



Healthy Social-Emotional Development in Early Childhood: A Cornerstone of Primary Prevention

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Speakers



Julie Fliss, MSW

Julie Fliss is a Child Welfare Program Specialist with the Children's Bureau's Office on Child Abuse and Neglect and a national expert on child abuse prevention. She has over twenty years of experience in the field of child welfare at the local, state, and federal levels, specifically in the areas of community-based prevention, child protection, continuous quality improvement, and family-centered practice. Her current portfolio includes oversight of and support to initiatives related to community-based child abuse prevention, children and families involved with child welfare and experiencing domestic violence, adverse childhood experiences, and support for American Indian/Alaska Native populations impacted by violence.



Bernadine Futrell, PhD

Dr. Bernadine Futrell is the director of the Office of Head Start (OHS) at HHS' Administration for Children and Families. Dr. Futrell, a Head Start child, began her career as an assistant Head Start teacher in Richmond, Virginia. She came to OHS in the Biden Administration from the National Head Start Association (NHSA), where she was most recently the senior director for effective practice. Prior to NHSA, Dr. Futrell led superintendent certification programs at the American Association of School Administrators.

She is co-author of the book *ConnectED Leaders: Network and Amplify your Superintendency*, and a regular contributor in research studies. Committed to service, Dr. Futrell is a member of the advisory committees at George Mason University and Howard University.

Dr. Futrell holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Virginia Commonwealth University, a master's degree in educational psychology from George Mason University, a Ph.D. in education policy from George Mason University, and post-graduate certificates from Complutense University of Madrid and Harvard University. Dr. Futrell and her husband are the proud parents of two elementary-aged children.



Walter S. Gilliam, PhD

Walter S. Gilliam is the Elizabeth Mears & House Jameson Professor of Child Psychiatry and Psychology at the Yale Child Study Center and Director of Yale's Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy. Dr. Gilliam is Vice President of ZERO TO THREE; a past president of Child Care Aware of America; a board director for the Irving Harris Foundation, First Children's Finance, and All Our Kin; and a former Senior Advisor to the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Dr. Gilliam is co-recipient of the prestigious 2008 Grawemeyer Award in Education for the coauthored book, *A Vision for Universal Preschool*

Education. His research and scholarly writing address early childhood care and education, early childhood mental health, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and adults in early care and education, school readiness, developmental assessment of young children, and race and gender disparities in early childhood, as well as issues of COVID-19 transmission, vaccination, and health and safety promotion in early childhood settings. He is most known for his work on preschool expulsion and suspension, early childhood mental health consultation, and race and gender bias in early childhood settings. His work frequently has been covered in major national and international news outlets, and he actively provides consultation to state and federal decision-makers.



Katie Hamm, MPA

Katie Hamm is Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. She first joined as associate deputy assistant secretary for early childhood development in February 2021.

Before joining the Biden Administration, Hamm was the vice president for early childhood policy at the Center for American Progress, where she oversaw the organization's early childhood program to advance child care, preschool, Head Start and home visiting investment. Previously, she was a career civil servant at the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), where she worked on budgetary and policy issues related to human services programs. As a Presidential Management Fellow, she completed a detail to the Administration for Children and Families in the Office of Child Care, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris.

Hamm received a Master of Public Administration from the Maxwell School of Syracuse University, a Bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia and is a Harry S. Truman Scholar.



Lettie Hicks

Lettie Hicks is a mother of three children from East St. Louis, and she is passionate about the ability of parents to make positive change in their own lives, their families, and their communities. Hicks is a parent leader and advocate with Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI), a Chicago-based organization dedicated to strengthening the power and voice of low-income and working families at all levels of civic life—from local institutions and communities to local, state, and federal policy arenas. Hicks also co-chairs POWER-PAC IL’s Health, Food, and Recess Campaign.



Melanie Martin, MSW

Melanie Martin is Family Support Network Director with the Maryland Family Network. A social worker by profession, Martin has worked extensively in the field of maternal and child health and family support. Her primary focus has been working with adolescent and young adult parents and their children, promoting healthy outcomes for both. Her philosophy is to plant seeds and to empower families with the tools and information needed to enable them to make decisions that will enrich their lives and create a path towards self-sufficiency and self-determination. Advocacy and leadership development are aspects of her work of which she is most proud. Currently at Maryland Family

Network, Martin oversees the Network of Family Support Centers and supports the program staff who provide training and technical assistance. Martin is also a wife, mother of two adult children, and the proud grandmother of a four-year old, bringing her life full circle.



Debbie Mays

Debbie Mays is a family child care provider and owner of Bright Beginnings Preschool. “I believe that children deserve respect and a voice and a right to dream BIG. I consider early child care professionals largely responsible for equipping children and families to be successful through developmentally appropriate practice in the classrooms, consistent modeling, and love and acceptance of each child where they are – not where we expect them to be. “Mediocre” is not acceptable when it comes

to our children. I am passionate about helping children gain the social and emotional skills they need before being thrust into an academic-driven education system. Let them be little. Don’t rob children of the only gift some may ever receive – being a child.”

Mays is founder of the Arkansas Family Childcare Association, currently chairs the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission, and serves on the Professional Development Standards Committee. She also serves as Regional Representative to the National Association of Family Child Care. In 2004, Mays was recognized as Arkansas Child Care Professional of the Year.



Aysha E. Schomburg, JD

Aysha E. Schomburg is Associate Commissioner of the Children’s Bureau. She has extensive experience in developing and coordinating comprehensive organizational capacity-building strategies across programs; a passion for ensuring that the voices of children, youth and families are heard; and a deep commitment to prevention as the best means of promoting health and well-being.

Schomburg joined the Biden Administration in March 2021 after serving as the senior administrator for program oversight for New York City’s Administration for Children’s Services (ACS). There, she worked collaboratively with agency leaders to develop and implement plans for the operational infrastructure of ACS, while also developing and coordinating comprehensive organizational capacity-building strategies across programs. In addition, during the COVID-19 public health crisis, she worked closely with New York City’s Department of Education and Department of Homeless Services to create and coordinate guidance for frontline staff. She also worked with the New York City mayor’s office to coordinate a platform for listening to nonprofits and social services agencies regarding COVID-19 challenges and proposed solutions.

Schomburg is committed to addressing racial equity and bias in child welfare. She leads implementation of President Biden’s Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government within the Administration for Children and Families.



Elaine Voces Stedt, MSW

Elaine Voces Stedt is the director of the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect (OCAN), housed within the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in Washington, DC. In this role, she oversees and manages OCAN activities, providing leadership in the area of child abuse and neglect prevention and systems improvement at the federal level; supporting staff in their work on large discretionary grant portfolios; maintaining federal interagency communication regarding child abuse and neglect issues; and convening national conferences and professional meetings.

Stedt joined the Children’s Bureau in June 2007 as a Child Welfare Program Specialist. In that role, she served as the lead for the Regional Partnership Grant Program, the most extensive federal effort to improve outcomes for families in the child welfare system affected by substance use disorders. For the past several years, she has led the Children's Bureau effort to bring national attention to the need for improving collaborative practice and policy among the substance use disorder treatment, child welfare, and family judicial systems. Stedt earned her Master’s degree in Social Work (MSW) from Virginia Commonwealth University.