



NAACFRC 2024

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH CONFERENCE
ATLANTA | JUNE 6, 2024

**CER PATHWAYS TO EQUITABLE
PROGRAMS AND POLICIES**



Conference at a Glance

8:30 a.m.	BREAKFAST & REGISTRATION
9:30 a.m.	WELCOME
9:45 - 11:00 a.m.	OPENING KEYNOTE AND PANEL
9:45 a.m.	INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER AND MODERATOR
9:46 - 10:00 a.m.	KEYNOTE
10:00 - 10:45 a.m.	PARENT POWER PANEL
10:45 - 11:00 a.m.	QUESTION & ANSWERS
11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	BREAKOUT SESSIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none">I. Advancing Research in Early Care and Education for African American Children<ul style="list-style-type: none">Exploring the Experiences of Black, Low-Income Parents' Access to Quality Early Childhood EducationLearning in Isolation: Understanding Racial and Ethnic Segregation in Early Childhood EducationInfusing child development science into the ministry activities of clergy in predominantly Black congregationsII. Incorporating Lived Experience into Federal Research PracticesIII. NAACFRC 2023-2024 Emerging Scholars Showcase
12:30 - 1:30 p.m.	LUNCH: IN-PERSON ATTENDEES
12:30 - 1:30 p.m.	SIMULIVE WEBINAR PRESENTATIONS (ONLINE/VIRTUAL ATTENDEES) <ul style="list-style-type: none">I. Re-conceptualizing Current Measurements of Accessibility for Black Family & Children in ECEII. Geography, Resources, and Outcomes: Unraveling Federal Early & Primary Care Disparities in the U.S.
1:30 - 2:45 p.m.	BREAKOUT SESSIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none">I. Community-Engaged Research in Economic Mobility and Poverty Alleviation<ul style="list-style-type: none">City Talkin' We Taking Notes: A Basic Income Project for African American Women Builds Hope & HealingWe as a Country Should Provide: The Impacts of Guaranteed Income on Racial and Economic Justice.Claiming #FATHERhood: The Building of Brothers United NationII. NAACFRC 2023-2024 Community Pilot Project Program Showcase<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Interrelationship Between Systems, Safety, and Poverty: Narratives from Four SeasonsEmpowering Communities Through Financial LiteracyIII. Safe First Steps: A Community-based Approach to Supporting Families Exposed to Trauma and Violence
3:00 - 4:30 p.m.	CLOSING PANEL <ul style="list-style-type: none">Policy Power: Using Research to Inform Policy and Improve Services for African American Children and Families QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
4:30-4:45 p.m.	CLOSING REMARKS & EVALUATION
5:00-6:30 p.m.	NETWORKING RECEPTION



MESSAGE

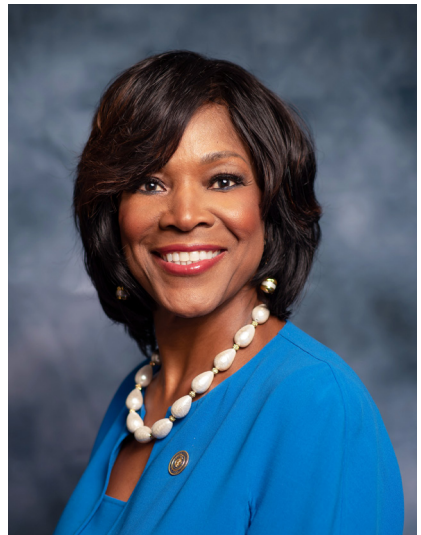
Valerie Montgomery Rice, M.D.



Welcome!

On behalf of Morehouse School of Medicine, I welcome you to the National African American Child and Family Research Center's 2024 Community-Engaged Research Conference. The theme this year is Community-Engaged Research Pathways to Equitable Programs and Policies.

Morehouse School of Medicine's vision is to lead the creation and advancement of health equity to achieve health justice. We are committed to addressing issues such as employment, education, economic mobility, children's healthy development and learning that impact African American families in urban and rural areas across the nation.



Our institution has received national recognition as a model for community engagement. Our faculty are among primary leaders in training learners and future leaders on rigorous, community-partnered approaches to ensure that the social, historical, and cultural factors that impact our families and communities are central to research development, implementation, and dissemination. We are not "helicopter researchers," who fly into communities, collect data, and abscond to publish papers.

This conference assembles parents, agency leaders, students, academic and policy researchers to share their community-engaged research experiences and outcomes, the importance of research to policy, and innovative research studies to spark insightful solutions to identified inequities.

Thank you for participating in this conference and we look forward to you joining us in advancing pathways to equitable programs and policies.

Sincerely,

Valerie Montgomery Rice, M.D.
President and CEO

MESSAGE

Tabia Henry Akintobi, PhD, MPH

Dear Conference Attendees:

On behalf of the Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) Department of Community Health and Preventive Medicine (CHPM) and the Prevention Research Center (PRC), I enthusiastically welcome you to the 2024 National African American Child and Family Research Center (NAACFRC) Community-Engaged Research Conference! The conference theme, Community-Engaged Research Pathways to Equitable Programs and Policies, is critical and timely.

The CHPM Department and PRC are strategic associations for NAACFRC within our institution. CHPM works with the community to understand and address community issues through a mission to implement, evaluate and disseminate innovative, scalable community-centered prevention approaches that advance health equity and justice locally, nationally, and globally. NAACFRC is physically housed within the PRC MSM PRC where we embrace and embody community-based participatory approaches through planning, implementing, evaluation and disseminating multilevel interventions focused on risk reduction, policy, system, and environmental changes with a primary focus on African American and other minoritized populations.

The conference agenda features expert advice and innovative research that helps us better understand the dynamics and importance of community-engaged research to inform programs and policies. I am confident that you will find this conference helpful in moving you toward your community-engaged research goals.

Sincerely,



Tabia Henry Akintobi, PhD, MPH

Professor and Chair of Community Health & Preventive Medicine Principal Investigator, Prevention Research Center





MESSAGE

Latrice Rollins, PhD, MSW

Greetings!

I am honored to welcome you to our 2024 Community-Engaged Research (CER) Conference! As director of the NAACFRC, I extend my sincerest gratitude to you for joining us, and our team and speakers for investing their energy and creativity to provide a top-notch event for us to enjoy.

Our conference theme this year is **CER Pathways to Equitable Programs and Policies**. Following last year's conference, we wanted to turn our focus to policies and how we can keep evolving our programs and policies through community-engaged research. We are pleased to have representatives from numerous institutions and communities bringing together research on early care and education and economic mobility.



Whether you are just starting on your journey with community-engaged research or are a seasoned professional, this conference is for you. The NAACFRC takes great pride in hosting productive and inspiring events that create meaningful connections between speakers and attendees. The atmosphere within will be comfortable, the networking stimulating, and the programming exciting, engaging, and participatory. Our hope is that by the end of our conference, you will consider us as part of your team.

Throughout the conference, NAACFRC team and conference planning members will be available to answer questions, and ensure you feel welcome and included. I hope that you leave this conference well-informed and excited to return next year and continue to be a part of this amazing community!

Latrice Rollins

Latrice Rollins, PhD, MSW

Director & Principal Investigator

National African American Child and Family Research Center

Morehouse School of Medicine

Conference Locations

MAIN SESSIONS - BANK OF AMERICA AUDITORIUM

- Welcome
- Opening Keynote and Panel
- Closing Panel

BREAKOUT ROOM #1 - BANK OF AMERICA AUDITORIUM

- Morning - Advancing Research in Early Care and Education for African American Children
- Afternoon - Community-Engaged Research in Economic Mobility and Poverty Alleviation

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NalZfXIsRV2NCqCq1rh_dA

BREAKOUT ROOM #2 - CONFERENCE ROOM B

- Morning - Incorporating Lived Experience into Federal Research Practices
- Afternoon - Safe First Steps - A Community-Based Approach to Supporting Families Exposed to Trauma and Violence

Register in advance for this webinar:

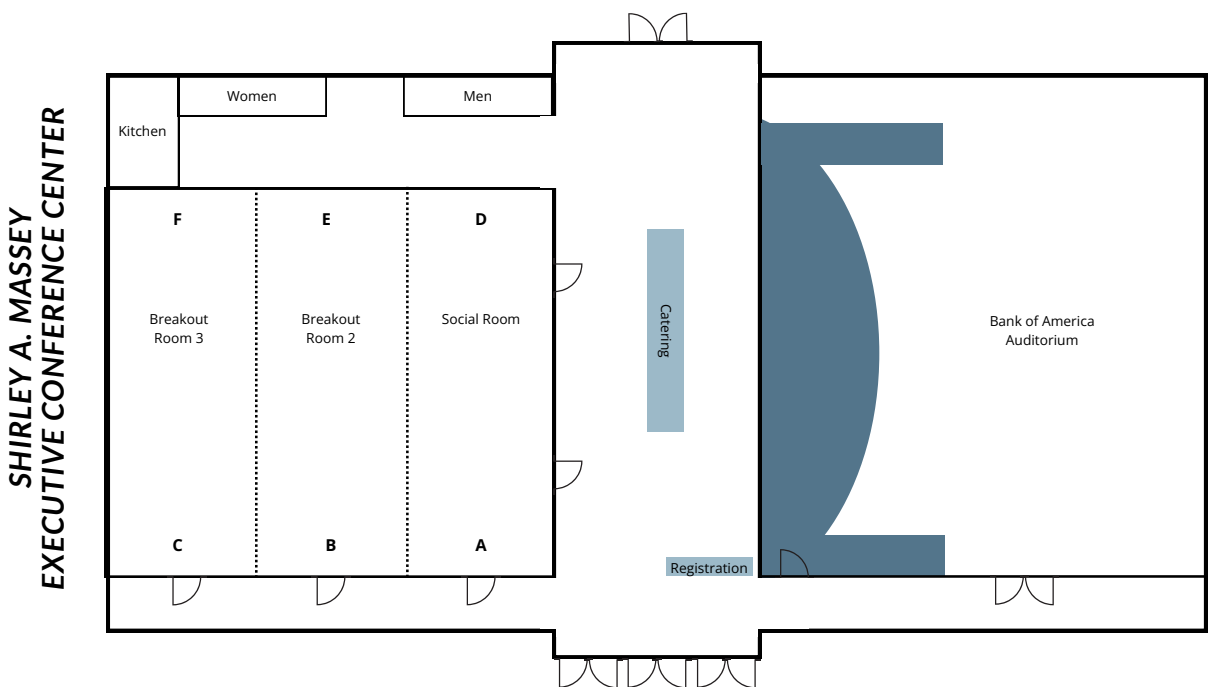
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wBP0j810RY67_R3SW_JAqQ

BREAKOUT ROOM #3 - CONFERENCE ROOM C

- Morning - NAACFRC Emerging Scholars Showcase
- Afternoon - NAACFRC Community Pilot Project Program Showcase

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AsNYAK7ATm6yU2vcWKqaw#/registration



NAACFRC 2024

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CER PATHWAYS TO EQUITABLE
PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

Conference Agenda

**Shirley Massey Executive Conference Center
Morehouse College, Atlanta, GA
naacfrc.org/annual-conferences**

This conference is designed to 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, and Childcare Assistance.

8:30 a.m. Breakfast & Registration

9:30 a.m. Welcome

Amanda Coleman, PhD, MA, Deputy Division Director, Division of Children and Family, Development, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation/ACF/HHS

Alex Crosby, MD, MPH, Vice Chair and Professor, Community Health and Preventive Medicine, MSM

Latrice Rollins, PhD, Director, National African American Child and Family Research Center, MSM

9:45-11:00 a.m. Opening Keynote and Panel

Parent-Power: Community-Engaged Research with Parents to Advance Equity in Services for African American Children and Families

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 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 in improving the rigor and relevance of research and evaluation, and better addressing 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."

During this session, attendees will hear from agency, program staff, and parents about the role of parents in research to improve programs and services for African American children and families to ensure 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

9:45 a.m. Introduction of Keynote Speaker and Moderator

Latrice Rollins, PhD, Director, National African American Child and Family Research Center, MSM

9:46-10:00 a.m. Keynote

William P. Jackson, PhD, Chief Dreamer, Village of Wisdom

10:00-10:45 a.m. Parent Power Panel

Moderator: Nina Smith, PhD, Co-Investigator, NAACFRC

Panelists:

- Tanya Thomas, PhD, Executive/Head Start Director, Coastal Plain Area EOA, Inc.
- Christian Slacks, Parent, Head Start Policy Council Member & Kissie Hunt, Executive Administrative Assistant, Coastal Plain Area EOA, Inc.
- Bridget Ratajczak, MA, Child and Family Development Supervisor, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
- Ebony Tolbert, Family Peer Ambassador, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
- Fatoumata "Fatima" Kane, Program Analyst, Youth Power, Parent Power Initiative, Center for the Study of Social Policy
- Sando Zou-Capuzzi, Young Parent Leader, Center for the Study of Social Policy

10:45-11:00 a.m. Question & Answers

11:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Breakout Sessions


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

Moderator: Cassandra Bolar, Ph.D., Co-Investigator, NAACFRC

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

Presenters:

- Stephanie M. Curenton, PhD, Executive Director, Center on the Ecology of Early Development, Boston University
- Leslee Barnes, Director, Multnomah County's Preschool, and Early Learning Division



Universal preschool programs 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 allow participants 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.

Objectives:

- Reflect upon ways equity can be centered in the design of a research-practice partnership
- Formulate considerations for 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

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

Presenter:

Keon N. Berry, PhD, Adjunct Professor, Sociology, Morehouse College

This qualitative study explores the experiences of Black, low-income parents' access to quality early childhood education (ECE) programs in Georgia. Through in-depth interviews, this study explores how income levels impact Black parents' lived experiences regarding access to quality ECE programs. Implications of this study's findings will benefit policymakers, administrators, and decision-makers with 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 levels in shaping access to ECE and provide insights for promoting equitable education for all children.

Objectives:

Describe

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


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

Presenters:

Allison Stephens, PhD, M.Ed., Director of Networks and Policy, HOPE National Resource Center

Darrell Armstrong, D.Div (hon.), M.Div., Ed.S.-MFT, Founder, Faith-leaders Allied and Aligned to Institute Trust in the Home (FAAITH)

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 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 these settings – childcare, early childhood education, and social services for concrete support (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 a focus group of Black clergy and local civil rights leaders.

Objectives:

- 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 or when engaging faith communities

II. Incorporating Lived Experience into Federal Research Practices

Moderator: Rodney Washington, EdD, Co-Investigator, Early Care and Education, NAACFRC

Presenters:

Marla McDaniel, PhD, Senior Fellow, Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population, Urban Institute

Kim Clum, PhD, Senior Social Science Research Analyst, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, ACF/HHS

Parthenia Fields, Member, Community Advisory Board (CAB)

Many federal agencies are exploring options to 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.

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 work
- Receive a compilation of shared ideas, resources, tools, and examples to apply in your work

III. NAACFRC 2023-2024 Emerging Scholars Showcase

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

Moderator: Robert Mayberry, PhD, MPH, MS, Co-Lead, Capacity-Building, NAACFRC, MSM

Objectives:

- Describe the NAACFRC Emerging Scholars Program
- Describe research findings in the areas of early care and education, rural and justice-involved populations and fatherhood

Emerging Scholars Presenters:

Peering Through the Lens: Demographic Realities of Black Households During the Pandemic

Breanna Chachere, MPH, Medical Student, University of Houston

This presentation will provide an assessment of demographic characteristics among Black households during the pandemic. Specific attention is given to rural populations and key variables include health, food insecurity, childcare and employment. The associations between parental mental health and parent-child interactions will also be shared. The findings from this study informs disaster preparedness policies that affect Black families in rural communities.

Racial Identity Development of Black Young Children: The Relationships Between Teachers and Families

Amber B. Sansbury-Scott, PhD Candidate, Education, George Mason University

This presentation will provide an overview of a national Head Start dissertation grant-funded study applying the PVEST framework with ethnotheories of teachers. These ethnotheories have traditionally only been applied with parents and families to understand the cultural values and race-related beliefs that motivate African American Early Care Education (ECE) teachers' racial socialization and identity development in partnership with African American families. The findings draw attention to distinct contextual influences that inform processes for racial socialization within African American families, namely Southern cultural values, family history, extended family bonds and kinship roles - or passed down beliefs about Blackness, which are important aspects to consider. The dissertation study reinforced that the Black majority relational context can be distinctly affirming and can evolve based on African American ECE teachers' and parents' negotiated cultural assets, child development beliefs, and family-centered practices.



Reentry Challenges and Barriers for Black Families in Georgia and Louisiana

Anthony Lizarraga, Doctoral Student, Educational Policy Studies,
University of Wisconsin-Madison

This presentation will describe community listening sessions (n = 4) that were conducted in Georgia and Louisiana where community members were asked about the challenges and barriers they faced with accessing different support services for children and families in their state. A rapid content analysis was conducted from the two Louisiana and two Georgia community listening sessions. Some of the key findings indicated widespread difficulties in accessing essential support services, chiefly in housing, food stamps, healthcare, and education, exacerbated by systemic barriers such as the closure of mental health facilities and transportation limitations. Additionally, re-entry challenges faced by individuals' post-incarceration in Georgia were highlighted, including limited awareness of support resources, denial of healthcare coverage due to criminal backgrounds, and frustrations with inefficient support systems and online benefit renewals, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to address these systemic disparities.

The Day That My Life Changed: Exploring How Black Fathers' Stories Make Meaning of Paternal Identity Development

Aremu Mbande Smith, Doctoral Student, Educational Psychology,
University of Illinois, Chicago

The lived experiences of Black fathers offer researchers rich analyses in interpreting how racialized masculinities and socioeconomic marginalizations influence paternal identity development. This presentation will describe the analysis of narrative data from 12 self-identified Black fathers, and how Black fathers make meaning of social experiences that shape their fatherhood identity. Findings produced ranging narratives, with stories of participating in children's births, interpreting early experiences with one's father, and navigating socioeconomic barriers emerging as central themes. These findings support recent trends in the study of Black father identity while interpreting the multidimensional nature of paternal identity development.

Digital Familism: Momentary Links between Digital and In-Person Interactions with Parents and Siblings, and Adolescents' Affect during COVID-19

Shedrick Garrett, MA, Ford Predoctoral and NSF Graduate Research
Fellow, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The COVID-19 pandemic presented many new challenges for families to navigate. The current study took place between May and September 2020, and included a racially diverse sample of adolescents (N = 213, M age = 15 years, 53% girls). Participants reported their affective responses to COVID-19 in a baseline survey and completed 14 days of ecological momentary assessments (3x daily) of their positive and negative affect, in-person and digital interactions with their parents and siblings, and the quality of these interactions. Adolescents with more COVID-19 negative affect reported more digital interactions with their parents

and siblings, and more negative interaction quality with their parents and siblings. At the hourly level, positive interaction quality with parents was linked to increased positive affect and decreased negative affect in the same hour. Positive interaction quality with siblings was linked to increased positive affect in the same hour. Conversely, negative interaction quality with parents and siblings was linked to decreased positive affect in the same hour. These associations were not contingent on if the interaction was digital or in-person. Results highlight the importance of family interaction quality for understanding adolescents' emotions during the pandemic.

12:30-1:30 p.m. Lunch: In-person Attendees

12:30-1:30 p.m. Simulive Webinar Presentations (online/virtual attendees)

Moderator: Calonie Gray, PhD, MS, Senior Social Science Research Analyst, Office of Policy, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE)/ACF/HHS

I. Re-Conceptualizing Current Measurements of Accessibility for Black Family & Children in ECE

Presenter:

Ashley Watts, EdD Student, Educational Policy, Marymount University

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.

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

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

Presenter:

- Briana Bostic, PhD, Post-Doctoral fellow, Baltimore Education Research Consortium

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, resource access, and outcomes within the U.S. ECE landscape. Furthermore, the study aims to enable participants to identify nuanced distinctions in outcomes for 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 homing 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 necessary to foster favorable outcomes for children.

Objectives:

- Understand how the resources available to ECE staff in the U.S. are shaped by 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

1:30-2:45 p.m. Breakout Sessions

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


Moderator: Arthi Rao, PhD, Co-Investigator, NAACFRC

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

Presenters:

- Ebonee Bell, Program Coordinator, Multnomah Idea Lab (MIL)
- Voycetta Marie White, MIL Member
- Kesha Canda, MIL Member

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 Multnomah Idea Lab (MIL) wishes to cultivate



the relationship of independence, equality, and shared knowledge. In such a relationship, knowledge is an asset for both parties, and the idea of help is replaced by 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 essential 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 Black 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 intelligent risks to test new approaches and strategies. The proposed presentation will discuss how the MIL uses participatory action research to challenge assumptions about poverty and the prevailing narrative about the competence of mothers who live on low or no income.

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 the practice of government spending

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

Presenters:

- Leah Hamilton, MSW, PhD, Senior Fellow, Jain Family Institute
- Simone Smith, PhD Student, Social Work, Policy, Planning, and Administration, Clark Atlanta University
- Aaron Quick, PhD Student, Social Work, Policy, Planning and Administration, Clark Atlanta University
- Desha Elliott, PhD Student, Social Work, Policy, Planning and Administration, Clark Atlanta University

This session will present the initial 12-month findings from a pioneering Guaranteed Income initiative in three sites across Georgia, focusing 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 receiving 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 shapes lives and challenges traditional perspectives on poverty alleviation and economic support systems.

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

Claiming #FATHERhood: The Building of Brothers United Nation

Presenter:

- Avis Files, Program Director, Pathway, Inc.

This session will discuss a unique approach to studying young Black fathers. The research aims to evaluate the impact of the Brothers United Fatherhood program (BUFP). using a randomized control trial design. 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 using 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 participants: gain a greater understanding of financial planning, improve conflict resolution with their partner, and increase understanding of healthy marriage.

Objectives:

- An understanding of how to do an 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

II. NAACFRC 2023-2024 Community Pilot Project Program Showcase

Moderator: Jareese Stroud, Co-Lead, Capacity-Building, NAACFRC, MSM

NAACFRC pilot project program grantees who are leaders in community-based organizations in diverse sectors share their research.


Objectives:

- Describe the NAACFRC Pilot Project Program
- Describe research findings in the areas of housing and wellbeing, youth financial literacy, and fatherhood

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

Presenter:

- Jordan Murphy, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC, Girassol Wellness



In December of 2021, an Atlanta Municipal Court Judge condemned Forest Cove Apartments in Atlanta, GA, due to the residents' dilapidated, unsafe, and unsanitary living conditions. 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. This presentation will describe our research to explore the social, cultural, relational, historical, and contextual factors that former Forest Cove residents share. We collected qualitative data from 13 families through a focus group and individual interviews. Through the lens of lived experience, we hope to broaden understanding of the factors and resources that may contribute to poverty alleviation and improved health and wellbeing.

Money Matters: Saving Today, Leading Tomorrow - Empowering Youth through Financial Literacy

Presenters:

- Tiffany Cuthbert, MEd, MNM, Pillars Initiative
- Mikayla Charles, MPH, Pillars Initiative
- Tyrone Bell, MPH, Pillars Initiative


In today's world, financial independence is more than a goal—it's a necessity. The Transitions program by Pillars Initiative presents a compelling vision of how financial literacy can transform lives and combat poverty. The presentation, "Money Matters: Saving Today, Leading Tomorrow," will showcase how a financial literacy curriculum can go beyond education but serve as a tool to inspire confidence and build a foundation for a secure financial future. Through engaging workshops and hands-on activities, we equip young minds with the skills to manage money wisely, make informed investments, and understand the power of savings. By highlighting real-world success stories, we aim to demonstrate how our curriculum provides a financial blueprint that positively nurtures a future-ready generation armed with the tools for financial stability and independence.

"We're All Fathers, We're All Black, We're All Men": A Qualitative Exploration of Fatherhood Programs as Spaces for Community Support and Father Well-Being

Presenters:

- Brianna Lemmons, PhD, Diana R. Garland School of Social Work, Baylor University
- Ericka Lewis, PhD, LMSW, School of Social Work, University of Maryland

The benefits of community-based fatherhood programs for growth, identity development and psychological well-being have been well documented. Although there are numerous programs and services that cater to the needs to women, few culturally relevant and gender-specific spaces exist wherein men can obtain the support necessary to meet their unique needs, raising issues of equity in service delivery. This presentation will discuss the findings of a qualitative research study that explores fathers' experiences participating in Thriving Fathers & Families, Bridgepoint (Formerly – Children's Home & Aid) a community-based fatherhood program located in the midwestern region of the United States. We will describe the benefits of these spaces for the promotion of community support and well-being among fathers, including 1) the ways in which interactions with program participants served to strengthen the resolve of fathers and help them to manage their own challenges and 2) how fathers drew



upon the experiences and common identities (i.e., being fathers, black, and men), as well as perspectives and parenting approaches of others to develop the coping skills necessary for meeting the demands of the fathering role. Implications for programs and community-based work with marginalized groups of fathers will be discussed.

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

Moderator: Brian McGregor, PhD, Co-Investigator, Criminal Justice & Health, NAACFRC, MSM

Presenter:

- Lynda Gibson, PhD, Director, Psychological Services Center, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

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 address young children's needs adequately. 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 the 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.

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 adverse 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 p.m. Closing Panel

Policy Power: Using Research to Inform Policy and Improve Services for African American Children and Families

Introduction of Keynote Speaker and Moderator:
Latrice Rollins, PhD, Director, NAACFRC, MSM

Keynote Speaker:
Charli Cooksey, MA, Founder and CEO, WEPOWER



Moderator:

Ife Floyd, MPP, Director of Economic Justice, Georgia
Budget and Policy Institute

Panelists:

- Alycia Hardy, MPA, Vice President of Policy and Research, National Black Child Development Institute
- Parker Gilkesson Davis, Senior Policy Analyst, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
- Patrick McFarlane, Government Relations Manager, Childcare Resource Center

Policy researchers will discuss using 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.

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

Questions & Answers

4:30-4:45 p.m. Closing Remarks & Evaluation

Latrice Rollins, PhD, Director, National African American Child and Family Research Center, MSM

Megan Reid, PhD, Social Science Research Analyst,
Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation/ACF/HHS

5:00-6:30 p.m. Networking Reception

Conference Speakers



Rev. Dr. Darrell Armstrong

Pastor, Shiloh Baptist Church, Trenton, NJ; Founder, Faith-leaders Allied and Aligned to Institute Trust in the Home (FAAITH)

Rev. Dr. Darrell Armstrong is the pastor of the Shiloh Baptist Church in Trenton, New Jersey. He founded the organization FAAITH, (Faith-Leaders Allied and Aligned to Institute Trust in the Home) and the Shiloh Community Development Corporation. Armstrong's mission is to support children and families through cross-sector collaboration. Armstrong completed policy training at Stanford University and his theological training at Princeton University.



Leslee Barnes

Director, Multnomah County's Preschool and Early Learning Division, Portland, Oregon

Leslee Barnes is the director of Multnomah County's Preschool and Early Learning Division in Portland, Oregon. Barnes has more than 20 years of experience in early childhood education. She has served as a preschool provider, small business owner, early childhood consultant, and Spark Improvement Specialist for the State of Oregon. Her leadership and work focus on racial justice and equity. She is also the founding board chair of Black Child Development PDX.



Ebonee Bell

Multnomah Idea Lab (MIL)

Ebonee Bell is committed to the cause of homeownership in the Black community. As a member of the Multnomah Idea Lab, Bell focuses on the Mother's Trust program, a study of the monthly unconditional cash transfers to Black female-headed households. Bell's prior work included developing a culturally responsive homeownership program for Black women, which led to a suite of services that included financial counseling, down payment assistance, and debt relief.



Dr. Keon N. Berry

Faculty, Morehouse College, Scholar-Practitioner

Dr. Keon N. Berry is a scholar-practitioner with a background in education management. Driven by a passion for positive social change, Dr. Berry's work incorporates the principles of equity, advocacy, and innovation. Throughout Dr. Berry's career, he has demonstrated a solid track record of unwavering commitment to empowering families and fostering favorable outcomes for youth of all ages. Dr. Berry strives to help children and families envision and actualize their dreams of a prosperous future.



Dr. Cassandra Bolar

University of West Georgia; Co-Investigator, NAACFRC

Dr. Cassandra Bolar, an Assistant Professor at the University of West Georgia, researches how contextual factors affect father involvement and family functioning in the Black community. She is a Co-Investigator for the National African American Child and Family Research Center, holds a Certified Family Life Educator credential, and earned a Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Studies from Auburn University.



Dr. Briana Bostic

Post-Doctoral Fellow, Baltimore Education Research Consortium; Online Presenter

Briana Bostic is a post-doctoral fellow at The Baltimore Education Research Consortium. Before earning her Ph.D. from The Johns Hopkins School of Education, she taught preschool in Chicago Public Schools. Her research focuses on teachers overall job demands and resources across geographic contexts and a child's social, emotional, and behavioral development in early care and education settings. She is interested in how teachers sense of community impacts how they understand themselves, their work, and their students.



Dr. Alex Camardelle

Co-Investigator, NAACFRC, TANF/Economic Mobility

Dr. Alex Camardelle is the Vice President of Policy and Research at the Atlanta Wealth Building Initiative. He recently served as the Director of Workforce Policy at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, where he led a program that centers Black workers in policy debates concerning the future of work, workforce development, and access to good jobs.



Kesha Canda

Kesha Canda is a Domestic Violence Advocate for WomenFirst Transition and Referral. She is the strong, Black mother of three beautiful children. Her journey into advocacy work began after she survived a 20+ year marriage with an abusive spouse. Kesha's dream is to help other women realize their potential by removing themselves from abusive relationships.



Breanna Chacere

2022 Emerging Scholar, NAACFRC; Medical Student, Tilman J. Fertitta Family College of Medicine, University of Houston

Breanna Chacere is a public health professional and second-year medical student at the University of Houston's Tilman J. Fertitta Family College of Medicine. She graduated from Rice University in 2013, earning a BA in Psychology and a minor in Poverty, Justice, and Human Capabilities. Her research focuses on parents' mental health and its impact on parent-child relationships.



Kim Clum, PhD

Senior Social Science Research Analyst, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, ACF/HHS

Kim Clum is a Senior Social Science Research Analyst focused on TANF Program and Policy Research, Behavioral Interventions Research, Racial and Ethnic Disparities, Equitable Approaches to Evaluation for the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. Her work focuses on employment and training programs for adults with low incomes, the application of behavioral sciences to human services, and racial and ethnic disparities in the human services.



Dr. Amanda Coleman

Deputy Division Director, Division of Children and Family Development, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation/ACF/HHS

Amanda Coleman is the Deputy Division Director of Child and Family Development at the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. She leads research projects on early care and education and childhood home visiting. Amanda holds a B.A. from Howard University and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina.



Charli Cooksey
Founder, CEO, Wepower

Charli Cooksey is an activist who led protests at Prairie View A&M University for voting rights for Black men and women. After graduation, she co-founded Inspire STL, an organization that helps under-resourced students access college-prep high schools and opportunities for college completion. Charli's work has been instrumental in bringing change and opportunity to students from underprivileged backgrounds.

Alex E. Crosby
Professor and the Vice Chair of the Community Health and Preventive Medicine Department at Morehouse School of Medicine

Alex E. Crosby is a Professor and the Vice Chair of the Community Health and Preventive Medicine Department at Morehouse School of Medicine. He completed his training in Family Medicine, General Preventive Medicine and Public Health, and epidemiology. He worked at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for 30 years. Where he responded to public health emergencies and led teams, addressing suicide clusters, civil unrest, school-associated violence, sniper attacks, firearm-related injuries, hurricanes, Ebola, and Coronavirus. He has authored or co-authored over 125 publications. His work focuses on the prevention of suicidal behavior, child maltreatment, intimate partner violence, and other interpersonal violence. He currently serves on the faculty of Morehouse School of Medicine in the Dept of Community Health and Preventive Medicine.



Dr. Stephanie Curenton
Executive Director, Center on the Ecology of Early Development, Boston University

Dr. Stephanie M. Curenton is a full professor at Boston University and Executive Director of the Center on the Ecology of Early Development. Her research centers around positive child growth and development and dismantling health and education inequities for racially marginalized families. She's the principal investigator of the CEED-Multnomah County Preschool for All Research and Evaluation Partnership. Her areas of expertise are language and literacy development, particularly among Black children and dual-language learners.



Tiffany Cuthbert
Founder, Executive Director, Pillars Initiative, NAACFRC Community Pilot Project Program

Tiffany Cuthbert is the Executive Director of Pillars Initiative in Atlanta. She works tirelessly to combat substance abuse misuse, tackle mental health concerns, and provide resources for the underserved. Tiffany is committed to her mission of educating, inspiring, and serving those around her.



Desha Elliott
Founder, Professional Doctoral Network

Desha Elliott is pursuing her Ph.D. in social science from the Whitney M. Young, Jr., School of Social Work at Clark Atlanta University. Elliot began her collegiate career at 15, obtaining a BA from Northern Kentucky University. Desha held leadership positions in the collegiate NAACP chapter, provided social services support through the Latonia Elementary Family Resource Center, and started a digital event marketing company as a member of the Collegiate Entrepreneurs Organization.



Parthenia Fields
Community Action Board Member

Parthenia Fields is committed to improving the lives of children and families in Jackson, Mississippi. For more than a decade, Fields has worked with families living in extreme poverty to provide educational experiences and connect them with vital services within the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. As a member of the CAB, her mission is to reframe the narrative around people in poverty.



Avis Files
Director, Family and Supportive Services, Pathway Toledo

Avis Files is a Fatherhood Practitioner with over ten years of experience in program development and implementation, grant writing, and extensive study of the black father. Files is the Director of Family and Supportive Services. She received her BA in Health and Human Services at The University of Toledo. Avis is considered a Master Moderator trainer and is highly sought-after for her training on fathers and families.



Ife Finch Floyd
Director, Economic Justice, Georgia Bridge and Policy Institute

Ife Finch Floyd leads the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute's ongoing proactive work to promote economic security and opportunity, key components of economic justice. Prior to GBPI, she served as the Director of TANF Research and Analysis with the Family Income Support Division at the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. During her decade at the Center, she supported state partners, expanded engagement with advocates, analyzed data and policy, and moved forward with racial equity research and conversations within the organization.



Shedrick Garrett
2023 Emerging Scholar, Developmental Psychology

Shedrick Garrett is a recipient of both Ford Pre-doctoral and NSF Graduate Research Fellowships at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He holds a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology. Before joining UNC, Garrett completed his Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Neuroscience with a double major from West Virginia University. Garrett's research examines the influence of social and digital domains on the psychological functioning, socialization, and development of minoritized youth.



Dr. Lynda Gibson
Program Director, Safe First Steps Program, Psychological Services Center, Univ. Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Dr. Lynda Gibson is a Clinical Child Psychologist, Clinical Assistant Professor, and Director of the Psychological Services Center at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Gibson is also the program director for the Safe First Steps Program, an early intervention research program designed to support providers in addressing the wide-ranging impact of childhood exposure to trauma and community violence.



Parker Gilkesson
Senior Policy Analyst, CLASP

Parker Gilkesson is a senior policy analyst at CLASP. She specializes in work support programs for individuals with low incomes. Previously, she was a human services specialist in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, where she worked directly with individuals to determine their eligibility for crucial programs like Medicaid, TANF, and SNAP. Gilkesson holds a Master of Public Policy degree with a concentration in public administration from Liberty University.



Calonie Gray, PhD, MS

Senior Social Science Research Analyst, Office of Policy, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE)/ACF/HHS

Calonie Gray’s work focuses on adolescent pregnancy prevention and supporting children and families impacted by parental substance abuse. She is interested in quantitative methods, adolescent development, substance abuse, and health equity. Before joining OPRE, she worked as a research analyst in the U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, providing technical leadership on policy, research, and evaluation initiatives. Before her federal service, she worked in private, academic, and government settings--both domestic and abroad--conducting applied research and evaluations targeting public health issues, particularly among populations experiencing physical and social vulnerabilities.



Dr. Leah Hamilton

Principal Investigator of the Family Economic Policy Lab, Appalachian State University

Leah Hamilton, MSW, Ph.D., is a Professor of Social Work at Appalachian State University, a Senior Fellow at the Jain Family Institute, and a Faculty Affiliate at the Social Policy Institute of Washington University in St. Louis. She teaches social welfare policy and researches economic justice and basic income. Her book, *Welfare Doesn’t Work: The Promises of Basic Income for a Failed American Safety Net*, was released in 2020.



Alycia Hardy

Senior Policy Analyst, Child Care and Early Education, Center for Law and Social Policy CLASP

Alycia Hardy is a Senior Policy Analyst with the childcare and early education team at CLASP. She works with federal and state data to help strengthen policies that support children, families, and the childcare workforce. She leads and supports developing policy recommendations, conducting research, and performing data analyses to advocate for systemic changes related to child care and early education access, wages, quality, and affordability.



Kissie Hunt

Executive Administrative Assistant, Coastal Plain Area EOA

Kissie Hunt is an Executive Administrative Assistant at Coastal Plain Area EOA, Inc. in Valdosta, Georgia. Her great passion for learning led her to attend Valdosta Technical College in 1998, where she earned her first diploma in Medical Assisting. She attended Wiregrass Georgia Technical College in 2004, to earn her second diploma in Cosmetology. Kissie is planning to enroll at American InterContinental University to complete her degree in Sociology.



William Jackson

Chief Dreamer, Village of Wisdom (VOW)

William P. Jackson is the Founder and Chief Dreamer of Village of Wisdom(VOW), a non-profit organization that uses Black parent power to ensure that education decisions about Black learners support their consistent exposure to culturally affirming learning environments inside and outside of school. Under William’s leadership VOW has rapidly positioned Black parents as power brokers and thought leaders in education, specifically, as the prevailing voices in evidence-based culturally affirming learning.



Fatoumata (Fatima) Kane

Program Analyst, Youth Power, Parent Power Initiative, Center for the Study of Social Policy

Fatoumata “Fatima” Kane is a Program Analyst at the Center for the Study of Social Policy. She was born and raised in Harlem, NY. She is passionate about creating systems-level change for communities and amplifying community voices. She supports constituent engagement work for youth-driven initiatives at CSSP. Before CSSP, she was an Early Childhood Educator in the Teach for America Program in Harlem. She has a Master of Arts in Teaching in Early Childhood Education and Special Education. Fatima hopes that we one day can live in a society where children, youth, and families have all the necessary resources to live a fulfilling, meaningful life. Fatima believes cross-sector collaboration is essential to provide robust services to families and improve policies and programs with family recommendations at the forefront.



Brianna P. Lemmons

Pillars Initiative, NAACFRC Community Pilot Project Program; Assistant Professor, Diana R. Garland School of Social Work Baylor University

Brianna P. Lemmons is an Assistant Professor at Baylor University’s Garland School of Social Work. She researches African American father’s involvement, child well-being, and the functioning of African American families. She founded the Black Female Fatherhood Scholars Network to uplift Black fathers and families. Dr. Lemmons holds a doctorate and masters in social work from Howard University and a bachelors in psychology from Spelman College.



Ericka Lewis

Pillars Initiative, NAACFRC Community Pilot Project Program; Associate Professor University of Maryland | School of Social Work

Ericka M. Lewis, LMSW, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor at the University of Maryland’s School of Social Work. She researches family functioning and child well-being, with a focus on improving the accessibility and quality of parenting interventions and mental health services for families of color. Ericka’s research is informed by her years of practice experience as a licensed social worker and Senior Training Specialist for the National SafeCare Training and Research Center (NSTRC).



Anthony Lizarraga

2023 Emerging Scholar, Public Policy, NAACFRC

Anthony Lizarraga is a doctoral student in the Educational Policy Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He earned a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science from the University of California-Irvine, a Master’s in Educational Studies, and a Master’s in Public Policy from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. His current work focuses on the ways school discipline is operationalized and enacted in early childhood educational settings, in particular, the way school discipline practices disproportionately impact Black and Latinx girls.



Patrick D. MacFarlane
Government Relations Manager, Child Care Resource Center

Patrick D. MacFarlane is the Government Relations Manager at the Child Care Resource Center at the Los Angeles County Headquarters. Patrick coordinates local, state, and federal public policy advocacy on early learning and care issues. He works with the Sacramento team to coordinate statewide public policy advocacy with CCRC's local work in Los Angeles County. Patrick also serves as California's Senate appointee to the Early Childhood Policy Council Parent Advisory Committee.



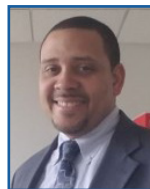
Dr. Robert Mayberry
NAACFRC Capacity-building Co-Lead

Dr. Robert Mayberry is a Professor in the Department of Community Health and Preventive Medicine at Morehouse School of Medicine. Dr. Mayberry also serves as the Associate Director of the MSM Clinical Research Center and Director and Epidemiologist of the CRC Study Design, Biostatistics, and Data Management Core. Dr. Mayberry is a nationally noted scientist, scholar, and opinion leader in minority health, health disparities, and equity research.



Dr. Marla McDaniel
Senior Fellow, Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population, Urban Institute

Marla McDaniel is a senior fellow at the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute. She holds a Ph.D. in human development and social policy from Northwestern University. Her research examines racial and ethnic disparities, low-income children, youth, and families, and the programs and policy environments that touch families' lives. Her work centers around the relationships between health inequities, education, and employment and their long-term impact on overall health and well-being.



Dr. Brian McGregor
Co-Investigator, Criminal Justice & Health, NAACFRC

Dr. Brian McGregor is a behavioral scientist with over 15 years of professional experience in needs assessment, program evaluation, and clinical and community-based research.

Dr. McGregor's research and evaluation initiatives aim to decriminalize mental illness, advance health equity, and eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal legal system. He seeks to engage the community, businesses, and government partners to advance justice reinvestment initiatives through data-driven policy and practice strategies.



Dr. Jordan R. Murphy
Executive Director & Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, Girassol Wellness, Inc.

Dr. Jordan R. Murphy is a nurse scientist and pediatric nurse practitioner specializing in behavioral health and trauma-informed care. She is the CEO of the Center for Interrelational Science and Pediatrics, LLC, and Executive Director of Girassol Wellness, Inc. Dr. Murphy collaborates with organizations in Georgia to provide workforce development, training, and consultation. She is a published researcher, teaches at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science, and is a Community Resiliency Model Senior Trainer.



Aaron Quick

PhD Program, Policy, Planning, Administration and Social Science, Clark Atlanta University

Aaron Quick is a full-time student at Clark Atlanta University's Policy, Planning and Administration, and Social Science Ph.D. Program. Quick's research will look into the root causes of police misconduct. While earning his Master of Social Work from North Carolina State University, Aaron worked as a counselor for the City of Raleigh schools and the North Carolina State University Police Department as an evaluation developer.



Bridget Ratajczak

Child and Family Development Supervisor, GA Dept of Early Care and Learning

Bridget Ratajczak is the Child Development Specialist at Bright from the Start. She has a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Special Education from UGA and 25 years of experience in the field of early childhood education and early childhood special education. She has worked as a preschool special education teacher, an Early Intervention Specialist at Babies Can't Wait, and an instructor in the Birth through Kindergarten teacher preparation program at UGA.



Arthi Rao

Senior Research Scientist and the Interim Director of the Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development at Georgia Institute of Technology

Arthi Rao is a Senior Research Scientist and the Interim Director of the Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development at Georgia Institute of Technology. She is also a Co-investigator with the National African American Child and Family Research Center focused on spatial analyses. She has an interdisciplinary educational and professional background in Urban Planning, Epidemiology and Geographic Information Systems. She uses methods including spatial clustering, data mining/classification techniques and hierarchical modeling in her research. She has integrated these methods to create decision-support tools for academic and industrial applications.



Megan Reid

Social Science Research Analyst, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation/ACF/HHS

Megan Reid is a Senior Social Science Research Analyst at the Administration for Children and Families. She specializes in researching the well-being of low-income families and the structural inequalities leading to poverty. She has eight years of experience in this organization and holds a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Texas at Austin.



Dr. Latrice Rollins

Director, NAACFRC

Dr. Latrice Rollins is an Assistant Professor at Morehouse School of Medicine in the Department of Community Health and Preventive Medicine and Prevention Research Center. She is also the principal investigator and director of the National African American Child and Family Research Center. Dr. Rollins is a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Leader and leads several community-based participatory research studies focused on father engagement and community health.



Amber B. Sansbury-Scott
2023 Emerging Scholar, Early Care & Education

Amber B. Sansbury-Scott is a Ph.D. Candidate in Education focused on Early Care & AMP; Education Policy at George Mason University. She is deeply committed to shared policy-making, community-based participatory approaches in research, and action to challenge anti-Black structures in early care education. Her dissertation qualitatively examines the cultural values and race-related beliefs that motivate Black parents and Black ECE teachers to share racial socialization and identity development processes.



Anthony D. Smith
Emerging Scholar, Educational Psychology

Anthony D. Smith is a Ph.D. student at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he's studying Educational Psychology with an emphasis in Human Development and a concentration in Black Studies. His academic work explores how gender and racial socialization emerge in community-centered spaces for Black boys and men. Smith earned his BS in Psychology from Howard University and MS in Applied Psychology from Sacred Heart University.



Dr. Nina Smith
Co-Investigator, NAACFRC, Associate Dean, College of Health and Sciences, North Carolina Central University

Nina Smith is the Associate Dean of the College of Health and Sciences at North Carolina Central University and Co-Investigator at the NAACFRC focused on rural populations. Grounded in ecological and developmental frameworks, Dr. Smith's training and specific research interests center around the impact of economic conditions such as poverty, parental job loss, and parental work characteristics on the well-being of children and families.



Simone Smith
Founder, Sexual Trauma and Assault Resources Inc. (S.T.A.R. Inc.)

Simone Smith is pursuing a Ph.D. in Social Work, Policy, Planning, and Administration at The Whitney M. Young, Jr. School of Social Work at Clark Atlanta University. She is a Licensed Master Social Worker who obtained her Master of Social Work and Bachelor of Social Work from The Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University. Simone is deeply committed to social action, advocacy, and justice in African American communities.



Allison Stephens
Director, Networks and Policy, HOPE National Resource Center

Allison Stephens is the Director of Network and Policy at the HOPE National Resource Center, Center for Community-Engaged Medicine. She uses her extensive experience in family and community engagement, including family peer support and systems advocacy, to support the relevance of the HOPE framework for diverse families and communities. Her background spans over 20 years and includes defining clinical treatment protocols, public policy and leadership, K-12/higher education, and children's mental health.



Jareese Stroud, MPH

Project Director in the Satcher Health Leadership Institute and Co-lead for Capacity Building at the National African American Child and Family Research Center at Morehouse School of Medicine

Jareese Stroud, MPH is a Project Director in the Satcher Health Leadership Institute and Co-lead for Capacity Building at the National African American Child and Family Research Center at Morehouse School of Medicine. She is a Public Health practitioner with over 20 years in implementing national educational programs and policies to improve marginalized communities. Jareese concentrates her research expertise in political determinants of health (PDOH), health system transformation, and mental and behavioral health. Within these sectors, she examines the impact of systemic oppression and challenges minority populations encounter that create inequities. Employing the PDOH framework and Community-Based Participatory Research approach, Jareese convenes community members and key decision makers to develop strategies for improving the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Jareese is committed to training diverse leaders to apply innovative/novel approaches in addressing emerging challenges.



Tanya Thomas

Executive/Head Start Director, Coastal Plain Area EOA, Inc.

Dr. Tanya Thomas has been the Executive Director/Head Start Director for Coastal Plain Area EOA, Inc., Valdosta GA for 19 years. The agency serves 10 counties within the South Georgia area. The programs the agency offers is Head Start. Community Service Block Grant, Low Income Energy Assistance Program, and Weatherization. Dr. Thomas's vision for the Community Action Agency is to provide a strong community-based organization that offers quality services to reduce poverty, educate and empower people, and improve lives.



Ebony Tolbert

Family Peer Ambassador, GA Dept of Early Care and Learning

Ebony Tolbert is a Homemaker and Family Peer Ambassador with Georgia Department of Early Care & Learning. Her role entails community outreach and educating Georgia families with resources, including, child development and early education. She is passionate about informing families about literacy, responsive interactions, and early care and learning options. Prior to her current role, she was a Nanny and Special Education PreK-5th Teacher Assistant.



Dr. Rodney Washington

Co-Investigator, NAACFRC, Early Care and Education

Dr. Rodney Washington previously served as Associate Professor and the Chair of Elementary & AMP, Early Childhood Education at Jackson State University. Washington has worked with multiple communities to plan, implement, and share research in various areas. Dr. Washington is a Mississippi native committed to supporting impoverished communities.



Ashley Watts

Practitioner-Scholar; Online Presenter

Ashley Watts is a practitioner-scholar who leads programs and initiatives for Black and Brown children across the City of Houston. As a former Start with Equity Fellow, she understands the significance of equity research in childhood education. As an EdD student, Watts brings collaborative and whole-child concepts devoted to families; well-being. Watts is dedicated to bridging the gaps in research and practice and providing practical and applied approaches in policy-making.



Voycetta White

Voycetta is an optician for the Oregon's Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation. She is a resilient, optimistic, and God-fearing, Black woman who is passionate about justice reform. Voycetta is the mother of four beautiful children. Her passion for justice reform came about when she was incarcerated for 85 months where she saw that the justice system was broken and needed change. Her dream is to help other Black men/women to remove barriers and break the cycle, starting with the underlying problems of trauma, mental health, domestic violence, addiction, and criminality. Voycetta has overcome all of these challenges.



Sando Zou-Capuzzi **Student**

Sando Zou-Capuzzi is a Georgia-based advocate leading the Youth Power, Parent Power initiative, partnering with pregnant and young parents to improve care standards. He co-founded The Metamorphosis Initiative, a peer mentoring program for youth in care, and champions young fathers' rights in foster care. Sando believes in inclusivity and providing education and workforce opportunities to young parents. An alumnus of the Year Up job training program, Sando is also pursuing an associate's degree in Cybersecurity.



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