



AGENDA

The **2024 Community-Engaged Research Conference: CER Pathways to Equitable Programs and Policies** will highlight community-engaged research including innovative research approaches, stories of successful research collaborations, and lessons learned from research within the following program tracks: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Head Start/Early Head Start, or Childcare Assistance.

8:30 AM **Breakfast & Registration**

9:30 AM **Welcome**

- Amanda Coleman, Ph.D., MA, Deputy Division Director, Division of Children and Family Development, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation/ACF/HHS
- Rick Kittles, Senior Vice President of Research, Morehouse School of Medicine

Conference Purpose & Intro to the NAACFRC Video

- Latrice Rollins, PhD, MSW, Director, NAACFRC

9:45 - 11:00 AM **Opening Keynote and Panel: Parent-Power: Community-Engaged Research with Parents to Advance Equity in Services for African American Children and Families**

- **Keynote:** William P. Jackson, PhD, Chief Dreamer, Village of Wisdom (VOW)
- **Moderator:** Nina Smith, PhD, Co-Investigator, NAACFRC
- **Panelist:** Tanya Thomas, PhD, Executive/Head Start Director, Coastal Plain Area EOA, Inc.
- **Panelist:** Bridget Ratajczak, Child and Family Development Supervisor, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, & Parent
- **Panelist:** Fatoumata "Fatima" Kane, Program Analyst, Youth Power, Parent Power Initiative, Center for the Study of Social Policy

Description: In 2021, OPRE issued a brief entitled, *Enhancing Rigor, Relevance, and Equity in Research and Evaluation Through Community Engagement*, which stated "Community leaders, community members, and American Child & Family Research Center; Assistant Professor, Community Health and Preventive Medicine, Morehouse School of Medicine researchers increasingly recognize that engaging communities in research and evaluation is critical for implementing effective programs and building trust. Researchers and communities also recognize the value of community-engaged research to improve the rigor and relevance of research and evaluation and better address historical and ongoing systemic inequities. Community-engaged research is more than a project or study; it is a process that requires commitment from researchers and communities to sustain long-term relationships and collaboration." We will hear from community-engaged researchers and parents about the role of parents in research to improve programs and services for African American children and families and ensuring services are equitable through positive outcomes.

Objectives:

- Identify community-engaged research approaches with parents
- Identify outcomes and actions that result from community-engaged research with parents

11:15 - 12:30 PM

Breakout Sessions

1. Advancing Research in Early Care and Education for African American Children

- **Moderator:** Cassandra Bolar, PhD, Co-Investigator, NAACFRC

Presentation Title: Studying an Equity-Focused Universal Preschool Program: Lessons from a Research Partnership

Description: Universal preschool programs that are grounded in equity can make a difference in the lives of children and families, particularly families that do not typically have access to high-quality programs. This session will provide participants with the opportunity to learn about a research- practice partnership grounded in equity to study a county-wide universal preschool program with perspectives from the policy and research leaders of the partnership, as well as time to reflect upon ways lessons learned can inform their own collaborative research.

- **Presenter:** Stephanie M. Curenton, PhD, Executive Director, Center on the Ecology of Early Development, Boston Univ.
- **Presenter:** Leslee Barnes, Director, Multnomah County's Preschool and Early Learning Division, Portland, Oregon

Objectives:

- Reflect upon ways equity can be centered in the design of a research-practice partnership
- Formulate considerations for their own collaborative research projects to reflect equity
- Learn about the unique needs of studying universal preschool and other ECE programs within an equity-focused research-practice partnership model

Presentation Title: Exploring the Experiences of Black, Low-Income Parents' Access to Quality Early Childhood Education

Description: This qualitative study explored the experiences of Black, low-income parents' access to quality early childhood education (ECE) programs in Georgia. Through in-depth interviews, this study explored the complex ways in which income-level impacts Black parents' lived experiences regarding access to quality ECE programs. Implications of this study's findings will be beneficial for policymakers, administrators, and decision-makers who have the positional power to impact change related to access to quality ECE programs. Overall, this study may contribute to a deeper understanding of the intersectionality of race and income level in shaping access to ECE and provides insights for promoting equitable education for all children.

- **Presenter:** Keon N. Berry, PhD, Faculty, Morehouse College; Scholar-Practitioner

Objectives:

- Describe the importance of high quality ECE
- Describe the importance of equitable access for all families
- Describe the importance of culturally responsive education

Presentation Title: Learning in Isolation: Understanding Racial and Ethnic Segregation in Early Childhood Education

Description: This session will present findings from a study which examines the prevalence of racial and ethnic segregation in center- and home-based early childhood education (ECE) programs and classrooms across the country. This research expands on prior studies which demonstrate that ECE students may be more exposed to segregation than students in primary and secondary schools, which has worrying implications for young children's healthy development and access to high-quality ECE.

- **Presenter:** Leah Awkward-Rich, PhD Candidate, Project Assistant, Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Objectives:

- Learn about the prevalence of racial/ethnic segregation in early childhood education settings.
- Understand the potential impacts, both academic and social, of segregation in early childhood education on children.
- Examine potential explanations for segregation in early childhood education settings.

Presentation Title: Infusing child development science into the ministry activities of clergy in predominantly Black congregations

Description: The primary focus of this project was to connect with families about their children's developmental needs, as described in the HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences) framework, through an established source of identity and strength – their faith communities. Accessing the positive childhood experiences (PCEs) needed for child brain development outlined in the HOPE framework inherently includes medical, public health, and social services systems. Consequently, systemic racism can inhibit the ability of African American children to have better physical, mental, and behavioral health outcomes throughout their lives, contributing to health disparities. The congregational home visiting model addresses the need for access to PCEs in all of these settings – child care, early childhood education, and social services for concrete supports (e.g. TANF). This model was developed through a literature review, racial equity needs assessment among Black churchgoers in the Trenton, NJ metropolitan area, and focus group of Black clergy and local civil rights leaders.

- **Presenter:** Allison Stephens, PhD, M.Ed., Director, Networks and Policy, HOPE National Resource Center
- **Presenter:** Rev. Darrell Armstrong, DDiv-hc, MDiv, EdS, Founder, Faith-leaders Allied and Aligned to Institute Trust in the Home (FAAITH)

Objectives: Attendees will be able to:

- Explain the purpose and components of the congregational home visiting model
- Diagram a basic service model that combines research and at least one community-based institution
- Predict possible barriers to the development of a model, particularly for communities of color and/or when engaging faith communities

2. Incorporating Lived Experience into Federal Research Practices

Description: Many federal agencies are exploring options to meaningfully engage people with lived experience in federally funded research and evaluation. This session will describe how a community advisory board (CAB) can fulfill this need, how to convene a CAB in the federal research context, and lessons learned from the perspectives of one project's CAB members, research firm staff, and federal staff. Speakers will describe and share lessons learned from the Advancing Contextual Analysis and Methods of Participant Engagement (CAMPE) project, funded by the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and implemented by Urban Institute.

- **Moderator:** Rodney Washington, PhD, Co-Investigator, Early Care and Education, NAACFRC,
- **Presenter:** Marla McDaniel, PhD, Senior Fellow, Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population, Urban Institute
- **Presenter:** Jerry Corley, Community Advisory Board Member
- **Presenter:** Parthenia Fields, Community Advisory Board Member

Objectives:

- Gain a deeper understanding of how community engagement can be conceptualized and implemented in federally funded research.
- Have an opportunity to contribute ideas and examples from your own work.
- Receive a compilation of shared ideas, resources, tools, and examples to apply in your work.

3. NAACFRC 2023-2024 Emerging Scholars Showcase

Description: NAACFRC Emerging Scholars, who are doctoral and medical students who have been mentored for the past year by NAACFRC Co-investigators, will share their research in early care and education and the well-being of African American children and families.

- **Moderator:** Robert Mayberry, PhD, Co-Lead, Capacity-Building, NAACFRC
- **Presenter:** Breanna Chacere, MPH, 2022 Emerging Scholar, NAACFRC
- **Presenter:** Amber B. Sansbury-Scott, M.Ed., 2023 Emerging Scholar, NAACFRC
- **Presenter:** Anthony Lizarraga, MS, 2023 Emerging Scholar, Public Policy, NAACFRC
- **Presenter:** Anthony D. Smith II (Aremu Mbande), MS, 2023 Emerging Scholar, NAACFRC
- **Presenter:** Shedrick Garrett, MA, 2023 Emerging Scholar, NAACFRC

12:30 – 1:30 PM LUNCH for in-person attendees

12:30 – 1:30 PM Simulive Presentations for online/virtual attendees

- **Online Moderator:** Jennifer Daniels, PhD, MSW, National Poverty Fellow, Institute for Research on Poverty, OPRE/ACF/HHS

1. (Re)Conceptualizing Current Measurements of Accessibility for Black Family & Children in ECE

Description: This research delves into the persistent inequities in early education faced by Black families, stemming from historical systemic practices that ultimately hinder accessible early learning and care spaces. Examining accessibility conceptualizations outlined by the Office of Policy, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE), the study reveals that current policies inadequately include Black children and families. Methodologically, comprehensive data collection from various sources and a case study on an optimally accessible program were conducted. Results indicate restrictive policies, disproportionately impacting Black children and families, further the culturally diverse families that exist today. Policy recommendations emphasize recognizing anti-Black ideologies, prioritizing equity, removing targeted barriers, and fostering cultural inclusivity for systemic change in early learning spaces.

- **Presenter:** Ashley Watts, MPA, Practitioner-Scholar

Objectives:

- Illuminate the historical roots of inequities in early education, emphasizing the enduring impact of post-Civil War systemic practices on Black families.
- Examine the contemporary manifestations of inequities in early education, with a focus on limited access to vital resources like childcare, contributing to opportunity gaps for Black children and families based on social indicators.
- Present concrete policy recommendations addressing historical and contemporary challenges, emphasizing the recognition of anti-Black ideologies, prioritizing equity, and removing barriers in early learning spaces.

2. Geography, Resources, and Outcomes: Unraveling Federal Early & Primary Care Disparities in the U.S.

Description: Using data from the 2019 National Survey of Early Care and Education explore the role of geographic context (region, urban density, poverty density) in the U.S., as well as teacher job demands and resources in the quality of early care and education (ECE) workforce (e.g., teachers, teaching assistants, instructional aides, director) interactions with children and their caregiving attitudes. This study explores the intricate interplay between program structures, such as workforce dynamics and access to resources, and outcomes within the U.S. ECE landscape. Furthermore, the study aims to enable participants to identify nuanced distinctions in outcomes for both staff and children within Head Start centers, comparing them to outcomes across all ECE center types (e.g., public pre- kindergarten). Additionally, the current project delves into the specifics of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program in Texas, pinpointing resources provided by the federal initiative serving children in kindergarten through 5th grade. By honing in on Texas, the study seeks to elucidate distinctions in outcomes for children attending selected 21st CCLC centers. Through a comprehensive examination of these federal programs, this research contributes valuable insights into the resources that are necessary to foster favorable outcomes for children.

- **Presenter:** Briana Bostic, PhD, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Baltimore Education Research Consortium

Objectives:

- Understand how the resources available to ECE staff in the U.S. are shaped by their geographic context (region, urban density, poverty density).
- Distinguish outcomes for staff and children in Head Start centers, compared to all centers.
- Identify program structure and resources provided by the 21st CCLC program in Texas and demonstrate distinctions in outcomes for children selected centers.

1:30 - 2:30 PM Breakout Sessions

1. Community-Engaged Research in Economic Mobility and Poverty Alleviation

- **Moderator:** Alex Camardelle, PhD, MPA, Co-Investigator, TANF/Economic Mobility, NAACFRC

Presentation Title: City Talkin' We Taking Notes: a Basic Income Project for African American Women Builds Hope & Healing

Description: The Multnomah Mothers' Trust (MMTP) believes that African American women know best how to achieve their dreams and grow community. The traditional government relationship between provider and recipient is one of help where one party proffers the knowledge and resources and the other accepts both. The relationship the Multnomah Idea Lab (MIL) wishes to cultivate is one of independence, equality, and shared knowledge. In such a relationship knowledge is an asset of both the parties, and the idea of help is replaced by one of self-sufficiency and the provision of the resources necessary for individuals to reach their own self-determined goals.

The Multnomah Mothers Trust provides monthly income to female headed households with children, who are current members of existing community-based organizations in Portland, Oregon. Trust members are identified by their organization to receive basic income payments through a third-party payer. The third-party payer provides quarterly survey data reports and documents participant experience and impact. Multnomah Mothers' Trust members who choose to enter financial information on monthly surveys are paid to do so.

The challenge of supporting BIPOC families living on a low-income is building hope (and autonomy, self-determination, and mastery), using County provided resources, in the face of structural white supremacy is real. Success requires the willingness to question what we know about who is in poverty and why, and to take smart risks to test new approaches and strategies.

The proposed presentation will discuss how the Multnomah Idea Lab uses participatory action research to challenge assumptions about the nature of poverty and the prevailing narrative about the competence of mothers who live on low or no income.

- **Presenter:** Ebonee Bell, Member, Multnomah Idea Lab (MIL)

Objectives:

- Change the narrative about what help is and who deserves government help.
- Change the narrative about the industriousness and pragmatism of people living on a low income
- Introduce the concept of autonomy to practice of government spending

Presentation Title: We as a Country Should Provide: The Impacts of Guaranteed Income on Racial and Economic Justice.

Description: This session will present the initial 12-month findings from a pioneering Guaranteed Income initiative in three sites across Georgia, with a particular focus on Black women. The session will compare the experiences and outcomes of participants across two distinct treatment groups one receiving a consistent monthly income and another an initial lump sum followed by a reduced monthly amount against a control group. It will explore the potential of Guaranteed Income as a tool for advancing racial and economic justice, highlighting its implications for policy efficacy and community resilience. Attendees will gain insights into how this innovative approach is shaping lives and challenging traditional perspectives on poverty alleviation and economic support systems.

- **Presenter:** Leah Hamilton, MSW, Ph.D., Principal Investigator of the Family Economic Policy Lab, Appalachian State University
- **Presenter:** Simone Smith, MSW, LMSW, Founder, Sexual Trauma and Assault Resources Inc. (S.T.A.R. Inc.)
- **Presenter:** Aaron Quick, MSW, PhD Program, Policy, Planning, Administration and Social Science, Clark Atlanta University
- **Presenter:** Desha Elliott, MS, Founder, Professional Doctoral Network

Objectives:

- Understand the nuances and impacts of Guaranteed Income models in fostering economic and racial justice.
- Analyze comparative outcomes of different income distribution approaches within the Guaranteed Income initiative.

- Explore policy implications and community responses to innovative poverty alleviation strategies in Georgia.

Presentation Title: Claiming #FATHERhood: The Building of Brothers United Nation

Description: This session will discuss a unique approach to studying young black fathers. The purpose of the research was to evaluate the impact of Brothers United Fatherhood program. The study design used a randomized control trial design, and the participants were young Black fathers ages 20-24 living in low-income high crime areas of Toledo, Ohio. All participants completed a baseline survey and then were assigned to an intervention group or control group in a 2:1 ratio. The intervention group participants enrolled in the fatherhood program and the control group participants received a resource list. Twelve months after enrollment, participants completed a one year follow up survey. The results indicated that BUFP helped. helped participants in the following areas 1. Gain a greater understanding of financial planning, improved conflict resolution with their partner and an increased understanding of healthy marriage.

- **Presenter:** Avis Files, Director, Family and Supportive Services, Pathway Toledo

Objectives:

- An understanding of how to do a RCT with young black men and the challenges
- The importance of allowing data to shape programming in a community
- The importance of research as it relates to black fathers

2. NAACFRC 2023-2024 Community Pilot Project Program Showcase

Description: NAACFRC Community Pilot Project Program grantees, who are leaders in community-based organizations in diverse sectors, will share their research.

- **Moderator:** Robert Mayberry, PhD, Co-Lead, Capacity-Building, NAACFRC

Research Title: The Interrelationship Between Systems, Safety, and Poverty: Narratives from Four Seasons

Description: In December of 2021, an Atlanta Municipal Court Judge condemned Forest Cove Apartments in Atlanta, GA due to the dilapidated, unsafe, and unsanitary living conditions for the residents. In July 2022, Girassol Wellness began providing family wellness and counseling services to the residents of Forest Cove. By September 30, 2022 all residents were permanently displaced from their homes. Our research aim is to explore the social, cultural, relational, historical, and contextual factors shared by former Forest Cove residents. Through the lens of lived experience, we hope to broaden our understanding of factors and resources that may contribute to poverty alleviation and improved health and wellbeing. To accomplish this, we will gather qualitative data from 25 families through a focus group and individual interviews.

Specific research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of Black families living in poverty in an urban city?
2. What are the historical and present-day factors that contributed to poverty and housing displacement for the former residents of Forest Cove in Atlanta, GA?
3. Do supportive services (e.g., TANF, childcare, transportation vouchers) help to reduce stress in Black families experiencing poverty and housing displacement?
4. Do family counseling services help to improve mental health outcomes in Black families experiencing poverty and housing displacement?

- **Presenter:** Jordan Murphy, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC, Executive Director, Girassol Wellness; NAACFRC Community Pilot Project Program

Research Title: Empowering Communities through Financial Literacy

Description: A comprehensive study to evaluate the effectiveness of the Pillars Initiative financial literacy curriculum. The research aims to measure the impact on participants' financial knowledge, habits, and overall wellbeing. Key areas of focus include: pre-post assessment, behavioral changes, focus groups, long term impact and qualitative insights.

- **Presenter:** Tiffany Cuthbert, M.Ed, MNM, Founder, Executive Director, Pillars Initiative; NAACFRC Community Pilot Project Program

- **Presenter:** Tyrone Bell, Facilitator, Pillars Initiative
- **Presenter:** Mikayla Charles, Coordinator, Pillars Initiative

Description: The team will share updates to their research to engage fathers in Brightpoint's programs and other human services.

- **Presenter:** Brianna Lemmons, Pillars Initiative, NAACFRC Community Pilot Project Program;
- **Presenter:** Ericka Lewis, Pillars Initiative, NAACFRC Community Pilot Project Program;

3. Safe First Steps: A Community-Based Approach to Supporting Families Exposed to Trauma and Violence

Description: Despite the increased rates of trauma and violence exposure for families living in under-resourced communities, there is a significant gap in the services available to adequately address the needs of young children. The goal of the Safe First Steps program is to share information with early childhood providers, schools, and families about the strategies that can be implemented to reduce re-traumatization and promote recovery for individuals dealing with intergenerational trauma and exposure to adverse childhood experiences. Following use of the Safe First Steps training and consultation model, previous program participants have reported increased collaboration with other child service systems, the use of positive self-care strategies to reduce secondary traumatic stress, and better trauma awareness and responsiveness.

- **Moderator:** Brian McGregor, PhD, Co-Investigator, Criminal Justice & Health, NAACFRC
- **Presenter:** Lynda Gibson, PhD, Program Director, Safe First Steps Program

Objectives:

- Learn about the effects of trauma in early childhood and the experiences that may serve as risk versus protective factors for young children.
- Discuss the safety and coping strategies that will help to reduce the negative outcomes children and families are experiencing because of trauma exposure.
- Explore individual and organizational strategies that can be implemented to support communities experiencing behavioral health disparities and historical inequities.

3:00 – 4:30 PM Closing Panel: Policy Power: Using Research to Inform Policy and Improve Services for African American Children and Families

Description: Policy researchers will discuss the use of data and research to inform policy and ways to reduce the gaps between current human service practices and goals for better quality services and positive outcomes.

- **Keynote Speaker:** Charli Cooksey, MA, Founder/CEO, WEPOWER
- **Moderator:** Ife Floyd, MPP, Director of Economic Justice, Georgia Budget and Policy Institute
- **Panelist:** Alycia Hardy, MPA, Senior Policy Analyst, Child Care and Early Education, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
- **Panelist:** Parker Gilkesson, MPP, Senior Policy Analyst, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
- **Panelist:** Patrick MacFarlane, Government Relations Manager, Child Care Resource Center

Objectives:

- Identify successful strategies to use research to inform policy and improve services to African American children, families
- Discuss current trends in policy research that impact African American children and families

4:30 – 4:45 PM Closing Remarks & Evaluation

- Latrice Rollins, PhD, MSW, Director, NAACFRC
- Megan Reid, PhD, Social Science Research Analyst, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation/ACF/HHS

5:00 – 6:30 PM Networking Reception