program development. Previously, Dal Pra served as the director for the Governor’s Division for Children, where she coordinated policies and programs to improve conditions for Arizona’s children and families in partnership with professional organizations, business groups, and policymakers. Her prior work experience also includes oversight of juvenile justice programs for the Governor’s Office and work to improve outcomes for women on probation.
Kim Davenport
Edward Street Child Services
Managing Director, Birth to 3rd Grade Alignment

50 Portland Street, 2nd Floor | Worcester, MA 01608
508-792-0220

Kim Davenport brings more than 25 years of experience in early education and non-profit management. She has vast management and leadership experience, as well as content development expertise in early education. Recently, she developed an ECE workforce degree for Fitchburg State University, which included the design of 8 new courses for the university. At Jumpstart, Kim developed the Pearson Teacher Fellowship, the first national early education fellowship which launched the careers of 150 educators. Currently, Kim serves on ECE Advisory Councils and workgroups with Quinsigamond Community College, Becker College, the Department of Early Education and Care, as well as several non-profit organizations in Massachusetts, including the Worcester Education Collaborative and the EcoTarium. She has served on Parenting Magazine’s Mom Congress Advisory Board.

Alvin David
Baptist Community Ministries
Program Director, Education Grants

400 POYDRAS ST, Suite 2950 | New Orleans, LA 70130
504-593-2333

Denise Dell Isola
Irving Harris Foundation
Senior Program Officer

191 N. Wacker Dr. Suite 1500 | Chicago, IL 60606
312-604-7913

Denise Castillo Dell Isola, advances the Irving Harris Foundation’s early childhood public policy agenda at the state and federal levels. She manages grants and special initiatives around the infant and early childhood mental health, early learning, family support, and early childhood advocacy, policy, and systems building. Before joining the Irving Harris Foundation, Dell Isola served as the executive director of an early childhood center in Chicago, and she also practiced commercial litigation at DLA Piper LLP.

Diane Dellanno
Advocates for Children of NJ
Policy Analyst

35 Halsey Street | Newark, NJ 07102
973-643-3876

Diane Dellanno is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and member of the early childhood team at ACNJ. Her primary role has been to develop an infant/toddler advocacy campaign to improve early learning policies and programs for infants and toddlers in New Jersey. Most recently, Diane was the principal investigator for two research studies, Out Of Reach, a look at the cost of quality child care in New Jersey and No Room For Babies, that examined the availability of infant-toddler child care in New Jersey. Diane has over 30 years’ experience in developing and implementing parenting education programs to assist parents in understanding how their children develop, foster positive parent-child relationships, support healthy child development, and engage families in their child’s learning to ensure educational success. Prior to joining ACNJ in 2012, Diane served as a director of Early Childhood and Education Programs for Prevent Child Abuse – NJ.
**Jerri Derlikowski**  
*ForwARd Arkansas*  
Research Director  

116 Ottenheimer Plaza, Ste 3 | Little Rock, AR 72201  
501-351-3271  

Jerri Derlikowski joined ForwARd in 2017 as Director of Research and Innovation, supporting ForwARd initiatives by providing research on education funding, policy, and innovative programs. Jerri formed Community Resource Innovations in 2015, working with individual communities and their local leaders in underserved areas of the state. Her work with ForwARd allows her to continue that work in small rural towns and school districts. Jerri facilitates the work of the Arkansas Coalition for Community Schools, which was formed in 2016. Her work in education began with serving as legislative fiscal staff. When the Legislature formed a new research unit, she was selected to lead it. In that role, she directed the biennial adequacy studies. The study is a comprehensive review of the entire state education system, which served as the basis of legislative decisions on education funding and policy needs. Jerri also served as Director of Education Policy for Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families (AACF).

**Geania Dickey**  
*Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation - Expect + More*  
Consultant  

904 Riverview Dr | Malvern, AR 72104  
501-749-2413  

**Louisa Diffey**  
*Education Commission of the States*  
Policy Researcher  

700 Broadway, Suite 810 | Denver, CO 80203  
303-299-3655  

Louisa Diffey joined Education Commission of the States in July 2016 as a policy researcher focusing primarily on early learning. Prior to joining Education Commission of the States, Louisa taught middle school Special Education in Colorado Springs as a Teach for America Colorado corps member. She has also taught Special Education in Denver Public Schools. Additionally, she has worked for a member of the Colorado House of Representatives and completed a fellowship with Leadership for Educational Equity.

**Eoin Dillon**  
*Council for a Strong America*  
Director of State Policy  

1212 New York Ave NW, Suite 300 | Washington, DC 20005  
202-464-7010  

Eoin Dillon manages state policy work done in the states that CSA staffs from its national office. By overseeing state leads for each state, he ensures work to mobilize local members in support of state policies is done in coordination with in-state advocacy partners and limited resources are used strategically. Eoin joined Council for a Strong America in 2015 as a member of the Fight Crime: Invest in Kids team, and continues to work with law enforcement leaders in several states. Previously, he spent seven years working with and mobilizing communities in Chicago through AmeriCorps, local political campaigns, the Greater Chicago Food Depository, and the Mayor’s Office. He also worked at an afterschool center in Madison, Wisconsin for three years.
Dionne Dobbins
Child Care Aware of America
Dionne Dobbins

1515 N. Courthouse Road | Arlington, VA 20785
240-676-3337

Dr. Dionne Dobbins is the Senior Director of Research at Child Care Aware® of America, a nonprofit membership organization whose mission is to lead state and national initiatives that ensure every child has access to affordable, high-quality childcare. She leads a team of researchers who work closely with the policy staff to align research reports with Child Care Aware® of America’s strategic goals, including our well-known reports and tools on child care supply and demand, licensing, and affordability. Dr. Dobbins has over 15 years of research, evaluation, and technical assistance experience related to the well-being and stability of children and families placed at risk. She has broad experience in the areas of early childhood education, mental health of young children, childcare, military families and vulnerable children and families.

Titus DosRemedios
Strategies for Children
Director of research and policy

400 Atlantic Ave. | Boston, MA 02110
617-330-7387

Titus is Director of Research and Policy at Strategies for Children (SFC), a policy and advocacy organization focused on high-quality early education in Massachusetts. He analyzes early education policy, research, data, and the state budget to inform SFC’s advocacy and communications. Titus also supports SFC’s Community Readiness initiative, which includes partnerships in Springfield, Holyoke, and New Bedford. Prior to joining SFC, Titus held a variety of in-school and out-of-school time teaching positions in Rhode Island, including life skills instructor, violence prevention educator, and second-grade teaching assistant.

Jonathan Doster
Ounce of Prevention Fund
Policy Manager, Illinois Policy team

33 W. Monroe, Suite 1200 | Chicago, IL 60603
312-453-1998

Jonathan Doster is a Policy Manager at the Ounce of Prevention Fund. With colleagues from the Illinois Policy team, he manages the agency’s state legislative affairs, working directly with the legislature and other policymakers in Springfield to increase access to and funding for early learning programs across Illinois. He lives in Chicago with his wife, Clarkie, and their yellow lab, Flo.
Catherine Dry  
Santa Fe Community Foundation  
Director, Santa Fe Baby Fund, Santa Fe Community Foundation  
501 Halona Street | Santa Fe, NM 87505  
505-988-9715 ext 7016  

Katie directs the foundation’s early childhood initiative to raise awareness in Santa Fe County about the importance of the first years of life. She also coordinates the work of the New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group, a collaborative of private and public charitable foundations from across New Mexico dedicated to improving the lives of babies, young children, and families.

Wendy Elliott  
Alliance  
Coordinator  
9501 SW 35th Terrace | Oklahoma City, OK 73179  
785-979-7961  

Wendy focuses on meeting management and internal communications, and is responsible for leading the grant management system. Wendy has 14 years of experience managing a variety of federal, state and private grants. For over 9 years Wendy was a senior staff member for Youth Volunteer Corps (YVC), where responsibilities included grants management and program development for 50 sub-grantees. Wendy has an extensive background working with diverse populations including African American, Hispanic, Somali, Burmese and Vietnamese youth. Wendy has provided diversity training to various youth-serving organizations such as Volunteer Centers, HandsOn programs and Boys and Girls Clubs.

Dale Epstein  
Child Trends  
Senior Research Scientist  
1516 Franklin Street Suite 205 | Chapel Hill, NC 27514  
919-869-3252  

Dale Epstein is a Senior Research Scientist at Child Trends, where she focuses on the intersection of research and policy and the role that state and national public policies play in the lives of young children and their families. She is the Project Director of the North Carolina Early Childhood Integrated Data System and the Principal Investigator for an evaluation of the Quality Rating and Improvement System in Arizona. She also works on the Child Care and Early Education Policy and Research Analysis project.

Jennifer Esterline  
Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium  
Executive Director  
P. O. Box 660327 | Austin, TX 78766  
512-796-4530  

Jennifer is the founder and executive director of the Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium, a collaboration of private, corporate and community foundations across the state working to promote, protect, and improve Texas public education through advocacy and public policy. Jennifer has been working in the nonprofit space for almost two decades, first as a program and development director for nonprofit and higher education institutions, and later as executive director for the KDK-Harman Foundation in Austin.
Elizabeth Everett
First Five Nebraska
Policy Associate

301 S. 13th St., Suite 600 | Lincoln, NE 68508
402-261-9671

A recent transplant to Nebraska, Elizabeth Everett has more than five years of public policy experience working on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., for Senator John McCain and the Senate Armed Services Committee. In these roles, Elizabeth worked on several pieces of legislation, including the annual National Defense Authorization Act, the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act and the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act. Elizabeth received an M.B.A. from George Washington University and a B.A. in Political Science from Vanderbilt University. She and her husband, Rick, live in Lincoln.

Shay Everitt
CHILDREN AT RISK
Director, Early Childhood Education Initiatives

2900 Weslayan, Suite 400 | Houston, TX 77027
713-869-7740

Shay Everitt leads CHILDREN AT RISK’s early childhood education research and policy efforts. She manages various projects that aim to improve the quality of publicly funded ECE programs across Texas, with a focus on childcare and public school Pre-K. Shay works with and convenes coalitions of stakeholders at the local, state, and national levels in different aspects of ECE, including child health, childcare licensing standards, and quality programming. She works with C@R’s Center for Social Measurement and Evaluation to understand the strengths and opportunities of the state’s ECE systems and to inform C@R’s state and local advocacy efforts. Shay is also an adjunct professor at the University of Houston-Downtown in the Nonprofit Management graduate degree program.

Danielle Ewen
EducationCounsel
Senior Policy Advisor

101 Constitution Ave NW Suite 900 | Washington, DC 20001
202-689-2919

Danielle has served in numerous leadership positions in child care and early education policy. Before joining EducationCounsel, she served as the Director of the Office of Early Childhood Education in the District of Columbia Public Schools where she oversaw programs serving three- and four-year-old children in high quality, comprehensive classrooms. She also served as the Director of the Child Care and Early Education team at the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP). At CLASP, she worked on federal and state issues around child care and early education, particularly the reauthorizations of the Child Care and Development Block Grant and Head Start.
**David Feigen**
Texans Care For Children
Early Childhood Policy Associate

1106 Clayton Ln, Ste 111W | Austin, TX 78723
832-217-4442

David Feigen leads Texans Care for Children’s work on pre-k, child care, and other policy priorities. Before joining Texans Care for Children, David was a Legislative Director at the Texas House of Representatives, where he shaped and executed legislative agendas focused on expanding opportunity for all Texans. Working with a diverse group of stakeholders, David achieved numerous legislative victories on behalf of early childhood education, juvenile justice, and child protection.

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**Cheryl Feldman**
District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund
Executive Director

100 S. Broad Street, 10th floor | Philadelphia, PA 19128
215-568-2220 ext 5101

Cheryl serves as Executive Director of District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund, a labor-management educational trust fund and workforce intermediary founded in 1974 with over 50 contributing employer partners. She has helped develop the Fund’s Learning Center into a comprehensive educational career center providing a wide range of literacy and career pathway training and education programs serving 5,000 adults and youth annually that reside in southeastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey. The Training Fund has become a national leader in implementing workforce programming and apprenticeships in healthcare and human services, including a groundbreaking Early Childhood Apprenticeship Associate’s Degree Program. Ms. Feldman serves on the Philadelphia Workforce Development Board and on the Advisory Panel on Work Based Learning for Youth and Adults of the National Skills Coalition.

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**Erica Fener Sitkoff**
Voices for Georgia’s Children
Executive Director

75 Marietta Street Suite 401 | Atlanta, GA 30303
404-521-0311

Dr. Erica Fener Sitkoff took the helm as the Executive Director for Voices for Georgia’s July of 2017 after joining Voices in 2014 Policy and Outreach Director. Erica has steered Voices to facilitate policy change that improves access to quality services for children and families across all systems that impact healthy development, including health insurance and quality health care, early childhood development, child welfare, and juvenile justice systems. Prior to joining Voices, Erica led the student support services transformation for the District of Columbia Public School System and worked as Vice President of Strategic Growth and Operations for a nationwide special education and early intervention services company.
**Adam Feser**  
First Five Nebraska  
Policy Associate  

301 S. 13th Street, Suite 600 | Lincoln, NE 68508  
402-261-9671

Adam was an advocate for policies promoting the community inclusion, rights, and autonomy of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities prior to joining First Five Nebraska. He has served on numerous legislative teams and committees focused on these efforts.

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**Emily Fetsch**  
Kansas Action for Children  
Director of Policy and Research  

709 S Kansas, Suite 200 | Topeka, KS 66603  
785-783-7370

Emily Fetsch is the director of policy and research at Kansas Action for Children. Previously, she was a researcher at the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and the Public Religion Research Institute, and the associate director at the National Religious Partnership for the Environment.

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**Wade Fickler**  
National Conference of State Legislatures  
Group Director, Children and Families  

7700 East First Place | Denver, CO 80230  
303-856-1426

Wade Fickler joined the National Conference of State Legislatures as group director for the Children and Families program in February 2018. His previous policy experience includes leadership positions with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, the Children's Institute, and City Club of Portland. His background also includes agency and in-house experience helping nonprofit, for-profit, and government entities achieve their goals through carefully crafted communications.

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**Rebecca Fine**  
Oklahoma Policy Institute  
Education Policy Analyst  

907 S. Detroit, Suite 1005 | Tulsa, OK 74120  
918-794-3944

Rebecca Fine joined Oklahoma Policy Institute in July 2018 as the education policy analyst. Originally from New York, Rebecca began her career in education in 2009 as an Oklahoma teacher. Rebecca proudly comes from a family of educators and spent four years teaching middle school in Tulsa and Union Public Schools.
Netsy Firestein
Open Society Foundations
Advisor
1615 Berkeley Way | Berkeley, CA 94703
510-847-3403

Netsy has a long history of organizing and policy advocacy with labor and community organizations on issues related to work and family, including child care and early education, paid family leave, and sick days. Netsy led the campaign that won paid family leave benefits in California, the first in the country. She now consults with Open Society Foundations and leads the ECE Organizing Network.

Justin Fleming
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
Government Affairs Director
200 North Third Street, 13th Floor | Harrisburg, PA 17101-1589
717-236-5980 ext 115

Justin Fleming is primarily responsible for government relations and advocacy in the areas of child welfare and early childhood education. Justin comes to PPC after spending more than seven years directing the government relations efforts of the Pennsylvania Psychological Association and National Association of Social Workers (PA Chapter). Prior to his government relations career, Justin worked for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania during former Gov. Ed Rendell’s administration doing press and media relations in three state agencies. In his final stop during the Rendell administration, Justin served as press secretary for the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

Ben Fulton
Public Sector Consultants
Senior Consultant
230 N Washington Sq | Lansing, MI 48813
517-331-9462

Ben applies his deep sense of personal commitment to project management, facilitation, research, and report writing at PSC. On the firm’s talent and economics team, he focuses on building consensus and developing concrete solutions to overcome challenges. Ben is particularly interested in identifying and promoting strategies that improve equity and ensure that all Michigan residents have an opportunity to thrive in today’s global economy. Prior to joining PSC, Ben led evidence-based policymaking projects and advocacy efforts in multiple states as part of the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative in Washington, D.C.
**Rita Furlow**  
Maine Children’s Alliance  
Senior Policy Analyst  

331 State Street | Augusta, ME 04330  
207-623-1868

Rita Furlow is an attorney and serves as the Senior Policy Analyst at the Maine Children’s Alliance, working closely with state leaders to help make young children a top priority. Her legislative and policy experience includes working in a congressional office, in the Maine House of Representatives, the Virginia State Senate, and as Special Assistant to Maine’s Attorney General. Ms. Furlow has focused on special education and disability law and advocated for children in private practice as the Executive Director of the Learning Disabilities Association of Maine.

**Ireta Gasner**  
Ounce of Prevention Fund  
Vice President, Illinois Policy Team  

33 W. Monroe | Chicago, IL 60603  
312-453-1924

Ireta Gasner serves as the key strategist for the Ounce in the area of government relations and systems building for the State of Illinois, and provides leadership to the Illinois Policy Team. Before moving into this role earlier this year, Ireta was the Ounce’s primary contact with the Illinois General Assembly and the Illinois congressional delegation and has led efforts to increase funding for early childhood programs and to pass improved policies for children and families. Before coming to the Ounce, Ireta provided direct services and administered programs for high-risk children and families for 14 years, including home-based Head Start.

**Barbara Gebhard**  
ZERO TO THREE  
Assistant Director of Public Policy  

5313 Pamela Circle | Cross Lanes, WV 25313  
202-857-2961

Barbara leads efforts to support states in the development of policies and systems to meet the needs of infants and toddlers. She coordinates annual state policy action team meetings, and also provides technical assistance to public-private teams on various topics relevant to infant-toddler policies. Barbara oversees the work of the Programmatic Assistance for Tribal Home Visiting (PATH), a federally funded project providing technical assistance to tribal home visiting grantees. She is ZERO TO THREE’s point of contact for the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Coordination Center, and the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood On-Site Compliance Review project. Previous roles include the director of the BUILD Initiative, Deputy Director of the WV Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Families, State Early Intervention Director, and State Day Care Specialist in the WV Department of Health and Human Resources.
Jessica Gillard
Ounce of Prevention Fund
Senior Manager, National Policy

33 W. Monroe, Suite 1200 | Chicago, IL 60603
517-488-4008

Jessica Gillard is an advocate, practitioner, and leader involved in promoting effective policy and practice on behalf of young learners for over 20 years. Prior to joining the Ounce National Policy Team, Dr. Gillard served in a variety of leadership roles including contracted Senior Policy Analyst for Early Education with the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Manager of Michigan’s Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant, and Director of Early Learning and Innovation for the Early Childhood Investment Corporation.

Matt Gillard
Michigan’s Children
President and CEO

215 S. Washington Sq. suite 110 | Lansing, MI 48933
517-485-3500

Matt Gillard is dedicated to supporting the implementation of relevant and innovative public policy. As former State Representative for the 106th District, Matt served six years in the Michigan House of Representatives, concluding his service in 2008 due to term limits. Matt also built a successful advocacy and consulting business, providing guidance to various organizations, constituencies, and decision-makers relative to education policy issues. Matt joined Michigan’s Children in 2014 as President and CEO. In this role, Matt oversees all of Michigan’s Children’s programs and operations.

Kathy Glazer
VECF
President

1703 North Parham Road | Richmond, VA 23229
804-350-3782

Kathy Glazer joined the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, a non-partisan, public-private venture, as President in January of 2012. Previously she worked with the national BUILD Initiative as Director of State Services, providing strategic advice to states advancing their early childhood policies and agendas. From 2005-2009 she served in Virginia state government positions including Executive Director of the Governor’s office for early childhood policy and Director of the Office of Early Childhood Development. Most recently, she served on the National Academies’ committee to develop the Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education report.
Rebecca Gomez
Heising-Simons Foundation
Program Officer
400 Main Street, Suite 200 | Los Altos, CA 94402
415-599-5966

Rebecca Gomez is a program officer for the Education program at the Heising-Simons Foundation. Prior to joining the Foundation in 2016, Rebecca was an assistant research professor at Rutgers University’s National Institute for Early Education Research, where she led the State of Preschool Yearbook data collection and analysis team and provided technical assistance to states via the Center for Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes. Rebecca also served as a graduate and postdoctoral research fellow at the National Center for Children and Families at Teachers College, Columbia University, where she conducted domestic and international research on early childhood systems, with a particular focus on governance and professional development. Rebecca is a former board member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Amanda Gorski
United Way of Miami-Dade
Associate Director, Public Policy
3250 SW 3rd Ave | Miami, FL 33129
305-646-7024

Amanda has been an integral part of South Florida community where she has been engaged in community development, government and politics for the past 15 years. She spearheads United Way of Miami-Dade’s legislative platforms at the local, state and federal levels. She has extensive experience in advocacy, research, issue identification, needs assessment, and problem-solving.

Jon Gould
Children’s Alliance
Deputy Director
718 6th Ave S | Seattle, WA 98104
206-683-2674

Jon Gould coordinates public policy, mobilization, lobbying, communications, and outreach activities. He has an extensive history of contribution and leadership in housing, human services, and children’s issues at the local, state and national levels. His strategic leadership has contributed to major state policy victories for children, including Washington’s Apple Health for Kids universal health coverage program, major expansions in early learning including the Early Start Act, and expansions of child nutrition programs.
**Rolf Grafwallner**
CCSSO
Program Manager

1 Massachusetts Ave, NW | Washington, District of Columbia 20001
202-312-6432

Dr. Rolf Grafwallner is Program Director for Early Childhood Initiatives where he works with states to improve learning opportunities and outcomes for young children. Prior to joining the Council, Dr. Grafwallner worked on early childhood policy and school reform as an Assistant State Superintendent at the Maryland State Department of Education. He has been a teacher, program director and administrator prior to joining the Department. His expertise is on large scale early childhood assessments, governance, finance, organizational leadership, and early education systems building.

**Sara Gray-Bradley**
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
Learning Policy Director

200 Third Street, 13th Floor | Harrisburg, PA 17101
717-756-8278

Sara Bradley joined Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children in September 2018 as the Learning Policy Director. In this role, Sara will use data and research to proactively develop public policy platforms ensuring all children enter school ready to learn and that all children have access to high-quality public education. Prior to joining PPC, Sara served as the Associate Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Head Start Association. She has more than 13 years of experience working at all levels of early learning advocating as a teacher, director, and champion for families and children in York County.

**Emily Griffey**
Voices for Virginia’s Children
Policy Director

1606 Santa Rosa Rd, Suite 109 | Henrico, VA 23229
804-649-0184

Emily Griffey leads Voices’ policy team, tackling crosscutting issues such as economic opportunity and trauma-informed policy. She convenes the Early Childhood Policy Network and leads the development of the Unified Policy Agenda. Emily serves on the Governor’s Children’s Cabinet Trauma-Informed Care and Early Childhood Workgroups, the Three Branch Initiative focused on implementing the Family First Prevention Services Act, and on partner advocacy coalitions. Emily comes to Voices with experience in working on early childhood issues at a local and regional level for Greater Richmond’s Smart Beginnings, Richmond City Social Services, and Baltimore’s Safe and Sound Campaign.
Lynanne Gutierrez
Groundwork Ohio
Policy Director & Legal Counsel

172 E. State St., Suite 400 | COLUMBUS, OH 43214
614-204-6106

Lynanne Wolf supports Groundwork Ohio’s statewide effort to advance quality early care and education so every child has the best chance for lifelong success. Lynanne previously worked as a Policy Associate for Voices for Ohio Children. In this role, she also managed the Ohio Children’s Oral Health Action Team. Prior to her advocacy work at Voices, Lynanne was in private law practice for five years. She specialized in child and family law, serving some of central Ohio’s most vulnerable children and families. Lynanne’s passion and unique commitment to vulnerable families accessing the legal system were recognized by her peers in the legal community as a “Rising Star” recipient by the Columbus Bar Foundation in 2013.

Sheila Hansen
Child and Family Policy Center
Policy Director

505 5th Ave | Des Moines, IA 50309
515-280-9027

Kinah Harrison
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Program Officer

One East Michigan Avenue | Battle Creek, MI 49017
269-969-2117

Theresa Hawley
Illinois Action for Children
Sr. VP for Policy and Innovation

4753 N. Broadway, Suite 1200 | Chicago, IL 60640
773-564-8866

Theresa Hawley has 25 years of experience in developing programs and systems that support the school readiness and social competence of young children in poverty. Dr. Hawley is responsible for ensuring that Illinois Action for Children’s policy and advocacy work, its research efforts, and its direct services to children and families are working together in an integrated way to strengthen early childhood systems at the community and state levels. She drives program and policy innovation across the agency and works to build partnerships with other organizations to expand Illinois Action for Children’s impact. She previously served as the Executive Director of the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development in Illinois, where she spearheaded the development and implementation of the state’s Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant and Preschool Development Grant-Expansion grant plans.
Dana Hepper
Children's Institute
Director of Policy & Advocacy

1411 SW Morrison St. #205 | Portland, OR 97205
503-219-9034

Dana Hepper oversees the Children’s Institute's legislative advocacy and community engagement work. She started her career as an elementary school and preschool teacher, then worked at Stand for Children for nine years doing community organizing, policy, and advocacy. Dana also serves on the board of Partnership for Safety and Justice and the Safety and Justice Action Fund focused on criminal justice reform.

Dede Hill
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
Director of Policy

540 Broadway | Albany, NY 12207
518-463-1896 ext 138

Dorothy (Dede) Hill coordinates the Schuyler Center’s policy team and conducts policy analysis and advocacy in the areas of family economic security and early care and learning. Prior to joining the Schuyler Center, Ms. Hill was a Professor of Law at Albany Law School, where her teaching and scholarship focused on labor and employment law. She previously practiced law as an Assistant Attorney General and Labor Counsel for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, an Assistant Solicitor General for the New York State Attorney General’s Office, and as an associate for a New York City labor law firm.

Lauren Hogan
National Association for the Education of Young Children
Senior Director, Public Policy and Advocacy

1313 L Street NW, Suite 500 | Washington, DC 20005
202-350-8837

Lauren Hogan is the Senior Director for Public Policy and Advocacy at the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). She previously served as Vice President of Program and Policy at the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) in Washington, DC. Lauren began her career working with an after-school program in Louisville, Kentucky and later served as the director of an early literacy and family support program in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She also served as a Rappaport Public Policy Fellow in the Department of Social Services in Boston, MA.
Betty Holcomb
Center for Children’s Initiatives
Policy Director

180 Cabrini Blvd, #94 c/o Kolben | New York, NY 10033
973-865-5315

Betty oversees policy development and advocacy, to promote quality early learning, healthy development and care for all children, birth through school age. She works closely with other city, state and national advocacy organizations as well as public officials, the media and practitioners to expand and improve early learning opportunities for all children. Betty helps lead the statewide Ready for Kindergarten, Ready for College Campaign, and serves on the steering committee of the Winning Beginning NY coalition to win new investment in and policies to support child care, Pre-K, special education, early intervention, home visiting, and family leave.

Christine Holmes
Penfield Children’s Center
President and CEO

833 N. 26th Street | Milwaukee, WI 53233
414-345-6300

For the last nine years, Christine Holmes has served as President and CEO at Penfield Children’s Center in Milwaukee Wisconsin. Penfield provides early childhood education, children’s mental health services, birth to three early interventions and a Montessori school for children of all abilities. Previously she worked for Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin, Alliance for Families and Strong Communities and Prevent Child Abuse America.

Eileen Horn
Kansas House of Representatives
Kansas State Representative, District 10

2121 Vermont St. | Lawrence, KS 66046
913-708-3929

Eileen represents the 10th House District in the Kansas Legislature. She serves on the Federal and State Affairs, Health and Human Services, and Agriculture committees. She served as the Sustainability Director for the City of Lawrence and Douglas County, where she led their local government efforts to use less energy, support the local agricultural economy, and generate less waste.
**Lindsay Hunsicker**
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
Senior Program Officer

500 5th Ave N | Seattle, WA 98199  
206-519-9010

Lindsay’s primary responsibilities focus on policy and advocacy grantmaking and government affairs for the states of Washington and Oregon. Prior roles at the foundation include leading the federal government affairs work for our US education priorities and Advisor to the Director on the US Policy and Advocacy team. Before joining the foundation Lindsay served as a Senior Education Policy Advisor on the United States Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee for Ranking Member Mike Enzi (R-WY). In her six-year tenure with the Committee, her portfolio focused on early childhood education and care and K-12 education issues. From 2001-2007 Lindsay served as a Senior Legislative Assistant for U.S. Senator John Ensign (R-NV). She started her career on Capitol Hill in the office of U.S. Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR).

**Cynthia Jackson**
Educare Learning Network/Ounce of Prevention Fund  
Executive Director of Educare Learning Network, SVP of Ounce of Prevention Fund

33 W. Monroe Street, Suite 1200 | Chicago, IL 60603  
312-256-8598

Cynthia D. Jackson is dedicated to producing high-quality early learning that achieves positive outcomes for all children and parents. She leads a generative, coast-to-coast network of high-quality birth-to-five schools that function as innovative learning labs for the field of early childhood education. In collaboration with the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, Educare Learning Network school leaders, and early childhood stakeholders, Cynthia advances practice, research and policy solutions to create greater system-wide impact. Prior to joining the Ounce, Cynthia was national director of training and technical assistance for Healthy Families America at Prevent Child Abuse America and Director, Midwest Learning Center for Family Support.

**Bill Jaeger**
Colorado Children’s Campaign  
Vice President, Early Childhood and Policy Initiatives

1580 Lincoln St., Suite 420 | Denver, CO 80203  
720-552-0002

Bill leads efforts to advance child care, early learning, and mental health policy efforts to support Colorado’s youngest children. Mr. Jaeger has spent more than a fifteen years teaching, studying, and working on issues in public education and public policy. His research has been published in American Politics Research and State Politics and Policy Quarterly, and he currently serves as a Colorado Children and Families Health and Human Services Ascend Fellow with the Aspen Institute.
**Mary Jalonick**  
TEGAC  
Retired  
6335 W. Northwest Hwy, Apt. 1712 | Dallas, TX 75225  
214-282-1113  

Mary Jalonick is retired President and CEO of The Dallas Foundation.

**September Jarrett**  
Heising-Simons Foundation  
Program Officer  
400 Main Street, Suite 200 | Los Altos, CA 94022  
650-887-0277  

September Jarrett is a program officer focused on policy and systems change, particularly in California. For the past two years, September has been the director of the Office of Early Care and Education in San Francisco, where she led policy, funding, data, and evaluation initiatives to forge an equitable and effective system of early learning. Prior to that, she was a program director at the Mimi and Peter Haas Fund, and a deputy director and inter-agency council at the Mayor’s Office of Housing for the city and county of San Francisco.

**Luc Jasmin**  
Parkview Early Learning Center  
Owner  
5122 N Division St. | Spokane, WA 99207  
509-981-5595

**Saru Jayaraman**  
Restaurant Opportunities Center United  
Co-Founder & President  
2607 Hearst Ave | Berkeley, CA 94720  
917-226-3713

Saru Jayaraman is the Co-Founder and President of the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC-United) and Director of the Food Labor Research Center at the University of California, Berkeley. After 9/11, together with displaced World Trade Center workers, she co-founded ROC, which now has more than 30,000 worker members, 500 employer partners, and 23,000 consumer members in a dozen states nationwide. She was profiled in the New York Times “Public Lives” section in 2005, named one of Crain’s “40 Under 40” in 2008, was 1010 Wins’ “Newsmaker of the Year”, New York Magazine’s “Influentials” of New York City, CNN’s “Top10 Visionary Women”, a Champion of Change by the White House, and received the James Beard Foundation Leadership Award. Saru authored Behind the Kitchen Door and has appeared on CNN, PBS, MSNBC, HBO, and NBC. In January 2018, she attended the Golden Globes as the guest of actor Amy Poehler as part of the #TimesUp initiative. Her most recent book is Forked: A New Standard for American Dining.
Jennifer Jennings-Shaffer
ZERO TO THREE
Sr. Campaign Manager
4414 34th Ave S | Seattle, WA 98118
202-864-2951

Jennifer Jennings-Shaffer supports the development and implementation of ZERO TO THREE’s advocacy strategy to move an infant-toddler policy agenda, including providing technical assistance to state infant-toddler coalitions, developing and implementing state advocacy and communications campaigns, and facilitating communities of practice among states. Prior to joining ZERO TO THREE, Jennifer served as the Early Learning Policy Director for the Children’s Alliance in Washington State. Previously, Jennifer worked at the Washington State Department of Early Learning as the Head Start State Collaboration Office Administrator.

Christine Johnson-Staub
CLASP
Interim Director, Child Care and Early Education
1200 18th St., NW, Suite 200 | Washington, DC 20036
774-269-9387

Christine Johnson-Staub leads the Child Care and Early Education team’s state technical assistance work, and its work on CCDBG implementation. In addition to state subsidy program policies, Christine also has expertise in early childhood financing, system building, and racial equity in early childhood programs.

Shannon Jones
Groundwork Ohio
Executive Director
172 E. State Street, Suite 400 | Columbus, OH 43215
937-671-8575

Shannon Jones leads Groundwork Ohio’s statewide advocacy effort to advance quality early care and education so every Ohio child has the best chance for lifelong success. Prior to joining Groundwork, Ms. Jones served in the Ohio General Assembly for a decade as a state representative and a state senator, where she was chosen by her colleagues for key leadership posts in both chambers. She also currently serves as a Warren County Commissioner and as a board member for the Health Policy Institute of Ohio.

Brandy Jones Lawrence
Pritzker Children’s Initiative
State Program Manager
1 North Wacker Drive Suite 2404 | Chicago, IL 60606
312-447-6027

Brandy is a former child advocate and consultant.
Myra Jones-Taylor
ZERO TO THREE
Chief Policy Officer

1255 23rd Street NW #350 | Washington, DC 20037
202-857-2611

Myra Jones-Taylor leads the development and implementation of ZERO TO THREE’s policy agenda, priorities and strategies; oversees the Policy Center; and serves as the principal spokesperson and point of contact for the organization on public policy matters with policymakers, the media, funders, and partner organizations. Prior to this role, Dr. Jones-Taylor served as the founding Commissioner of the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. Dr. Jones-Taylor is an active board member of organizations committed to young children and ending racial and social inequality, including All Our Kin, Capita and Equity Partners. She is also a member of the Irving Harris Early Childhood and Reproductive Health Advisory Committee.

Chloe Jordan
National Black Child Development Institute
Senior Director of Policy

8455 Colesville Rd, Ste. 910 | Silver Spring, MD 20910
702-817-1411

Chloe Jordan is originally from Las Vegas, Nevada. Since 2011, she has served as a research fellow for the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Title I Funding (Student Achievement & School Accountability), Communities In Schools school-based teaching staff and federal program grants officer on comprehensive school reform initiatives for DC public and public charter schools. She currently serves in the role as Senior Director of Policy for the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI).

Elizabeth Jordan
Child Trends
Director of Policy Communications

7315 Wisconsin Ave, Ste 1200W | Bethesda, MD 20814
202-520-9090

Elizabeth Jordan focuses on facilitating better use of research by policymakers and practitioners. She works across the organization to identify and strengthen connections with end-users of Child Trends research, ensuring that the work reaches these users in ways that are understandable and actionable. Beth also directs several projects across the child welfare, early childhood, and youth development research areas that explore how policies can support or raise challenges for vulnerable children and their families.

Nancy Jost
West Central Initiative
Director of Early Childhood

P.O. Box 318, 1000 Western Ave | Fergus Falls, MN 56538
218-739-2239

Nancy is the chairperson for Minnesota’s Early Learning Council. She manages the B8 Workforce Coalition, the PN3 Coalition, a regional Early Childhood Initiative, regional Early Childhood Dental Network, Early Childhood Mental Health Network and actively participated in many state-wide early childhood task forces.
**Katherine Kempe**

NAEYC  
Senior Director, Professional Recognition and Advancement  

1313 L St NW, suite 500 | Washington, DC 20005  
202-350-8867

Katherine Kempe leads Power to the Profession, a national collaboration to establish a unified framework for the early learning profession. Ms. Kempe has extensive experience working in Minnesota’s early learning community focusing on community engagement and elevating the voices of parents and early learning professionals at the state Capitol. As Senior Policy Advocate at Think Small, Ms. Kempe served as the grassroots manager for a successful statewide campaign to increase public resources to support high quality early learning.

**Carlise King**

Child Trends  
Director, Early Childhood Data Collaborative  

7315 Wisconsin Avenue Suite 1200W | Bethesda, MD 20814  
240-223-9329

Carlise promotes policies and practices that support the development and use of coordinated early childhood data across departments of education, social services, and public health to guide policy. Carlise regularly convenes experts from states and national and technical assistance groups to communicate effective strategies for data integration and use of data to support policy. She has over 18 years of experience conducting state and national level research on early childhood issues and examining the impact of state and federal policies on parents’ access to child care services, licensed child care supply, child care costs, and the child care workforce.

**Kari King**

Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children  
Vice President of Public Policy  

200 North Third Street, 13th floor | Harrisburg, PA 17101  
717-236-5680

Kari King leads PPC’s government relations efforts and oversees the organization’s policy development and implementation work, representing the organization before the Pennsylvania General Assembly, state agencies, regulatory bodies, and Pennsylvania’s federal congressional delegation. Kari joined PPC in April 2015. She previously served in various positions in former Gov. Tom Corbett’s administration, starting as the Legislative Director for the Pennsylvania Insurance Department. From there, she was promoted to Deputy Secretary for Legislative Affairs in the governor’s office and ultimately rose to the position of Deputy Chief of Staff.
Lisa Klein is Executive Director of the Alliance for Early Success, responsible for leading and overseeing all Alliance strategy and investments. She has over 30 years of experience serving young children and their families in philanthropy and not-for-profit organizations. Before joining the Alliance, she spent 10 years at the Kauffman Foundation, first as Manager of the Research and Evaluation Department and then as Vice-President of Early Education. Ten years of experience as a clinical psychologist and Director of a partial hospital program helped make her a more informed and better grant maker. She combines her interests in children, social justice, and dance by serving on the Kansas City Board of Alvin Ailey.

Nakeshia Knight-Coyle
Oregon Department of Education, Early Learning Division
Director of Early Learning Programs and Cross Systems Integration

700 Summer Street NE | Salem, OR 97301
503-947-0023

Lisa Knoche
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Research Associate Professor

238 Teachers College Hall | Lincoln, NE 68588-0345
402-472-4821

Lisa Knoche is Director of the Nebraska Early Childhood Research Academy in the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families, and Schools at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Dr. Knoche is an applied developmental psychologist with expertise in the design, development, and evaluation of early childhood intervention and prevention programs to support healthy development in young children and support family engagement in early learning. Dr. Knoche is particularly interested in identifying and supporting effective professional development strategies for early childhood professionals and has extensive experience in implementing collaborative research programs with community partners.

Allison Krutsinger
Children's Alliance
Early Learning Policy Director

718 6th Ave S | Seattle, WA 98104
253-426-0410

Allison brings her deep knowledge of the benefits of quality early learning and her passion to ensure that children furthest from opportunity can succeed in school and in life. She began her career in Olympia in 2007 as a legislative aide working on early learning and child welfare policy under the leadership of Representative Ruth Kagi. She has worked as a coach, manager, and system leader in Arizona and Washington State, improving access to high-quality early learning.
Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn
LaCroix-Dalluhn Consulting
CEO/Principal
1519 Chelsea Street | SAINT PAUL, MN 55108
651-769-4933

Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn is Founding CEO at LaCroix-Dalluhn Consulting. LaCroix-Dalluhn Consulting works with public agencies, non-profits, philanthropic organizations, and coalitions to identify sustainable solutions for complex issues and challenges. Laura’s consulting expertise is providing management and strategy consulting services. Prior to starting LaCroix-Dalluhn Consulting, Laura led various statewide networks and associations representing public, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations working collaboratively to address common concerns and ideas.

Kelsie Landers
EverThrive Illinois
Policy Analyst
1006 S Michigan Ave, Suite 200 | Chicago, IL 60640
312-281-7234

Kelsie Landers is a Policy Analyst with EverThrive Illinois. She advocates improving the health and lives of women, children, and families across the lifespan.

Adam Lara
Advancement Project
Policy and Research Analyst
1910 W. Sunset Blvd. Suite 500 | Los Angeles, CA 90026
213-406-9109

Adam works within the Educational Equity Department at Advancement Project. He is responsible for helping lead the organization’s community mobilization and advocacy effort with parents in Southeast Los Angeles, help design and implement a train-the-trainer family engagement curriculum, and support the team’s early childcare education policy advocacy. Prior to joining the Advancement Project, Adam served as the Learning and Evaluation Specialist at the Center for Community Engagement at California State University, Long Beach.

Zarah Levy
Clayton Early Learning
Policy Grants Specialist
3801 MLK Blvd | Denver, CO 80205
303-393-5619

Zarah Levy is responsible for support, research and project management for the Prenatal, Infant, and Toddler Coalition co-convened by Clayton, as well as leading the Denver Educare Parent Ambassador Program. She most recently served as a supervisor for the Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking hotline and a project manager contracting on long-term organizational development, M&E and research for the Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking. In doing work for families, babies, and young children through an anti-oppression lens she hopes to contribute to a more equitable and thriving community. She currently serves on the Colorado Action Plan Advisory Committee and previously served on the Friends of Gilpin board within Denver Public Schools.
Abbie Lieberman
New America
Senior Policy Analyst
740 15th Street NW, Suite 900 | Washington, DC 20005
650-787-6001

Abbie is on the Early & Elementary Education Policy team at New America where she provides research and analysis on policies that impact children from birth through third grade. Prior to joining New America she interned on the legislative affairs team at Education Trust and at the U.S. Department of Education working on the 2013 Race to the Top District competition.

Frank Luntz
FIL, Inc.
CEO
9165 Key Commons Court | Manassas, VA 20110
703-740-6586

Frank Luntz is one of the most honored and expert communication professionals in America today. Pioneering the “Instant Response” technique that dives into the intersection of communications and public opinion to deliver precise corporate and campaign data, his focus groups have become influential in political circles. Dr. Luntz’s public opinion work spans the globe and nearly every industry. Working for more than 50 Fortune 500 companies and CEOs, Dr. Luntz advises on issues ranging from energy to education, retail to design. Most recently, Dr. Luntz has worked for ABC, Fox and CBS News as a crisis communications expert and political analyst. He has conducted live, televised, focus group sessions for all three broadcast networks, two cable news channels, and PBS, as well as for The Wall Street Journal, The New Yorker, The Times of London, and U.S. News & World Report. Dr. Luntz is the author of three New York Times Best Sellers and has taught courses at Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, and George Washington University.

Clinton Macsherry
MD Family Network
Director of Public Policy
1001 Eastern Avenue, 2nd Floor | Baltimore, MD 21202-4325
410-659-7701

Clinton Macsherry, a former journalist and legislative aide in Baltimore and Annapolis, has for the last 18 years served as Director of Public Policy for Maryland Family Network, a statewide advocacy organization working to ensure that young children and their families have the resources to thrive. In this capacity, he led a successful campaign to restructure state governance of childcare and early education. His recent lobbying efforts have focused on expanding public pre-kindergarten, enhancing the quality and affordability of childcare, strengthening family support programs, and establishing paid parental leave. In each of these policy areas, Maryland made tremendous strides in 2018.
Marina Marcou-O'Malley
Alliance for Quality Education
Operations and Policy Director

94 Central Avenue | Albany, NY 12206
518-432-5315

Marina Marcou-O’Malley is the Operations and Policy Director for the Alliance for Quality Education. Marina joined AQE in late May 2008. As a former pre-school and elementary school teacher, as well as an adjunct lecturer at the University at Albany, she has seen how education policy affects students’ lives and future. Her expertise is in the fiscal analysis of education state budgets for Pre-K-12 and education policy, particularly in regards to educational equity for low-income communities and communities of color, as well as in the state’s insufficient investment in early care and learning. Marina is also a parent of two children, one in 4th and one in 1st grade.

Jana Martella
Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELo) at EDC
Co-director

1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW, Suite 700W | Washington, DC 20007
202-572-5311

Jana co-leads and supports all operations of the Center, including the development and execution of strategic and responsive technical assistance (TA), analysis and review of all products and publications, and providing direct TA to multiple states. She brings more than thirty years of experience in education, including as a teacher and assistant school administrator, SEA legislative liaison and coordinator for federal programs. A central part of her focus has been on the education system and program improvement through standards-based reform, including her work in promoting improved opportunities in early childhood education.

Debi Mathias
BUILD Initiative
Director - QRIS NLN

806 E. 36th Street | Charlotte, NC 28205
570-238-7775

Debi Mathias is Director of the QRIS National Learning Network for the BUILD Initiative and Senior Consultant for the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance and the State Capacity Building Center IMPACT Project. Before this she was Director of Early Learning Services with the Departments of Education and Public Welfare in PA, responsible for the state’s QRIS, state Pre-K, Head Start Collaboration Office and State Head Start funding, family support programs, professional development systems and standards aligned systems. Ms. Mathias’ areas of expertise include QRIS, professional development, training and technical assistance, and systems building.
**Alison May**  
National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)  
Research Analyst  
7000 E. First Place | Denver, CO 80230  
303-856-1473  

Alison May is a research analyst with the early care and education project at the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). Alison joined NCSL in early 2011 and works with NCSL's Early Learning Fellows Program and monitors home visiting efforts in the states and territories. She also creates quarterly newsletters and is a contributing author to NCSL's Blog. Previously Alison worked at the American Civil Liberties Union of Colorado and a small non-profit located northeast of Denver that focused on civic engagement.

**Carey McCann**  
BUILD Initiative  
State Services Assistant Director  
0235 SW Palatine Hill Rd. | Portland, OR 97219  
773-844-3365  

Carey supports state leaders in building comprehensive, equitable early childhood systems and setting policy that guides implementation of services for children prenatal to age five. Carey has additional expertise in early childhood mental health, infant toddler policy, health equity, and preventing expulsion and suspension in the early years. Carey came to BUILD from more than 12 years at the Ounce of Prevention Fund, consulting with states on early childhood policy and advocacy strategies.

**Madeline McClure**  
TexProtects  
Founder & Strategic Advisor  
1341 W. Mockingbird Lane, Suite 560W | Dallas, TX 75247  
469-399-6900  

**Michelle McCready**  
Child Care Aware of America  
Chief of Public Policy & Research  
1515 N. Courthouse Rd., 3rd Floor | Arlington, VA 22201  
703-341-4116  

Michelle McCready serves as the Chief of Policy at Child Care Aware® of America (CCAoA) and provides vision, leadership, and management of policy and evaluation division, including federal policy, state initiatives, and advocacy. She has more than a decade of leadership experience on several presidential and congressional campaign efforts. She staffed Organizing for America during the first three years of the Obama Administration, was the Field Director for Representative Gerald Connolly (D-VA), and for the past six years has implemented CCAoA’s policy and legislative agenda.
Margie McHugh is Director of the Migration Policy Institute (MPI)'s National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy. The Center is a national hub for leaders in government, community affairs, business, and academia to obtain the insights and knowledge they need to respond to the challenges and opportunities that today’s high rates of immigration pose for communities across the United States. It provides in-depth research, policy analysis, and technical assistance, training and information resource services on a broad range of immigrant integration issues. Ms. McHugh’s work focuses on education quality and access issues for immigrants and their children from early childhood through K-12 and adult, post-secondary and workforce skills programs. She also leads the Center’s work seeking a more coordinated federal response to immigrant integration needs and impacts, and more workable systems.

Caitlin McLean is a lead researcher for the biennial Early Childhood Workforce Index as well as related research, particularly strategies to improve compensation and workforce data. Prior to joining CSCCE, Caitlin’s research focused on comparative early care and education policy in the United States and select European countries.

Dr. Means is a 2012 graduate of Spelman College and holds a Ph.D. in Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation from the University of Kentucky College of Education.

Jacy oversees the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Children’s Campaign’s efforts to engage advocates, providers, parents, caregivers and others in policy work, publications and research. Jacy previously served as the executive director and co-founder of Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR), a sisterhood of Latinas dedicated to building a movement of Latinas, their families, and allies through leadership development, organizing, and advocacy to create opportunity and achieve reproductive justice. Trained as an urban planner, Jacy has also worked in local government, creating policies and programs to foster more sustainable communities that are accessible for all residents.
**Allison Muhlendorf**  
Alabama School Readiness Alliance  
Executive Director  

PO Box 4433 | Montgomery, AL 36111  
334-450-1027  

Allison works to promote high quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten as a top statewide priority in Alabama. Prior to joining ASRA, Muhlendorf served as state policy associate for Pre-K Now, and served as legislative assistant to former Oregon State Senator Vicki L. Walker. Prior to her work in the Oregon Senate, she worked at the Children’s Institute. Muhlendorf received the 2016 President’s Award from the Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA). Muhlendorf was also recognized as one of 2017’s Women Who Shape the State by the Alabama Media Group.

**Kelley Murphy**  
Children’s Action Alliance  
Director, Early Childhood Policy  

3030 N. 3rd St., Suite 650 | Phoenix, AZ 85012  
602-266-0707  

Kelley Murphy is the Early Childhood Policy Director at the Children’s Action Alliance. Before this she was the Bureau Chief in Policy at the Arizona Division of Behavioral Health Services. She spent four years as Senior Health Policy and Program Specialist for Arizona’s early childhood agency, First Things First, where she worked at the state and local level for improved health policy for children and partnered with community members to further define and develop the system of early childhood in Arizona.

**Juan Carlos Nordelo**  
Office of Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez, 19th Legislative District  
Legislative Director  

211 Front Street | Perth Amboy, NJ 08861  
732-638-5057  

Juan Carlos Nordelo has extensive experience in non-profit fundraising and development as well as policy analysis and research. Juan Carlos currently serves as the Legislative Director to Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez, where he is responsible for developing and moving her policies through the legislative process.

**Gail Nourse**  
Consultant  
Consultant  

4909 Bethel Creek Drive Suite 2400 | Vero Beach, Illinois 32963  
708-537-7973  

Gail Nourse served as the Vice President of Illinois Policy at the Ounce of Prevention Fund until December of 2017 where she was responsible for leading the Illinois Policy Team in the areas of legislative and advocacy work, outreach, and systems development. Prior to her work on the Illinois Policy Team, Gail served as a Senior Policy Manager for the National Policy Team at the Ounce. In Pennsylvania, Gail served as the first Director of the Pennsylvania Key, where she provided statewide leadership in the development of an integrated and coordinated system of program quality improvements and professional development. Since January of 2018, Gail has provided consultation services in the areas of infant-toddler child care advocacy, peer learning, and meeting planning.
Amy O’Leary
Strategies for Children
Early Education for All Campaign Director

400 Atlantic Avenue | Boston, MA 02110
617-330-7384

Amy works to ensure that Massachusetts invests the resources needed for all children, from birth to age five, to access high-quality early education programs that prepare them for success in school and life. Prior to joining SFC in 2002, she worked as a preschool teacher and Program Director at Ellis Memorial in Boston. Amy was elected to the governing board of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, is a member of the Children’s Defense Fund Emerging Leader Fellowship, and serves on the adjunct faculty at Wheelock College in Boston and Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester.

Mike Odeh
Children Now
Director of Health Policy

1404 Franklin St | Oakland, CA 94612
510-763-2444

Mike Odeh brings extensive health policy and advocacy expertise to Children Now, where his work focuses on health coverage, access, quality, financing, and care delivery. Prior to joining Children Now, Mike worked at Health Access, a California health care consumer advocacy organization, and previously at the Center for Children and Families at the Georgetown University Health Policy Institute. Mike has also taught a health policy course at San Francisco State University.

Adrienne Olejnik
Kansas Action for Children
Director of Government Relations

709 S. Kansas Avenue, Suite 200 | Topeka, KS 66603
785-232-0550

Adrienne joined Kansas Action for Children in September 2018. Before joining KAC, she worked in the gaming, finance, and library industries. She has been actively involved in local and state community work through service as a city council member, community foundation chair, leadership program graduate, and board positions.

Danielle Pacifico-Cogan
Children’s Institute
Director of Communications

1411 SW Morrison Street, Suite 205 | Portland, OR 97205
503-219-9034

Danielle is responsible for the development, integration, and implementation of communications strategies that support Children’s Institute’s mission. She also supports Children’s Institute’s emerging statewide community engagement work focused on rural communities and communities of color in the Portland metro area. In addition, Danielle co-chairs CI’s staff equity team focused on developing an integrated diversity, equity, and inclusion framework to guide organizational practice and external work.
**Jeni Palmer**  
National Conference of State Legislatures  
Research Analyst II  

7700 E 1st Place | Denver, CO 80222  
303-856-1351  

Jeni Palmer is a member of NCSL’s Children and Families program and provides support to the Early Care and Education project by tracking legislation, conducting research and writing, creating a prenatal-to-age-3 legislative advisory group, and helping with the Early Learning Fellows Program. When she’s not at work, Jeni can be found chasing after her own early learners (she is a mama to four-year-old Everett and two-year-old Tessa), teaching prenatal yoga, completing a puzzle with her husband, or trying to squeeze in a nap.

**Maki Park**  
Migration Policy Institute  
Senior Policy Analyst  

1400 16th st NW, Suite 300 | Washington, DC 20036  
202-266-1922  

Maki Park focuses on early childhood policies affecting children of immigrants and refugees as well as Dual Language Learners (DLLs) from birth to age 8 in the United States and internationally. Previously, Ms. Park worked as Director of Outreach and Program Manager at WorldTeach, based at Harvard’s Center for International Development, where she oversaw recruiting and admissions operations and managed the organization’s program in Guyana. She has also worked as an education consultant in Malawi and served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Turkmenistan.

**Judy Parker**  
Ounce of Prevention Fund  
Director, National Policy  

33 W. Monroe, Suite 1200 | Chicago, IL 60603  
207-730-3424  

Judy Reidt-Parker provides leadership for the design and implementation of the state consultation for a network of state advocates, Educare leaders, and other state and local leaders. Judy has worked in the early childhood field for 30 years and has experience in direct service leading a parent cooperative, designing and implementing after-school and intergenerational programming, and directing programs that provided Early Head Start, Head Start and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children program services. She has worked as an advocate at the state and federal level.
**Kris Perry**  
Save the Children Action Network  
President

899 North Capitol Street NE | Washington, DC 20002  
202-794-1934

Kris Perry has served as the President of Save the Children Action Network since February 2018. Formerly the Executive Director of the First Five Years Fund, Kris understands that the future lies in the health and wellbeing of children. She has dedicated her career to bringing resources and support to parents, caregivers, and early learning workforce professionals to ensure children grow up healthy and ready to succeed. Kris has appeared in the New York Times, POLITICO, New Republic, Salon, Congressional Quarterly and many other news outlets across the country. Kris has also served as Executive Director of First 5 California and First 5 San Mateo County. Kris is a licensed clinical social worker and a board-certified diplomat who holds a postgraduate certificate as a service integration specialist.

**Sophie Phillips**  
TexProtects/Prevent Child Abuse Texas  
COO

1341 W. Mockingbird Lane, Suite 560W Suite A | Dallas, TX 75247  
469-399-6900

Sophie Phillips focuses her efforts on the evidence of child abuse prevention programs, such as family support home visiting, and engages in public policy and research efforts to increase investments in such programs in Texas. Additionally, she manages the Texas Home Visitation Consortium, a collaborative of home visiting providers, funders, researchers and state agency resources to raise awareness of the increasing need of home visiting in Texas and to coordinate legislative efforts.

**Gail Piggott**  
Alabama Partnership for Children  
Executive Director

2529 Bell Road | Montgomery, AL 36117  
334-271-0304

Gail Piggott has over 43 years of experience in education, administration, and management of non-profit and government programs for children and families at the local and state levels. She became the executive director of the Alabama Partnership for Children (APC) in 2003. This broad public/private state-level agency concentrates on issues of children from birth to five and their families, coordinates the state’s Strengthening Families, Help Me Grow, and Project LAUNCH initiatives, administers the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program, and coordinates multiple advocacy and education initiatives related to early childhood healthy development and family support.
**Karla Pleitez Howell**  
Advancement Project  
Director of Educational Equity  

1910 W Sunset Blvd Suite 500 | Los Angeles, CA 90026  
213-406-9141  

Karla Pleitez Howell is a public interest lawyer with experience in direct client services, systems change, and advocacy. She is currently the Director of the Advancement Project’s Education team and is responsible for managing operations. In addition, Ms. Pleitez works with key stakeholders to identify education priorities to assure equity in California’s education system. Prior to joining the Advancement Project, she was the Supervising Attorney for Public Counsel’s Early Care & Education Law Unit. She also worked as the Directing Attorney for El Rescate Legal Services, a nonprofit focused on assisting families with immigration legal issues. Ms. Pleitez began her legal career as a law clerk for the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office.

**Julie Poppe**  
NCSL  
Program Manager  

7700 E. First Place | Denver, CO 80120  
303-856-1497  

Julie Poppe manages the Early Care and Education Project where she provides a range of informational and policy services to state legislators and legislative staff through technical assistance, publications, legislative educational presentations and research on issues related to early care and education for children from birth to age 5. She has authored and co-authored publications on topics including early childhood care and education financing and budgeting, preschool, children’s mental health services, and infant and toddler development and care.

**Sally Puleo**  
Council for a Strong America  
National Director of State Offices  

70 E Lake St Suite 1116 | Chicago, IL 60601  
312-651-4263  

As the National Director of State Offices, Sally Puleo manages the operations of CSA's nine state-based teams. She is based in Chicago and has been with the organization since 2007. Before her current role, she launched and led CSA Mission: Readiness in Illinois, and helped lead Fight Crime: Invest in Kids in Illinois. Previously, Sally worked as an advocate for sexual and domestic violence victims in urban, suburban and rural communities in four states.
**Al Race**
Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University
Deputy Director and Chief Knowledge Officer

50 Church St., 4th Fl | Cambridge, MA 02138
617-495-4158

Al focuses on how to use the knowledge generated by the Center’s work to transform the landscape in which science-based innovation for children and families can thrive. The Center catalyzes local, national, and international innovation in policy and practice for children and families, especially those facing serious adversity. In collaboration with a broad network of research, practice, policy, community, and philanthropic leaders, the Center seeks transformational impacts on lifelong learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health.

**Rosita Ramirez**
NALEO Educational Fund
Director of Constituency Services- Education

1122 W Washington Blvd 3rd Floor | Los Angeles, CA 90015
213-765-9433

Dr. Rosita Ramirez is Director of Constituency Services for the Education Portfolio for the National Association of Latino Elected & Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund, a nonprofit organization that facilitates full Latino participation in the American political process, from citizenship to public service. Dr. Ramirez is primarily responsible for the overall design, implementation and development of education policy institutes and governance training opportunities within the organization for Latino elected officials across the United States.

**Jessie Rasmussen**
Buffett Early Childhood Fund
President

808 ConAgra Drive | Omaha, NE 68102
402-541-4030

Jessie Rasmussen has been with the Buffett Early Childhood Fund for 10 years, serving first as the Vice President for four years and then as President since 2011. The entire focus of the Buffett Early Childhood Fund is on promoting the opportunity for children facing the greatest odds in life to have quality experiences in the first five years of life. Investments are made in Nebraska and nationally in three key areas—practice, policy and knowledge development. Across her professional career, Jessie has been an early childhood practitioner, Nebraska State Senator, Director of the Governor’s Office of Children and Family Policy, Director of Health and Human Services in Nebraska and Iowa, and Director of Early Childhood Policy at the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation.

**Sara Redington**
The Miles Foundation
Director of Strategy and Communications

5049 Edwards Ranch Rd suite 280 | Fort Worth, TX 76107
615-545-5377
Grace Reef is the founder of the Early Learning Policy Group, LLC. A veteran political and policy strategist, Grace worked for 17 years in the U.S. Senate as a senior policy advisor on issues related to families with children for Senators George Mitchell, Tom Daschle, and Chris Dodd. Grace’s experience ranges from childcare, Head Start, and state pre-k to welfare reform and family economic stability. She has worked with a number of state coalitions in partnership with the Alliance for Early Success seeking to strengthen access to quality early learning settings. As an outreach consultant to the Committee for Economic Development (CED), Grace specializes in working with business leaders and early childhood policy to strengthen the quality of early learning settings (childcare, Head Start, and state Pre-K).

Corinne Ribble is the Executive Director of the NY Funders Alliance, a regional grantmakers association in New York State.

Cynthia Rice has worked at the Advocates for Children of New Jersey, serving as Senior Policy Analyst for the last 16 years. She has worked closely with members of Congress, the Governor’s Office, the New Jersey Legislature, school districts and the early childhood community to advocate for quality early learning experiences for all young learners. Her work has included identifying, monitoring, writing about and advocating for critical early childhood education issues, especially around quality preschool and its expansion, child care and linking preschool to the early elementary years. Most recently Ms. Rice has focused on reducing PreK-12 chronic absenteeism to ensure educational success for all students. Before working at ACNJ, Ms. Rice spent three years as an assistant district attorney in Bronx County, New York.
Michelle Richard
Public Sector Consultants
Vice President

230 N. Washington Square, Suite 300 | Lansing, MI 48933
517-331-9466

Michelle Richard is a project manager, key researcher, and policy analyst who works with clients at the local, regional, and state levels to bring research, policy, and practice together to achieve better outcomes for students statewide. Michelle is often called upon to manage large projects, such as a statewide special education monitoring and compliance initiative. She frequently serves as the lead researcher and analyst on large reports examining such topics as early learning and development, school systems and governance, and teacher quality efforts. Michelle also works with school districts on community engagement efforts and strategic planning; with education organizations on scale-up planning, and with regional and state agencies on grant applications.

Sarah Rittling
First Five Years Fund
Executive Director

1010 Vermont Avenue NW Suite 1000 | Washington, DC 20005
202-730-0944

Sarah Rittling has committed herself to advancing education opportunities for America’s children and their families. As Executive Director of the First Five Years Fund, Rittling has developed a strong track record of bridging the partisan divide to find solutions and build consensus. In her previous role as National Director, Rittling led FFYF’s bipartisan government relations efforts, managed partnerships with early childhood and other advocacy coalitions, and directed the organization’s staff and operations. Prior to joining FFYF, Rittling served as Senior Policy Advisor at Education Counsel, an education consulting firm, where she was part of a bipartisan, education-focused team led by former U.S. Secretary of Education Dick Riley. Previously, she served as counsel to Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., on education policy before the Senate Health, Education Labor and Pensions Committee and counsel to Rep. Michael N. Castle, R-Del., on education and labor matters before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Elena Rivera
Children’s Institute
Senior Health Policy & Program Advisor

1411 SW Morrison St. #205 | Portland, OR 97205
503-219-9034

Elena Rivera joined Children’s Institute in 2015. She is responsible for establishing strong linkages between health and early learning in policy and advocacy efforts, including identifying opportunities to leverage Oregon’s health system transformation to improve outcomes for young children. Elena serves as vice chair of the Best Beginnings Committee of Oregon’s Early Learning Council and convenes the Health Aspects of Kindergarten Readiness Technical Workgroup in collaboration with the Oregon Health Authority.
Michele Rivest
NC Early Education Coalition
Policy Director

1829 E. Franklin Street, Suite 1000 | Chapel Hill, NC 27514
919-218-0224

Michele Rivest is the policy director of the NC Early Education Coalition, a statewide advocacy coalition dedicated to advancing high-quality early care and education since 1990. Michele also serves as the project manager for the state’s Think Babies initiative. Michele is a lifelong passionate advocate for children and families and has worked at the national, state and local levels.

Jessica Roach
Children's Alliance
Early Learning Policy Specialist

718 Sixth Ave S | Seattle, WA 98117
206-324-0340

Jessica Roach works with the Early Learning team at the Children’s Alliance and with the Early Learning Action Alliance to shrink the opportunity gap faced by low-income children and children of color by advocating for expanded access to high-quality early learning opportunities for all of Washington’s children. She also facilitates the organization’s advocacy for federal policies that expand early learning opportunities. Jessica worked for more than 10 years in Washington, DC with nonprofits, the faith community and in the U.S. Congress, organizing and advocating for greater opportunity and economic security for those living at the margins of our economy. She formed a deep respect for the impact that high-quality early learning can have as the daughter of a Head Start teacher, and through her own years of teaching in a preschool classroom.

Eva Roberts
Buffett Early Childhood Fund
Director of Strategic Initiatives

808 Conagra Drive | Omaha, NE 68102
402-341-0874

Eva Roberts has a diverse background in project management; grant writing, research, public policy, and philanthropy, all dedicated to promoting justice and opportunity for young children. She leads the foundation’s newest grantmaking initiative, the Acceleration Grants, which are designed to spark collaboration and innovation across the Educare Learning Network and throughout the early childhood field. She helps lead BECF’s organizational strategy and planning efforts, and represents the foundation on the boards of Educare Seattle, Educare Denver and Educare of California at Silicon Valley. Prior to joining the Buffett Early Childhood Fund team in 2013, Eva worked for Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano in the Office for Children, Youth and Families and for the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at UNC-Chapel Hill on the Multi-State Study of Pre-K.
Jennifer Roberts
New Orleans Early Education Network
Executive Director

8300 Earhart Blvd, Suite 201 | New Orleans, LA 70118
504-812-3998

Jen Roberts began her career in youth development in after-school and summer programming and upon graduating from college, taught in public middle and high schools in Philadelphia. She left classroom teaching and became an administrator in K-12 education in Philadelphia, PA and later for one of the largest community college systems in Houston, TX. Her return to early childhood education to lead the New Orleans Early Education Network as its first Executive Director only reinforces her passion for increasing the access, quality, coordination, and funding of early childhood learning opportunities for our city’s youngest citizens.

Kimberly Robson
Save the Children Action Network
Senior Director, Mobilization

899 North Capitol Street NE Suite 900 | Washington, DC 20002
202-794-1746

Kimberly Robson, Senior Director Mobilization, brings more than 25 years of political, policy, fundraising and field organizing to Save the Children Action Network. Before joining SCAN, she served for eight years as the Director of Affiliate and National Programs at NARAL Pro-Choice America where she was responsible for designing, overseeing and implementing all aspects of the organization’s organizing plan to build a politically active constituency across the country. From 2002-2006, Kimberly served as National Field Director for People for the American Way. Kimberly also served for five years as Director of Policy and Programs for Women’s Action for New Directions, representing the organization on Capitol Hill, and she also worked for two years as Finance Director for Citizen Action’s Campaign for a Responsible Congress.

Rio Romero-Jurado
Ounce of Prevention Fund
Policy Specialist

33 W. Monroe, Suite 1200 | Chicago, IL 60603
469-230-3000

Rio Romero-Jurado is a policy specialist who supports the team’s consultation activities to states as well as supports the collective policy and advocacy work of the Educare Learning Network. Rio was previously a research and policy coordinator at the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition. She also provided program support at the National Women’s Law Center in Washington, DC. In 2012, Rio served as a mayoral fellow for the City of Chicago, studying issues of early education, human services programming and public education reform.
**Angela Rothermel**  
Children Now  
Associate Director, Early Childhood Policy  
1404 Franklin St. Suite 700 | Oakland, CA 94612  
510-763-2444

Angela focuses on projects in the arena of early childhood health and family support, including expanding voluntary home visiting programs, promoting developmental screenings and early intervention, and the development of a comprehensive statewide prenatal to three policy agenda. Before joining Children Now she held positions within various early childhood systems and policy efforts in Colorado. She directed a Denver Metro area public-private collaboration working to improve early childhood outcomes for vulnerable children and families, and served as project coordinator for collective impact initiatives related to juvenile delinquency prevention, early childhood education quality, and mental health systems.

**Stephanie Rubin**  
Texans Care for Children  
CEO  
1106 Clayton Ln #111W | Austin, TX 78723  
512-473-2274

Stephanie Rubin is the CEO of Texans Care for Children. Previously, Stephanie was Senior Officer for The Pew Charitable Trusts, where she coordinated multi-state children’s initiatives. She also oversaw more than 20 state policy campaigns for Pre-K Now, a $10 million initiative supported by Pew and other funders to increase access to quality pre-k. Before moving to Austin, Texas, Stephanie served as Counsel and Legislative Director in the California State Senate and later was Deputy Director of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, California.

**Sue Russell**  
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center  
Executive Director  
PO Box 901 | Chapel Hill, NC 27514  
919-967-3272

Sue Russell is Executive Director of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center, which helps states implement effective workforce strategies to address the education, compensation and retention of their early care and education workforce. She has 48 years of experience in the early childhood profession, most recently as the President of Child Care Services Association. Areas of expertise include development of successful state and national workforce and QRIS initiatives, effective policies and systems to improve access to high quality programs for all children and to strengthen and support the early childhood workforce, early childhood professional development, workforce compensation and higher education systems, and state advocacy for better public policies, systems and investments for young children and their teachers.
Jason Sabo
Frontera Strategy
Founder
PO Box 1811 | AUSTIN, TX 78704
512-450-2125

Jason Sabo is the Founder of Frontera Strategy, an Austin-based public affairs firm serving nonprofits and philanthropists. Jason has led and assisted efforts to pass legislation and secure appropriations at state capitols across the country for more than twenty years. Mr. Sabo works with foundations and other philanthropists interested in strategic grant making to improve state policies for children and families. Jason likes to work, but he also likes to kayak, ride his bike, and hide out on the Llano River.

Alicia Sanderfield
Alliance for Early Success
Executive Assistant
12705 Courtney | Quantico, VA 22134
217-416-0120

Alicia Sanderfield is a dedicated United States Marine Corps Spouse and a mother of two boys who currently resides in Quantico, VA. Prior to joining the Alliance for Early Success as an Executive Assistant, Alicia worked as a Claims Recovery Unit Examiner with Health Care Service Corporation.

Aaliyah Samuel
National Governors Association
Education Division Director
444 North Capitol St. NW | Washington, dc 20001
202-624-7857

Susan Sarver
Buffett Early Childhood Institute
Director of Workforce Planning & Development
2111 S. 67th Street, Suite 350 | Omaha, NE 68106
402-554-6515

Susan Sarver joined the Buffett Early Childhood Institute in 2014. Her work focuses on ensuring a skilled, informed, and diverse early childhood workforce in Nebraska and the nation. She is chair of the Nebraska team to examine state and national efforts based on recommendations from the recent consensus report Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation. She also is working with the Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Commission that is developing a comprehensive plan of action for expanding and strengthening the state’s early childhood workforce. Her research has been devoted to studying rural families living in poverty as well as continuity between parents and teachers.
**Ruth Schmidt**  
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association  
Executive Director  

2908 Marketplace Drive Ste 101 Suite 200 | Fitchburg, WI 53719  
608-729-1042

Ruth Schmidt leads Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA), the state affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. WECA supports early education professionals through scholarships, wage supplements, nutrition, and professional development services. WECA is implementing the Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network. She’s a founding member of the Wisconsin Early Learning Coalition and Wisconsin Partners and serves on the UW Prenatal to Five Initiative Planning Committee. Ruth is a member of Congressman Mark Pocan’s K-12 and Early Childhood Education Advisory Group.

**Stephanie Schmit**  
Center for Law and Social Policy  
Senior Policy Analyst  

1200 18th St. NW Ste. 200 | Washington, DC 20036  
202-906-8008

Stephanie Schmit focuses on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of data, state technical assistance, and federal and state policy analysis. She has expertise in home visiting, data analysis, state, and federal child care and early education policy, and maternal depression policy. Prior to joining CLASP, she worked at the National Center for Parents as Teachers in St. Louis, focusing on policy and advocacy for young children. Additionally, she worked in direct practice doing home visits through an early childhood program in Cincinnati, OH.

**Karen Schulman**  
National Women’s Law Center  
Child Care and Early Learning Research Director  

11 Dupont Circle, NW Suite 800 | Washington, DC 20036  
202-319-3037

Karen Schulman conducts research, provides budgetary and policy analysis, and writes on child care and early education issues. She is the author of an annual report on state child care assistance policies, including the recent update, Red Light Green Lights: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2016. She has also co-authored several other NWLC reports, including Set Up To Fail: When Low-Wage Work Jeopardizes Parents’ and Children’s Success; A Center Piece of the Child Care Puzzle: Providing State Prekindergarten in Child Care Centers; and A Count for Quality: Child Care Center Directors on Rating and Improvement Systems.
**Nelida Sepulveda**  
PCCY  
ECE Policy Director  
1709 Benjamin Franklin Parkway. 6th floor | Philadelphia, PA 19103  
215-563-5848

Nelida Sepulveda has over 20 years’ experience advocating for effective workforce and public education reform policies. In 2017 Nelida joined PCCY as the Early Childhood Education Policy Director. As such, she oversees PCCY’s infant and toddler policy initiative. She works closely with regional and statewide partners to lead a research and planning process that will expand access to high-quality care for infants and toddler, particularly those from low-income families.

**Cara Sklar**  
New America  
Deputy Director, Early & Elementary Education Policy  
740 15th Street NW, Suite 900 | Washington, DC 20005  
202-596-3383

Cara provides research and analysis on policies and programs improving children’s birth-through-third grade learning experiences. Prior to joining New America, Cara gained education policy experience working at the federal, state, and local levels. She was a federal policy analyst for Zero to Three, an education research analyst for the District of Columbia Government, and the director of research and policy for a high-performing, two-generation public school.

**Linda Smith**  
Bipartisan Policy Center  
Director, Early Childhood Initiative  
1225 Eye St NW | Washington, DC 20005  
202-637-7929

Linda K. Smith is the Director, Early Childhood Policy at the Bipartisan Policy Center. She is the former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Early Childhood Development for the Administration for Children & Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS). She served as executive director for the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA), and as a professional staffer on the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee under the Chairmanship of the late Senator Edward M. Kennedy. Prior to this work, she was the director of the Office of Family Policy for the Secretary of Defense, where she was one of the primary architects of the military’s child care program.

**Sheila Smith**  
National Center for Children in Poverty  
Director, Early Childhood  
600 West 168th Street, Room 404D | New York, NY 10032  
212-304-6084

Sheila Smith has extensive knowledge about policies that can benefit low-income children and the use of data and research in advocacy. Sheila leads work at NCCP to track state policies that affect young children in the areas of early care and education, health, and family support/economic well being, and to produce state-specific data on risks to children’s development. Her team partners with states to strengthen policies in the areas early care and education, parent/family engagement, early childhood mental health, and two-generation programs for families in deep poverty.
**Aldo Solano**  
Children’s Institute  
Community Engagement Advisor  

1411 SW Morrison St. #205 | Portland, OR 97205  
503-219-9034  

Aldo joined Children’s Institute in April of 2018 as their first Community Engagement Advisor. He is responsible for developing and expanding relationships statewide to build stronger political support and public demand for a comprehensive early childhood system. Before joining the Institute, Aldo worked as the Advocacy Director for the Oregon Latino Health Coalition. In 2017, Aldo led the community engagement and field efforts that passed Cover All Kids (SB 558) to expand OHP access to all children in Oregon regardless of immigration status. He currently serves on the board of directors for both Farmworker Housing Development Corporation and Causa.

**Mandy Sorge**  
National Governors Association  
Policy Analyst, Early Care and Education  

444 N. Capitol Street N.W., Suite 267 | Washington, DC 20001  
202-624-5486  

Mandy Sorge works on early childhood education issues from birth through third grade. Prior to joining NGA, she worked in training and technical assistance for the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships grants. In this role, she helped lead the evaluation of training and technical assistance, as well as writing and developing training materials and resources to support the effective implementation of these grants. She began her career as an early childhood educator working in Early Head Start and child care classrooms in both North Carolina and Washington, D.C.

**Helene Stebbins**  
Alliance for Early Success  
Deputy Director  

4617 8th Road S. | Arlington, Virginia 22204  
703-769-2772  

Helene began her work with the Alliance for Early Success at its inception in 2005 as a grantee, and now serves as the deputy director. She is responsible for leading the health policy strategy, and also manages a portfolio of investments focused on financing, research, and communications.
Jennifer Stedron
Early Milestones Colorado
Executive Director

1600 Downing St., Ste 750 | Denver, CO 80218
720-639-9001

Jennifer Stedron is Executive Director of Early Milestones Colorado, an intermediary organization that advances innovative solutions in Early Childhood Development so that every Colorado community provides an environment where children flourish. Prior, she worked at the Aspen Institute as Senior Program Manager for the Ascend initiative focused on two-generation approaches to family economic security. She has also served as the Executive Director of Colorado’s Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) and the Policy Director for Early Childhood in the Office of Lieutenant Governor Joe Garcia. In this last capacity, she spearheaded the ECLC’s work to establish Colorado’s new Office of Early Childhood and led the grant application effort that resulted in Colorado’s $45M Early Learning Challenge Fund award. Jennifer has also managed bipartisan policy efforts in early childhood and K-12 education for the National Conference of State Legislatures. She has been published in the variety of formats including peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, and national policy briefs.

Deborah Stein
Partnership For America’s Children
Network Director

1101 14th Street NW Suite 600 | Washington, DC 20005
202-290-1816

Deborah Stein, who became the first Network Director for the Partnership for America’s Children in 2014, has more than 30 years of experience in policy analysis and advocacy on behalf of vulnerable children and their families. Before she came to the Partnership as its first leader, she spent eight years at The Hatcher Group, a public affairs and communications firm, where she served as Vice-President of Public Policy. Debbie also spent nine years with Voices for America’s Children, the predecessor organization to the Partnership. Debbie previously worked for the Food Research and Action Center and as a consultant for several national legal services organizations. She spent six years at Brooklyn Legal Services, where she represented indigent clients in housing matters and in obtaining public assistance. She was co-president of the New York City Legal Services union local.

Louise Stoney
Opportunities Exchange
Co-Founder

521 35th Street | West Palm Beach, Florida 33407
561-841-6501

Louise Stoney is an independent consultant specializing in the early care and education finance and policy. She co-founded the Alliance for Early Childhood Finance and, more recently, provides strategic leadership to the national Shared Services movement through her work with Opportunities Exchange, a non-profit consulting firm focused on transforming the business of early care and education to improve outcomes for children. Louise has worked with state and local governments, foundations, national policy organizations, early care and education (ECE) providers, industry intermediaries and child advocacy groups in more than 40 states and cities. Public and private organizations have sought Louise’s expertise to craft new financing strategies and policy options, model costs, challenge assumptions and explore innovative solutions.
**Samir Tanna**  
Illinois Action for Children  
Director of Public Policy and Community Engagement

4753 N Broadway | Chicago, IL 60640  
773-564-8851

Samir Tanna is the Director of Public Policy and Community Engagement, concentrating on state and federal policy affecting accessible, affordable, high-quality child care and early learning programs. Prior to joining Illinois Action for Children, Samir worked as a Policy Associate at the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning. There he worked on state and federal policy involving an employer-based asset development pilot for adult learners.

**Blair Taylor**  
Tennesseans for Quality Early Education (TQEE)  
Executive Chair

122 Harbor Isle Cir N | Memphis, TN 38103  
901-210-5537

Blair is the founder of Tennesseans for Quality Early Education. She is also the president of Memphis Tomorrow, an association of CEOs of Memphis’ largest businesses which partners with government and civic leadership to advance prosperity and quality of life in the Memphis community. Earlier in her career, she was the founder and president of The Work Place, a not-for-profit workforce development enterprise dedicated to helping low and semi-skilled people learn new skills, and gain and maintain employment.

**Rebecca Ullrich**  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Policy Analyst

1200 18th St. NW, 2nd Floor | Washington, DC 20036  
202-906-8038

Rebecca Ullrich uses qualitative and quantitative analysis to advocate for state and federal policies that support young children and their families, with a focus on infants and toddlers and children in immigrant families. Prior to CLASP, Ms. Ullrich was a policy analyst with the Center for American Progress’ early childhood team. In that capacity, she focused on the early childhood workforce, early intervention, and measures of quality in early childhood programs.

**Vett Vandiver**  
GEEARS: GA Early Education Alliance for Ready Students  
Director of Communications

3400 Peachtree Rd NE, Suite 1720 | Atlanta, GA 30326  
770-920-4923

Vett Vandiver is passionate about increasing awareness for early education in the state. Vett has experience in strategic communications, public engagement, digital communications, and photography in both the government and non-profit sectors. Before joining GEEARS, Vett worked in the communications offices at the University System of Georgia, the City of Atlanta, and the Office of the Governor. She is a graduate of the 2017-2018 GPEE Education Policy Fellowship Program. Vett was selected by the Atlanta Regional Commission as one of 56 community leaders to join the 2018 Regional Leadership Institute.
Becky Veak
First Five Nebraska
Director
301 S. 13th Street, #600 | Lincoln, NE 68508
402-261-9671

Becky is the Director of First Five Nebraska, a policy and communications organization that works with state and private partners on shaping effective early childhood policies based on best practices. Prior to this work, Becky brings over 25 years of experience working as an aide in the Nebraska Legislature and the U.S. Senate, lobbying for the long-term care industry, and developing and administering a statewide program for the Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services. Ms. Veak worked in a multi-agency effort during restructuring and redesign of Nebraska’s Health and Human Services System, and has also spent time fundraising and working in the area of strategic planning.

Sara Vecchiotti
Foundation for Child Development
Vice President, Research and Program Innovation
295 Madison Ave Floor 40 | New York, NY 10017
212-867-5777

Sara Vecchiotti is responsible for research, program, and grants development and monitoring, as well as communications. Prior to this position, she served as the Chief Operating Officer for Lutheran Social Services of New York. Dr. Vecchiotti also held several leadership positions at the New York City Administration for Children’s Services within the Division of Early Care and Education. Dr. Vecchiotti has completed the Society for Research in Child Development Congressional Fellowship in the Office of Senator Jeff Bingaman working on early care and education policy and the Executive Branch Fellowship in the Office of Child Care at the United States Department of Health and Human Services in the Administration for Children and Families. She has also held fellowships at the Foundation for Child Development, Yale Child Study Center, Columbia University, Teachers College and the Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy.

Liliana Velazquez Liu
Council for a Strong America
Senior Policy Associate
70 E. Lake St., Suite 1116 | Chicago, IL 60601
312-809-6850

Liliana Velázquez Liu is a Senior Policy Associate at Council for a Strong America. She brings experience in early childhood education advocacy, having completed her Illinois Early Childhood Fellowship at the Ounce of Prevention and Illinois Action for Children. She also supported a Head Start recruitment project and parent-led early learning campaign at Community Organizing & Family Issues (COFI).
Christina Walker
Clayton Early Learning
Manager, Policy and Advocacy

3801 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd | Denver, CO 80206
303-393-5623

Christina Walker coordinates the public policy efforts of Clayton, including legislative and regulatory advocacy, policy analysis, research, and serving as a content expert for national and statewide early childhood coalitions, councils, and advisories. Before working at Clayton, Ms. Walker was a policy analyst with the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) in Washington, DC. She has expertise in home visiting, Head Start, and state and federal child care and early education policies and systems. She also previously worked on national and state early childhood and home visiting policy with the Pew Charitable Trusts’ Home Visiting Campaign and helped implement a Head Start preschool program with the District of Columbia Public School’s Office of Early Childhood Education.

Margie Wallen
Ounce of Prevention Fund
VP, National Policy

3300 W. Monroe, Suite 1200 | Chicago, IL 60603
312-453-1978

Margie Wallen’s 20-year tenure at the Ounce of Prevention Fund includes many roles in advocating for public policies and investments that promote the healthy development of children from birth to age eight. As director of policy partnerships for national policy, Margie partners with and supports state early childhood leaders as they protect, improve and grow public and private investment, policies, and high-quality early learning and development services for young children. In addition, Margie works with the Educare Learning Network. Prior to her current role, Margie coordinated the work of the Illinois Early Learning Council and has consulted on a variety of initiatives in Illinois. Margie is a member of the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership’s advisory board and the Opportunities Exchange shared services advisory council.

Ginger Ward
Southwest Human Development
CEO

2850 N. 24th St | Phoenix, AZ 85008
602-266-5976

Ginger Ward is the founder and chief executive officer of Arizona’s largest nonprofit dedicated to early childhood development, with more than 900 employees serving 135,000 young children and their families each year. Ms. Ward has made a significant contribution to the early childhood field in Arizona by ensuring that the latest best practices and research are used to create programs and to educate parents, professionals, and policy makers about the importance of children’s earliest years to later development. She sits on a variety of boards and committees charged with forming policy and improving services for children and families.
Katy Warren
WA State Assn of Head Start & ECEAP
Deputy Director
345 118th Ave SE, Suite 110 | Bellevue, WA 98005
425-453-1277

Katy Warren has been with WSA since 2007 and has worked in government and nonprofits throughout her career. She served in Washington DC as press secretary for a member of Commerce, served in Olympia as a Senate legislative aide. She did public involvement and research consulting for several years, spent a year teaching English in Southeast Asia to support her travel habit, and is now committed to supporting advocacy and training for low income early learning programs.

Albert Wat
Alliance for Early Success
Senior Policy Director
1875 Connecticut Ave, NW, 10th Floor | Washington, DC 20009
202-494-2150

Albert is a Senior Policy Director at the Alliance for Early Success, where he supports the organization’s strategy and goals for early education, including increasing access to high-quality pre-k, improving the early learning workforce, and enhancing alignment with K-12 policies. Before joining the Alliance, Albert was a Senior Policy Analyst in the Education Division of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, where he helped governors’ staff and advisors improve their early care and education policies, from early childhood through third grade. Before NGA, Albert was the Research Manager at Pre-K Now, an advocacy campaign at the Pew Center on the States. In 2014-15, Albert served on the committee of the Institute of Medicine that released the report, Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation. He also serves on the board of the Council for Professional Recognition.

Michael Weinberg
Thornburg Foundation
Policy Officer
2300 North Ridge Top Road | Santa Fe, NM 87506
505-506-0782

Michael Weinberg works to increase the number of children ready for kindergarten in New Mexico. Previously, as the program evaluation manager for New Mexico’s Legislative Finance Committee, Michael identified opportunities to improve outcomes across the birth to college education continuum. Michael spent the first fourteen years of his career in the education trenches, as a teacher, literacy coach, and principal of a PreK-8 school.
Renee Wessels
Buffett Early Childhood Institute
Associate Executive Director

2111 S. 67th St., Suite 350 | Omaha, NE 68106
402-554-2924

Renee Wessels has served as Associate Executive Director of the Buffett Institute since 2013. Ms. Wessels has more than 30 years of experience in public affairs, communications, and public policy issues. She has worked with some of the nation’s leading organizations dedicated to improving the lives of children, including Save the Children, the Children’s Defense Fund, and the National Commission on Children. Later, as head of her own public affairs firm, she specialized in child welfare, after-school, and public health issues and worked with a variety of public/private partnerships and systems improvement efforts. She also has worked in the Nebraska Legislature and Governor’s Office, and the U.S. Congress.

Alexandra Wilcox
NALEO Educational Fund
Deputy Director of Constituency Services - Early Childhood Education

1122 W Washington Blvd, 3rd Floor | Los Angeles, CA 90015
213-747-7606

Kara Williams
Allyn Family Foundation
Director of Strategic Initiatives

450 South Salina St | Syracuse, NY 13202
315-299-5210

Kara Williams is Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Allyn Family Foundation. She has over 20 years’ experience designing and directing large, complex community health projects. Previously, Kara was Senior Program Officer at the Health Foundation for Western & Central NY. She has also directed clinical service delivery, health promotion, and policy advocacy programs at the Onondaga County Health Department, and managed community-based participatory research at the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine’s Division of Community Pediatrics. In addition, she has overseen health journalism programs, trained law students in mediation and creative problem solving, and provided technical assistance to nonprofits in program design and evaluation, and strategic planning.

Laurie Williamson
NC Early Childhood Funders Collaborative
Project Manager

1319 Watts Street | DURHAM, NC 27701
919-724-1682

Laurie Williamson coordinates the NC Early Childhood Funders Collaborative’s efforts to bring the collective voice and resources of philanthropy together in promoting the development and sustainability of a comprehensive early childhood system. Prior to this position, Laurie was the Sr. Community Impact Director with the United Way of the Greater Triangle. She is an experienced macro-practice social worker with over 10 years of nonprofit leadership. Laurie grew up in the mountains of North Carolina and now lives in Durham with her husband Matt (double UNC Tarheel household), two kids - Jack and Cora and a pound puppy named Pete.
**John Wilson**  
Kansas Action for Children  
Vice President of Advocacy

709 S Kansas Avenue, Suite 200 | Topeka, KS 66603  
785-218-7288

For over a decade John Wilson has worked at the intersection of design, public health, and policymaking. John helped build the Alliance for a Healthier Generation into the nation’s leading nonprofit organization focused on children’s health. As a Kansas State Representative, John worked to redefine the culture of the Legislature to make it more open and collaborative. Now at Kansas Action for Children, he guides their comprehensive advocacy strategy built around research, strategic communications, and government relations. The best parts of his day are when he’s spending time with his wife, Jami, and their two sons, Parker and Henry.

**Lisa Wiltshire**  
Tennesseans for Quality Early Education  
Policy Director

985 Davidson Dr | Nashville, TN 37205  
615-517-0353

Lisa Wiltshire joined TQEE as Policy Director in April 2017, after serving two years as the Executive Director for the Office of Early Learning at the Tennessee Department of Education, a $150 million division overseeing statewide programs serving children, ages 0-5, and their families. Ms. Wiltshire led multiple strategic initiatives at the department including the creation of a comprehensive, evidence-based definition of program and instructional quality for Pre-K. Prior to her role at the state department, Ms. Wiltshire served as the Director of Early Learning Innovation for Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools where she created three model early learning centers to exemplify best practice in early childhood education and led a collaborative coalition to expand pre-k opportunities for students in Davidson County.

**Stephen Woerner**  
VOICES for Alabama’s Children  
Executive Director

P.O. Box 4576 | Montgomery, AL 36103-4576  
334-213-2410 ext 106

Stephen Woerner has served as the Executive Director for VOICES for Alabama’s Children since September 2018. Prior to that, he has worked extensively within the non-profit and youth development sector. His work has included serving as a non-profit consultant for a large state university, serving as executive director for a youth leadership and diversity education program, and as program director at several youth special needs programs.
**Daithi Wolfe**  
Kids Forward  
Early Education Policy Analyst  
555 W. Washington Ave., #200 | Madison, WI 53703  
608-284-0580  

Daithi (DAH-hee) has been an Early Education Policy Analyst at Kids Forward since 2007. He is co-chair of Healthy Early, an award-winning statewide coalition that works to improve nutrition and increase physical activity in child care settings. He also manages the Farm to Early Care and Education Project. Before becoming an ECE advocate, Daithi was a public elementary school teacher for 16 years in Madison. Daithi is Irish for David. He got the nickname when traveling to Ireland in 1983 to study traditional fiddling.

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**Kacey Wulff**  
Children Now  
Director, The Children’s Movement  
1404 Franklin Street | Oakland, CA 94612  
510-763-2444  

Kacey Wulff manages The Children’s Movement, the statewide network of “pro-kid” business, education, parent, civil rights, faith, community, and non-profit organizations that want to make kids the top public policy priority. Prior to Children Now, Kacey served in the Obama administration as the Director of Outreach and Enrollment at the US Department of Health and Human Services. There, she worked to implement the Affordable Care Act and led efforts across policy and external affairs teams to develop and implement strategies to drive enrollment on healthcare.gov. Kacey also served as a policy advisor and special assistant in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response.

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**Amy Zaagman**  
Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health  
Executive Director  
110 W. Lenawee St. | Lansing, MI 48933  
517-482-5807  

Amy directs an organization of diverse partners representing hospital systems, statewide organizations, local public health advocates and individuals with an interest in the advancement of maternal and child health. She was employed for over 13 years in the Michigan Legislature serving eight years as Chief of Staff to former State Senator Beverly Hammerstrom, Majority Floor Leader and Chair of the Senate Health Policy Committee. After leaving the Legislature, Amy took the position of Associate Director of the Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards and was primarily responsible for their advocacy and public policy efforts.
Ceil leads ACNJ’s advocacy efforts to ensure that all children in NJ have the opportunity to grow up safe, healthy and educated. Her advocacy has helped secure measurable gains for children in many areas of child well-being, including early education, health, nutrition, child welfare, and juvenile justice. Ceil argued before the NJ Supreme Court on preschool standards in Abbott v. Burke, the landmark educational equity case. She is currently heading ACNJ’s birth to 3 campaign, Right from the Start NJ.

Tracy Zimmermann is a diehard optimist. She believes that together - with an excellent strategy, honest dialogue, and true collaboration - we can give each child the opportunity to fulfill his or her potential. She has served as NCECF’s Executive Director since 2015 and co-founded the organization in 2013. She has worked on behalf of public interest organizations, including leading the North Carolina Partnership for Children’s (Smart Start) public engagement efforts, serving as Public Relations Director at FPG Child Development Institute at UNC, and as Senior Vice President at The Hauser Group, a public-interest PR firm in Washington DC.