

Great First Eight Curriculum

Infant & Toddler Curriculum Development Team



Domain Leads



Nell K. Duke
Co-Director,
Infant–Grade 2;
Literacy Lead

Nell K. Duke, EdD, is a professor in Literacy, Language, and Culture and also in the Combined Program in Education and Psychology at the University of Michigan. Duke's work focuses on early literacy development, particularly among children living in poverty. She has served as Co-Principal Investigator of projects funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, the National Science Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, and the George Lucas Educational Foundation, among other organizations. Duke has been named one of the most influential education scholars in the U.S. in *EdWeek*. She has received a number of awards for her work including, in 2018, the International Literacy Association's William S. Gray Citation of Merit for outstanding contributions to research, theory, practice, and policy. Duke began her teaching career in child-care settings and currently works with aspiring and practicing teachers. Among other roles, she serves as an advisor for the Public Broadcasting Service/Corporation for Public Broadcasting Ready to Learn initiative, an expert for NBC News Learn, and advisor to Stand for Children, a national advocacy organization. She has served as an author or consultant on several educational programs, including Connect4Learning: The Pre-K Curriculum. Among her books is *Beyond Bedtime Stories: A Parent's Guide to Promoting Reading, Writing, and Other Literacy Skills From Birth to 5*. Her Twitter handle is @nellkduke.



Claire Vallotton
Co-Director, Infant
through Age 3;
Language, Emotional,
and Physical
Development Domain
Lead, Infant and
Toddler; Social &
Emotional Learning
Lead, Age 3

Claire D. Vallotton, PhD, is an associate professor of Human Development and Family Studies at Michigan State University. Her research, teaching, and service focus on the development and well-being of babies from birth to 3 years, in the context of relationships with their families, educators, and communities. Vallotton conducts community-based intervention research with parents and educators of young children in poverty. She uses her research to improve the quality of training for the early childcare and education workforce, and to provide parents with effective tools to support their children's development. Vallotton is passionate about high quality teaching, and leads the Collaborative for Understanding the Pedagogy of Infant/toddler Development (CUPID), a group of 60 scholars across universities that aims to better prepare the infant/toddler workforce. She is the lead author of a forthcoming book on comprehensive competencies for infant/toddler educators. Her work has been honored the Ruth L. Kirschstein Clinical Research Service Award, the National Institutes of Health Clinical Research Fellowship, and the New Investigator Award from the World Association of Infant Mental Health. She was named an Exceptional Emerging Leader in childcare research by Child Care Exchange. Her twitter handle is @CDVallotton.



Sandra K. Chapman
Social Identity Lead

Sandra (Chap) Chapman, EdD, is the founder of Chap Equity, an organization rooted in the belief that, through teamwork, we can learn more about ourselves and others; discuss and discover the foundational research needed to address the needs in a community; create conversations that support individuals where they are and confront barrier issues; and create actionable steps towards building stronger educational communities. In addition, Dr. Chap is the deputy director of Programs and Curriculum at the Perception Institute, where she identifies opportunities to translate the mind sciences and other essential concepts into interactive trainings that build the capacity for clients to transform their organizations. Chap facilitates workshops on racial identity development, racial microaggressions, implicit bias, identity/racial anxiety, and stereotype threat in education, healthcare, and with teams in various types of organizations. Embedded within each concept are tools for helping individuals override unconscious phenomena linked to identity and better connect behavior with values. Between 2019 and 2021, Dr. Chap worked as the lead on Identity Development for the Great First Eight Infant and Toddler curriculum development project, led by Dr. Nell K. Duke at the University of Michigan. Great First Eight is a full day, project-based curriculum designed to integrate all disciplines, prioritizing science and social studies to an unprecedented degree for the infant through primary grades, and to support educators in enacting culturally relevant pedagogy. Dr. Chap is the co-author of *Black Girl on the Playground* (Teaching Beautiful Brilliant Black Girls, Corwin Press, 2021) and an article about the working relationship between the Head of School and the Direction of Diversity for the NAIS Magazine called, *The Power of Conversation* (Summer 2014).



Nicole Gardner-Neblett
Linguistic Diversity Lead

Nicole Gardner-Neblett, PhD, is an assistant professor of Psychology at the University of Michigan. She is a developmental psychologist whose research focuses on the individual and contextual factors that promote children's language and literacy development. She adopts a strengths-based approach to conducting research on socially and economically disadvantaged children and families to better understand children's development and identify effective practices that can transform the early learning experiences of young children. In particular, Dr. Gardner-Neblett's work examines the oral narrative, or storytelling, skills of African American children and the implications for literacy development and educational practice. Her work also examines the effectiveness of teacher professional development programs to promote children's early language and communication development. Dr. Gardner-Neblett has published her work in high quality, peer-reviewed outlets, including *Child Development*, *Developmental Psychology*, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, and *Child Development Perspectives*. Dr. Gardner-Neblett holds a PhD and MA in Developmental Psychology from The University of Michigan and a Bachelor's in Psychology from Brown University.



Daryl Greenfield
Science Lead

Daryl Greenfield, PhD, is a professor of Psychology & Pediatrics at the University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL. He works at the interface of research, policy, and practice at the international, national, state and local level, broadly focused on school readiness with at-risk and dual language learners, with a more specific focus on early science education. He is currently Principal Investigator on federally (National Science Foundation, Institute of Education Science, Administration for Children and Families) and privately (United Way, Buffett Early Childhood Fund, Stranahan Foundation) funded grants to develop and evaluate early childhood science programs, and touch screen computer adaptive science assessments, for both English and Spanish speaking young children. He advises on multiple national, state and local advisory boards and work groups for issues related to research, policy and practice in early science including the Head Start National Center on Early Child Development, Teaching and Learning. He is one of the authors of the 2017 policy brief *Early STEM Matters* (ecstem.uchicago.edu). He was the invited speaker on early science at the 2016 *White House Summit on STEM in Early Childhood*. He gave the 2017 Hansen Endowed Early Childhood Lecture at Iowa State University on his work in early childhood science and was the keynote speaker at the 2017 Buffett Early Childhood Institute Conference on *Children as Scientists: Scientific Inquiry for Every Child*.



Mary Hynes-Berry
Math Lead

Mary Hynes-Berry, PhD, is on the faculty at Erikson Institute, Chicago, and is a founding member of the Early Math Collaborative. She has been the project director of the *Math All Around Me* initiative since its inception in 2014. This program focuses on articulating a research-based conceptual understanding of precursor math for 0–3s as well as identifying highly effective strategies and practices related to everyday activities and routines that prepare the ground for infants, toddlers, and twos to enter preschool primed to take on learning explicitly mathematical Big Ideas and skills. She has spent over 40 years working directly with young children in urban settings as an oral storyteller as well as offering professional development to in-service teachers and families in both literacy and math.

She was project director of a literacy-based *Annenberg School Challenge* grant in Chicago as well as of a K–3 math curriculum produced by Encyclopedia Britannica, authored by Dr. Thomas Romberg. Earlier, she did textbook writing, primarily in literacy and language arts for many years. In addition to her *Don't Leave the Story in the Book, Biblio/Poetry Therapy: The Interactive Process* and *Where's the Math: Using Books, Games & Routines to Spark Children's Thinking* (pub. 9/2019), she is a contributor to the Early Math Collaborative's *Big Ideas of Early Mathematics and Growing Mathematical Minds*.



Denise Nicole Powell
Family Engagement
and Early Intervention
Lead

Denise Nicole Powell, PhD, is an educational consultant based in Detroit, Michigan. She formerly served on the faculty at Marygrove College. She received a Bachelor's in Elementary and Special Education from Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan, and her Master's in Educational Leadership from Marygrove College. Dr. Powell earned her PhD in Early Childhood Education from Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. Her 2012 dissertation, *Bridges and barriers: An examination of service coordinator and provider roles and perceptions of family engagement in early childhood intervention services* earned the Outstanding Dissertation Award from Oakland University's School of Education and Human Services. She has over 44 years' experience in public education and has served in the roles of special education teacher and elementary school principal in urban and suburban school districts. After the principalship, Dr. Powell worked as an independent educational consultant, research coordinator for the American Institutes for Research, and principal/leadership coach with the Wayne and Genesee County Intermediate School Districts in Michigan. She has presented at numerous local, state, and national conferences. Her research interests include parent engagement, family access to early intervention, and the impact of poverty on young children.

Lead Writers



Christina Ciaverilla
Writer

Christina Ciaverilla, MEd, is an early childhood professional with a background in classroom teaching, administration, curriculum development, and instructional coaching. She studied Elementary Education and Educational Leadership and Policy, both at the University of Michigan. Christina is currently an instructor for Michigan State University's Elementary Education program and contributes to the ongoing development of the Michigan Birth to 3 Literacy Essentials.



Luci Davila
Writer

Luci Davila is a doctoral student at Michigan State University with a specialization in Child Development. She has studied Human Development and Family Studies at Texas Tech University for her undergraduate as well as at the University of Alabama for her master's degree. In that time, she presented posters at multiple conferences across the US, including for the Society for Research in Child Development and the Cognitive Development Society. Her academic and research experiences have impacted her practical work both domestically and abroad. Luci has worked as an educator in early childhood centers throughout the United States as well as elementary schools in the Dominican Republic and Thailand; she most recently served as a Senior Lead Early Childhood Mentor in Texas. These experiences fostered a great passion for children's development as it is influenced by their culture, environment, and upbringing.



Marisa Diaz
Writer

Marisa Diaz is an early child educator for children age birth to five years, specializing in infancy and toddlerhood. Her work experience includes serving as the head teacher of the Infant Classroom at the Child Development Laboratories at Michigan State University. Her areas of interest include modeling and coaching others to engage in high-quality teacher-child interactions, creating intentional and nurturing environments, fostering a positive socioemotional climate, and supporting the home/school connection by building partnerships with families. Diaz is a contributor in the development of an inclusive curriculum specific to infants and toddlers, focusing on the whole child. She has mentored preservice and new teachers and instructed and assessed practicum experiences for preservice teachers studying child development. Her mastery-level coursework concentrates on antibias education and implementation in an early childhood education setting and she presents at state, national, and international conferences. Diaz was honored with the 2019 Excellence in Early Childhood Education Award from the Michigan Association for the Education of Young children, for her commitment to high quality education for children and their families as well as advancing the early childhood education profession.



K'Sandra Earle
Writer

K'Sandra Earle, MEd, is the associate director of the Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative of Grand Rapids. Her work experience includes teaching second and third grades in the Houston Independent School District. She has also served as childcare center director. She has coached and mentored teachers in the areas of adult-child interaction and culturally responsive practices. As associate director, she leads a team of education coaches, data quality specialists, and family service workers to deliver technical assistance and services to community based organizations that provide high quality early education and care. K'Sandra holds a Master's in Instruction and Curriculum with an emphasis in Early Childhood from Grand Valley State University. Her master's project centered on culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices to support emergent bilingual learners in the early childhood classroom.



Anissa Eddie
Pritzker Fellow,
KConnect & First Steps
Kent

Anissa Eddie, MSW, is an early childhood researcher and consultant. Anissa is currently pursuing a PhD in child development at Michigan State University, and she is the owner and principal consultant of Liminality Consulting. Her work focuses on early childhood policies related to family supports, early care, and early childhood education. The scope of her work examines how public policy can be leveraged to increase equitable outcomes for young children and families – particularly within the contexts of birth equity, identity development and social determinants of health. Anissa also has a specific line of research focused on the racial socialization of infants and toddlers. Anissa’s background is in social work and she has worked as a school-based social worker, an outpatient therapist, and a college instructor. Prior to starting her doctoral program, Anissa led the PN–3 initiative in Kent County, Michigan as a Pritzker Fellow. Anissa also has business management experience as the Co-Founder of a family-owned business, Malamiah Juice Bar, which is located in Grand Rapids, Michigan.



Emily Hamlin
Writer

Emily Hamlin is an early childhood professional with a background in classroom teaching, instructional coaching, curriculum development, and district administration. She studied Family Community Services and Child Development at Michigan State University and Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Michigan. Emily is especially interested in high-quality preschool programming, teaching and learning, the educational continuum from birth through third grade, educational leadership, and advancing equity in education.



Tamesha Harewood
Writer

Tamesha Harewood, PhD, is an assistant professor of Human Development and Family Studies at Michigan State University. Her scholarly interests focus on professional development of the pre-service early childhood workforce, as well as parental influences on children’s early development. She is particularly interested in the competencies needed by the early care workforce to support children’s learning and development in all areas. Tamesha has been involved in conducting research in academic, community-based, and applied settings for over 10 years. Her contributions include authored and co-authored research papers, book chapters, and federal reports related to children’s development, specifically in the language, cognitive and social emotional domains. Tamesha holds a Master’s in Child Development and PhD in Human Development from Michigan State University, a Master’s in Human Resources Administration from Central Michigan University, and a Bachelor of Science in Public Sector Management from University of West Indies.



Loria Kim
Writer

Loria Kim, MEd, is a PhD student in Human Development and Family Studies at Michigan State University. She is interested in the research area of infant/toddler development, teacher preparation and professional development along with high quality care. Her interests developed over time as she worked with infants and toddlers in university based childcare centers and laboratory schools. Loria guided and mentored assistant teachers and student teachers on interactions with children and families as well as creating and implementing developmentally appropriate curriculum plans. She has experience using different curricula for infants and toddlers as a teacher and worked with a diverse group of children and families. With her Master’s in Early Childhood Special Education, Loria had opportunities to interact with children with special needs and their families in the community and learned various aspects influencing this particular population. Her master’s research project was about early childhood providers’ perception on burnout, turnover, and related prevention strategies.



Lauren Lee
Writer

Lauren Lee, B.A., is a graduate student in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) at Penn State University. She is studying to become an early-intervention speech language pathologist. Her master's thesis research involves studying infant vocalizations and how certain elements of cry can be a pre-cursor to later language development. Lauren had the privilege of working closely with families, children, and staff at the Child Development Laboratories at Michigan State University (MSU). She graduated from MSU in May 2020 with a B.A. in Child Development. Under the supervision of lead teachers, she implemented developmentally-appropriate lesson plans for children birth through four years of age. Lauren serves as the first-year representative for her cohort on the Multicultural Committee for CSD at Penn State. During her undergraduate degree, Lauren developed a workshop addressing culturally competent practices in infant/toddler care routines. Lauren is passionate about high-quality education with a focus on representation and inclusivity for diverse children and families.



Grace Meinke
Writer

Grace Meinke is an undergraduate student at the University of Michigan. She is pursuing a major in social theory and practice in the School of Literature, Science, and the Arts as well as a minor in education for empowerment with the School of Education. Her concentration of study regards social class and inequality in education systems and equitable curricular development for early education. Grace has had the privilege of working with children as an academic tutor, choreographer, and student advisor among a variety of university organizations such as the Michigan Mentorship and the Residential College Mentorship Among Peers programs. Grace has worked as a project lead establishing partnerships with local nonprofit groups in an effort to organize book drives and promote early literacy in low-income school districts. Under the leadership of lead professors from the University of Michigan and outside consultants, Grace worked to develop a model for mastery-based assessment and transcripts with the Learning, Equity, and Problem-Solving for the Public Good (LEAPS) program. Grace's passion is focused on the potential for education to disrupt systemic inequalities and establish equitable learning opportunities for students of all backgrounds from a young age.

Organizational Partners

Starfish Family Services: Lead Partner

Founded in 1963, Starfish Family Services is a nonprofit human services agency, recognized as a champion for children and families across metro Detroit who have limited access to essential resources such as education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Serving over 4,000 children and their families annually, they provide high quality programs and support services that focus on early childhood education and development, behavioral health wellness, and empowered families. Through their family-centric, integrated approach, they build trusting relationships with parents and caregivers to connect them to the right resources at the right time. As the lead organizational partner in the infant and toddler curriculum development project, Starfish administrators and educators, headquartered in Inkster, Michigan, has supported the curriculum development process, most notably by hosting focus groups of families and key members of the community and by providing a site for trying out and obtaining feedback on curricular components. In 2021–22, Starfish piloted the curriculum at the Marygrove P-20 Early Education Center.



Celina Byrd
Principal
Marygrove Early
Education Center

Before joining Starfish Family Services in 2014, Celina Byrd spent many years working with and supporting adult learners. In addition, she has over 20+ years' experience in early childhood as an owner/operator of a childcare center located in the City of Detroit. She has been a teacher, entrepreneur, consultant, and chair of the Information Systems Department at Lewis College of Business. Byrd currently supports the P-20 Cradle to Career initiative as special projects director for the new Marygrove Early Learning Center to be built on the Marygrove Campus. Byrd believes every child and their family are deserving of loving experiences, high quality education, and equitable opportunities. One of her many mantras "no deposit, no return" is why she continues to deposit hope and promise in the lives of others. Byrd received a Bachelor's in Information Management and a Master's in Educational Administration from Wayne State University.



Ann Kalass
Chief Executive
Officer, Starfish
Family Services

Ann Kalass has served as the chief executive officer of Starfish Family Services since 2007. Kalass brings a passion for children and families to her work—along with a belief that all children in our community can learn, grow, and thrive. As CEO, Kalass is responsible for strategic planning, fund development, board development, fiscal management, and program and organizational development for the \$45 million private, non-profit agency. In this role, Kalass has led a period of unprecedented strategic growth by defining and strengthening the agency's core competencies in early childhood development, behavioral health services, and family support programs. Kalass has expanded Starfish's impact in Inkster, Detroit, and surrounding communities, and the agency serves more than 4,000 children birth to 17 across Detroit and Wayne County annually. Working with parents and caregivers, Starfish drives positive outcomes for its children with 82% of its preschoolers leaving for kindergarten assessed as "school ready." Kalass has 25 years of management and leadership experience in the profit and non-profit sectors, including 13 years at Ford Motor Company prior to joining Starfish. The Aspen Institute named Kalass as a member of the 2015 Class of Ascend Fellows, placing her in a group of 21 national leaders from a range of sectors who bring breakthrough ideas to build economic security, educational success, and health and well-being for low-income families in the United States.



Karen Roback
Vice President of
Early Childhood
Policy and Programs,
Starfish Family
Services

Karen Roback is the Vice President of Early Childhood Education and Strategy at Starfish Family Services and provides leadership for early childhood education programming serving about 2,000 children daily across Southeast Michigan. Roback led a team of internal experts to develop the Starfish program service delivery model, Blueprint for Brighter Futures, and now leads the implementation of the model across Starfish. Roback also provides oversight for a Great Start to Quality Resource Center satellite location, the Marygrove Early Childhood Education Center and the Starfish parent engagement strategy. Prior to joining Starfish, Roback was at the Early Childhood Investment Corporation and was instrumental in leading the transformation of Michigan's early care and education quality efforts including developing Great Start to Quality, Michigan's quality rating and improvement system. Karen holds a Master's in Early Childhood from the University of Michigan and a Bachelor's in Elementary and Early Childhood Education from Eastern Michigan University.

Hearts & Minds on Babies

Hearts & Minds on Babies (HMB) is a collaboration between Early Head Start (EHS) agencies and three university partners in Michigan: Wayne State University, University of Michigan, and Michigan State University. The purpose of this project is to develop an integrated workshop for parents and teachers of infants and toddlers to help them support babies' social and emotional development. The HMB workshops help parents and educators to better understand and respond to children's relationship needs, and increases caregivers' own self-care and coping skills through mindfulness practices. HMB developed and tested a new model in which early child educators are trained and coached in the new practices, embed the practices within their classrooms, then help to facilitate the parent workshops, which builds the parent-educator relationship. Hearts & Minds on Babies provides core expertise in early child and family mental health, and practices that promote well-being, relationships, and emotional skills for babies, their educators, and their families.



Ann Stacks
Principal Investigator,
Hearts & Minds on
Babies

Ann M. Stacks, PhD, is the director of the Infant Mental Health Program at the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute. Dr. Stacks holds a full license in Marriage and Family Therapy and is endorsed as an Infant Mental Health Mentor by the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health. Dr. Stacks' program of research focuses on dimensions of caregiving that support social emotional development in early childhood, especially in the context of family risk, including poverty and maltreatment. She is particularly interested in the protective role that caregiver reflective functioning and sensitivity play in supporting the development of a secure attachment and social emotional competence in young children and in understanding effective ways to promote caregiver reflective functioning and sensitivity in parents who have a history of childhood maltreatment and in early childhood teachers. She was awarded the Esther Dean Callard Award for outstanding services to infants, toddlers and their families and the Hiram E. Fitzgerald Emerging Scholar/Researcher award from the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health.



Holly Brophy-Herb
Co-Principal
Investigator,
Hearts & Minds
on Babies

Holly Brophy-Herb is a Professor of Child Development at Michigan State University. She holds an Infant Mental Health endorsement from the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health and is a former preschool teacher. Dr. Brophy-Herb's research program focuses on how parents and teachers socialize young children's understanding and expression of emotion, and how this influences toddlers' early social emotional development. She is particularly interested in how these emotion socialization practices are related to adults' abilities to reflect on themselves and others, and contextual factors including the family and early care and education environments. Dr. Brophy-Herb's recent work has focused on teacher and parental mental health, stress, and coping as it relates to caregiving with infants and toddlers. Her work informs the development of training, support, and intervention models in teacher preparation programs, early childcare and education contexts and family environments, including the Building Early Emotion Skills (BEES) curricula utilized in MSU Extension and Brilliant Detroit. Dr. Brophy-Herb's research has been funded by the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Administration for Children and Families, the State of Michigan, and several foundations and agencies. Dr. Brophy-Herb is Editor of the *Infant Mental Health Journal*, Associate Editor of *Infancy*, and serves on the boards of the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health and the World Association for Infant Mental Health.



Maria Muzik
Co-Principal
Investigator,
Hearts & Minds
on Babies

Maria Muzik, MD, MSc, associate professor of Psychiatry and Obstetrics & Gynecology at Michigan Medicine. Her work focuses on the impact of stress, trauma and mental illness in the context of childbearing on caregiving and the developing parent-child relationship, and how to support families in overcoming psychological and environmental adversity. She has served as principal or co-investigator on multiple projects funded by the National Institute of Health, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services-Administration for Children and Families, the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid in Michigan. Dr. Muzik holds a doctorate in medicine and master's degree in public health. She serves as the medical director of the Perinatal Psychiatry Program at Michigan Medicine where she delivers clinical care both within psychiatry as well as oversees the integration of perinatal mental health services within obstetrics, family medicine and pediatrics. She is the perinatal director for *MC3 for Moms*, a state-wide video- and telephone-based perinatal consultation to primary care, public health nursing, community mental health and other health providers. Dr. Muzik is the co-director of *Zero To Thrive*, a multidisciplinary initiative at the University of Michigan focused on promoting science, increasing public awareness, and developing and implementing programs and services to buffer risks and enhance resilience in young children under the age of 5. Within the scope of her work she has co-developed the *Strong Roots Curricula*, a series of interventions for parents and other caregivers to foster caregivers' reflective capacity and enhance their sensitive caregiving, and ultimately, to benefit the wellness and health of young children. Dr. Muzik co-edited the book *Motherhood in the Face of Trauma: Pathways Towards Healing and Growth*.



Kate Rosenblum
Co-Principal
Investigator,
Hearts & Minds on
Babies

Kate Rosenblum, PhD, IMH-E, is a clinical and developmental psychologist and Professor of Psychiatry and Obstetrics & Gynecology at Michigan Medicine, where she co-directs the Women and Infants Mental Health Program and Zero to Thrive, a multidisciplinary program focused on research, training, and service to promote the wellbeing of families with young children who have experienced adversity. Dr. Rosenblum directs the Infant and Early Childhood Clinic, a multidisciplinary training service that delivers trauma-informed treatment to children and their families. Her research focuses on the development and evaluation of relationship-focused interventions for vulnerable families who have experienced significant disruptions, including separations, trauma, and/or loss (e.g., military families, children involved in the child welfare system). In these contexts her work focuses on strengthening protective factors to enhance resilience. In that vein she is a co-developer of the Strong Roots Programs, a set of integrated mental health and parenting preventive interventions for families with young children that includes Mom Power, Fraternity of Fathers, Strong Military Families, and Hearts and Minds on Babies. She has published 100+ peer review articles, book chapters and books, and is the lead investigator on a number of federal, state, and foundation supported projects, all focused on infant and early childhood mental health. Dr. Rosenblum serves as the Vice President of the Board of the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health, and is a strong advocate for relationship-focused, trauma-informed practices across early childhood systems.



Carla Barron
Merrill Palmer
Skillman Institute,
Wayne State
University

Carla Barron, PhD, IMH-E, is the clinical coordinator for the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute's Infant Mental Health Program at Wayne State University. She is endorsed by the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health as an Infant Mental Health Mentor and was their 2019 recipient of the Hiram E. Fitzgerald Emerging Scholar award. Carla has a doctoral degree in social work and has been involved in the infant mental health field for more than 20 years as a home visitor, individual and group reflective supervisor/consultant, trainer, and researcher.

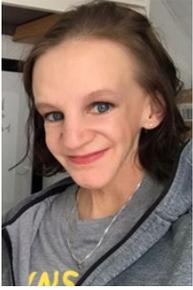


Beverly Weathington
Merrill Palmer
Skillman Institute,
Wayne State
University

Beverly Weathington, LMSW, is program coordinator of The Healthier Urban Families Outreach Program (HUF) and chair of the Community Advisory Board at The Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute (MPSI). Through HUF, Ms. Weathington provides professional development seminars to teachers and clinicians working with at-risk families and collaborates with the Infant Mental Health Program at MPSI in offering the annual Explorations in Development Conference. She is a steering committee member and facilitator trainer of The Giant Step Teen Conference, which brings together 250–300 9th and 10th grade students from the greater metropolitan Detroit area for discussions that promote inclusion, understanding and acceptance. Ms. Weathington is on the Leadership Committee of the Wayne State University Early Childhood Consortium providing support to private, corporate and federally funded childcare centers in downtown and midtown Detroit. She is also a curriculum content developer, facilitator and trainer of the Hearts and Minds on Babies Curriculum—funded by the Administration for Children and Families, with the aim of increasing caregiver reflective functioning. Through this project she has worked with a team in developing curricula for teachers, administrators and parents. Ms. Weathington is very committed to the cultural relevancy of service delivery and has developed trainings for clinicians, educators and legal professionals. She has also served as content advisor for Detroit Public Television and was instrumental in planning and implementing one of the first national childcare resource and referral on-site centers for the automotive industry.

Practitioner Partners

Starfish Family Services Hively Site



Andrea Bzura
Infant Toddler
Teacher



Chris Kruck
Infant Toddler
Teacher



Alicia Oldham
Infant Toddler
Teacher



Renee Pascas
Curriculum Coach



April Sawyer
EHS Site Leader &
Disability Specialist



Michelle Smith
Infant Toddler
Teacher



Kristen Walpole
Infant Toddler
Teacher

Practitioner Partners

Starfish Family Services Marygrove Early Education Center Site



Celina Byrd
Principal



Sydney Varner
Assistant Principal



Tamara Abdur-Rahamn
Infant Toddler
Center Support



Audrey Baskin
Infant Toddler
Teacher



Lafredia Bolding
Infant Toddler
Center Support



Marsha Buford
Threes Teacher



Sarah Campbell
Infant Toddler
Teacher



Sandra Colman
Infant Toddler
Teacher



Beth Cornwell
Infant Toddler
Teacher



Nancy Coy
Infant Toddler
Teacher



Alaila Hrabowski-Shamily
Infant Toddler
Center Support



Ikeya Lake
Infant Toddler
Teacher



Shayla Merck
Infant Toddler
Teacher



Danielle Miree
Infant Toddler
Teacher



Alexandra Purdy
Infant Toddler
Center Support



Janelle Scott
Threes Teacher



Michelle Smith
Infant Toddler
Teacher



Tonecia Thorton
Threes Teacher

National Advisory Board



Barbara Abel
Clinical Lecturer,
University of Illinois
Chicago

Barbara Abel, PhD, is a Clinical Lecturer at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC). Barbara designed and now teaches a new course on infant care in UIC's Human Development Program and leads Professional Learning Communities focusing on Social Emotional Learning, Inclusion and STEM in their ECE Alternative Licensure Program (ALP), as well as coaching the ALP coaches. Prior to joining the faculty at UIC, Barbara was assistant director of Program and Curricula at the Ounce of Prevention Fund's Educare School Chicago. Abel has worked in the field of infant and early childhood care and education for over 30 years. Her experiences in the field range from being a teacher of infants and toddlers, to designing and directing programs for children from birth to five living in historically underserved urban communities, to teaching graduate and undergraduate students and conducting research particularly in the area of the influence of culture and context on children's social/emotional development. She also contributes to the development of curriculum initiatives, including her work with Erikson Institute on the development of Math All Around Me (MAAM), which explores the mathematical capacities of children from birth to three, and how these capacities can be nurtured by the important adults in the children's lives.



Celina Byrd
Principal
Marygrove Early
Education Center

Before joining Starfish Family Services in 2014, Celina Byrd spent many years working with and supporting adult learners. In addition, she has over 20+ years' experience in early childhood as an owner/operator of a childcare center located in the City of Detroit. She has been a teacher, entrepreneur, consultant, and chair of the Information Systems Department at Lewis College of Business. Byrd currently supports the P-20 Cradle to Career initiative as special projects director for the new Marygrove Early Learning Center to be built on the Marygrove Campus. Byrd believes every child and their family are deserving of loving experiences, high quality education, and equitable opportunities. One of her many mantras "no deposit, no return" is why she continues to deposit hope and promise in the lives of others. Byrd received her Bachelor's in Information Management and a Master's in Educational Administration from Wayne State University.



Ronald Ferguson
Adjunct Lecturer in
Public Policy, Harvard
University

Ron Ferguson's teaching and research across 35 years at the Harvard Kennedy School have covered topics ranging from state and local economic development, to school reform, to early childhood parenting. Dedicated to bridging from research-to-practice, Ron is the co-founder of Tripod Education Partners LLC (tripoded.com) and creator of The Basics (thebasics.org)—a multi-city public health campaign for early childhood parenting and caregiving. Ron is the faculty director of the Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University (agi.harvard.edu), a member of the Mindset Scholars Network (mindsetscholarsnetwork.org), and was recently a member of the Distinguished Scholars Working Group of the Aspen Institute's National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development. Ron's most recent book with co-author Tatsha Robertson is *The Formula: Unlocking the Secrets to Raising Highly Successful Children*, (February 2019, Ben Bella Press). His other writings include *Toward Excellence with Equity: An Emerging Vision for Closing the Achievement Gap*, published by Harvard Education Press, the highly influential Pathways to Prosperity report with colleagues from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and work as a member of the research team for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation project on Measures of Effective Teaching. Ron earned a PhD from MIT and an undergraduate degree from Cornell University, both in economics.



Ed Greene
VP, Children,
Youth and Media
Literacy Partnerships
at Hispanic
Information and
Telecommunications
Network, Inc. (HITN)

Ed Greene, PhD, is a producer, advisor, and coach at Ed Greene Strategies. Previously, he served as Vice President for Children, Youth, and Digital Media Literacy Initiatives at the Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network (HITN, www.hitn.org). He served as director of educational outreach for HITN's U.S. Department of Education Ready to Learn Transmedia project (2012–2015). With background and training in child development, early learning, and children's media environments, his diverse experiences include roles as an administrative/legislative aid in the Michigan Senate; senior adviser and consultant to Cito, the Netherlands, and its Piramide Approach to Early Learning; and director of global outreach for Sesame Workshop. Over his forty-year career, Ed has worked directly with infants, toddlers, preschool children, adolescents and families, as well as in a variety of roles and capacities in philanthropic, private and public sectors, and higher education. He is a former elected board member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, and American Camp Association, and currently serves as a trustee of the Coalition for Quality Children's Media. Ed's passion is focused on building culturally relevant partnerships, policies and program practices in the digital age. He recently co-authored a chapter in Peggy Pizzo's Teachers College Press publication *Teaching and Leading with Emotional Intelligence: A Dilemma-Based Casebook for Early Care and Education*.



Kristen Greene
Program Director,
Professional
Development
and Workforce
Innovations
Department,
Zero To Three

Kristen Greene is a program director for Zero to Three's Professional Development and Workforce Innovations Department. Kristen provides key leadership, working to conceptualize, develop, implement, enhance, and expand Zero to Three's competency-based professional development products and services. She is a trusted expert, leading presentations at state, regional, national, and occasional international conferences and meetings. Kristen joined Zero to Three in May 2016, after serving as an Early Childhood Education Specialist, under a federal Race to the Top - EC grant, at the RI Department of Education. Kristen has a doctorate in early childhood, family and literacy studies and brings a wide range of additional professional experience focused on young children, early care and education, and ECE professional development. These experiences include positions as an early childhood special education teacher, childcare center administrator, higher education faculty member, and Early Head Start Infant Toddler training and technical assistance specialist. Among other roles, Kristen represents Zero to Three on the Early Childhood Personnel Center's Collaborating Partners and Cross-Disciplinary Group.



Wendy Lewis Jackson
Managing Director,
Detroit Program,
Kresge Foundation

Wendy Lewis Jackson is managing director for the Detroit Program. She co-leads The Kresge Foundation's efforts to revitalize Detroit and to strengthen its social and economic fabric. Her work supports organizations providing economic opportunity for low-income people and addresses the needs of vulnerable children and families. Prior to joining Kresge in 2008, Lewis Jackson was a program director for Children and Family Initiatives and executive director for education initiatives at the Grand Rapids Community Foundation in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She taught at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan, and has co-authored and assisted in the publication of several reports and publications that address community needs and problem solving. Lewis Jackson is an American Marshall Memorial Fellow of the German Marshall Fund of the United States. The Association of Black Foundation Executives named her an Emerging Leader in 2008. Lewis Jackson earned a Bachelor's in Political Science and Communications from the University of Michigan. She also holds a master's degree in social work from U-M, with a concentration in community organization and social policy and planning.



Samuel J. Meisels
Executive Director,
Buffett Early
Childhood Institute,
and
Richard D. Holland
Presidential Chair
in Early Childhood,
University of
Nebraska, Lincoln

Samuel J. Meisels is the founding executive director of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska and holds the Richard D. Holland Presidential Chair in Early Childhood Development. One of the nation's leading authorities on the assessment of young children, he has published more than 200 research articles, books, monographs, and assessments. Meisels was president of the board of directors of Zero to Three, the National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families, has lectured throughout the U.S. and abroad, and is an advisor and consultant for numerous local, state, and national organizations including the Office of Head Start, the National Academy of Sciences, state departments of education, foundations, public policy groups, and school districts. He holds a Bachelor's in Philosophy from the University of Rochester and master's and doctoral degrees from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Meisels joined the University of Nebraska in 2013 after more than 11 years as president of Erikson Institute where he expanded programs, facilities, and research and strengthened engagement with schools, communities, and families. Prior to Erikson he had a 21-year career as a professor at the University of Michigan where he conducted research focused on infants and young children with disabilities and in high-risk communities, and developed assessments for children birth through eight that are widely used throughout the U.S. and abroad.



Manica Ramos
Senior Research
Scientist, Early Child
Development, Child
Trends

Manica F. Ramos, PhD, is a Senior Research Scientist in the Early Childhood research area at Child Trends (CT). She is a board member of CT's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and of a member of CT's Hispanic Institute research committee. Dr. Ramos' substantive research focuses on the intersection of family engagement and early childhood development. Cultural sensitivity is an integral element in all of Dr. Ramos' work; she has published several reports on the importance of and how to enhance cultural sensitivity when working with children and families. Dr. Ramos co-authored a book on developing indicators of positive child development and has developed many surveys (in English and Spanish) that are used at the state and local levels. Currently, Dr. Ramos is the project director of CT's team that supports the National Center for Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. She is the principal investigator of an evaluation of PBS KIDS Parent Engagement programs as well as a seven-year evaluation of an American Heart Association wellness promotion program being implemented in over 400 preschools across the nation. She is also the project director of a strategic research-community partnership to redesign a two-generational program serving Latino families with preschool age children across multiple states.



Christina Weiland
Associate Professor,
University of
Michigan

Christina Weiland is an associate professor at the School of Education at the University of Michigan, where she is affiliated with the Educational Studies department, the Combined Program in Psychology and Education program, and the Education Policy Initiative at the Ford School of Public Policy. Her research focuses on the effects of early childhood interventions and public policies on children's development, especially on children from low-income families. She is particularly interested in the active ingredients that drive children's gains in successful, at-scale public preschool programs. Her work is characterized by strong, long-standing research collaborations with practitioners, particularly the Boston Public Schools Department of Early Childhood. Her work has been generously funded by the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences, the U.S. Department of HHS, the Smith-Richardson Foundation, Chile's Ministry of Education and the University of Michigan. She has presented her work on preschool to the Seattle City Council, to senior U.S. Department of Education officials, and at a Congressional briefing, at U.S. House Education and the Workforce Committee and U.S. Senate HELP Committee briefing, among others. She holds an MA in Education and an EdD in Quantitative Policy Analysis in Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

State Advisory Board



Kyleen Black
Parent Representative,
Starfish Family
Services

Kyleen Black is a parent leader who has worked in the non-profit field for 5 years. Kyleen joined Starfish in 2014 as a concerned parent and then joined the parent leadership team shortly after. While in college she developed a passion for giving back and helping the community. Being a parent leader has taught her more about having empathy and how to encourage parents to be a better version of themselves for themselves and family. Over the past 5 years Kyleen has held various positions, sat on multiple committees and has spent her time becoming educated through gaining her Child Development Associate (CDA), certifications in Mental Health office of substance abuse, Trauma, ParentCorps and Bridges out of Poverty so that she can help parents and children look past their barriers as their families grow. She now holds the parent resource coordinator position at Starfish Family Services. This position allows her to help guide others, sustain parent engagement, build meaningful relationships and meet people where they are.



Synthia Britton
Early Childhood
Public Health
Consultant, Michigan
Department of Health
and Human Services

As the early childhood public health consultant at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), Synthia is an architect of early childhood systems. She builds connections between programs and provides implementation improvement supports for Home Visiting, childcare, early intervention, early hearing and vision, food/nutritional services, safety and injury prevention, lead safety, etc. Her efforts particularly focus on linking early childhood programs that span across the public health branch of MDHHS and the early education offices of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). While keeping pregnant women, young children and families at the core of the work, she fuels innovation through collaboration, data-driven decision-making, and research to promote services for pregnant women, young children and families. Synthia holds a Bachelor's in Family Community Services from Michigan State University and a Master's of Social Work from the University of Michigan. She stands on the shoulders of giants in Michigan and will continue lifting the developmental monitoring and screening work that has been so valued in early childhood system leaders throughout the state.



Diane Brown
Siena Heights
University

Diane S. Brown, PhD, was appointed the coordinator for the Academic Department of Marygrove College's Master in the Art of Teaching program in 2007 and the director in 2010. In 2014, she became the chair of the Education Division of the College. Brown's research interests include student-teacher interactions in the online environment and the use of *Currere* as a method to retain experienced teachers in the profession. She is the author of *Restorying Ourselves: Using Currere to Examine Teachers' Careers*. Prior to the Marygrove appointment, Brown taught first through tenth grades for 21 years in Arizona, Texas and Oklahoma in both public and private schools. She received her Bachelor's in Elementary Education and her Master's in Reading Education from Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana and her PhD in Curriculum, Literacy and Technology from Oklahoma State University. She is a Catholic Sister with the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) of Monroe, Michigan



Anissa Eddie
Pritzker Fellow,
KConnect & First
Steps Kent

Anissa Eddie, MSW, is an early childhood researcher and consultant. Anissa is currently pursuing a PhD in child development at Michigan State University, and she is the owner and principal consultant of Liminality Consulting. Her work focuses on early childhood policies related to family supports, early care, and early childhood education. The scope of her work examines how public policy can be leveraged to increase equitable outcomes for young children and families – particularly within the contexts of birth equity, identity development and social determinants of health. Anissa also has a specific line of research focused on the racial socialization of infants and toddlers. Anissa’s background is in social work and she has worked as a school-based social worker, an outpatient therapist, and a college instructor. Prior to starting her doctoral program, Anissa led the PN-3 initiative in Kent County, Michigan as a Pritzker Fellow. Anissa also has business management experience as the Co-Founder of a family-owned business, Malamiah Juice Bar, which is located in Grand Rapids, Michigan.



Jewell Jones
State Representative

A lifelong resident of the City of Inkster, Jewell Jones made history in November 2015 when he was sworn in as the youngest person to ever sit on the City Council of Inkster, Michigan. Yet, Jewell continues to make a difference in the community and positive impact on public policy. His effectiveness as a Councilman blossomed into a successful, record-breaking campaign during the summer of 2016. Jewell was selected to be the Democratic Nominee in the 11th State House District and he went on to win the general election, becoming the youngest State Representative in Michigan’s history, as well as the youngest lawmaker in the country. Since then, he’s been re-elected and still remains one of the youngest lawmakers in the nation. Jewell is also an U.S. Army Reserved Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Cadet, a member of the Michigan National Guard, a Senior Deacon at his church, an Auxiliary Police Officer, and a senior, pursuing a Political Science and Business Studies degree at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Jewell is passionate, and committed, about engaging more people in democratic citizenship, cultural enrichment, and sustainable business development.



Jen Jonika
Vice President,
Board of Directors
of MI-AIMH,
SFS Director of
Maternal and Early
Childhood Clinical
Services

Jennifer Jonika is a master-level clinical psychologist who has worked in the non-profit field for 15 years. Jennifer joined Starfish Family Services in 2003 and began working in an outpatient mental health setting for children exposed to trauma. Early in her career, she determined her true passion was early intervention and prevention. For the past 10 years, Jonika has specialized in working with infants and toddlers in the mental health field, and now holds the position of clinical director of Maternal and Early Childhood Clinical Services at Starfish Family Services. Jonika develops and runs creative programming for at-risk young children and families in the Detroit area. Jonika has experience developing and running Medicaid and private funded programming for infants, toddlers, and pregnant women. She is also the president of the board of the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health. Jonika's biggest achievement to date is tripling the size of maternal and early childhood behavioral health services at Starfish through creative and innovative programming. In 2015, Jonika was a Crain's Business 40 Under 40 Nominee.



Laurie Linscott
Director, Child
Development
Laboratories,
Michigan State
University

Laurie Linscott is the director of the Child Development Laboratories at Michigan State University. She is engaged in teacher training, research and outreach. Preservice teachers in the field of early education complete their early childhood lab practicums at the CDL. Linscott is active in outreach at the local, state and international level. Linscott participates in the Office of Great Start Professional Stakeholders group and Michigan Department of Education's Inclusion Stakeholders group. She served on MDE's committee for the review and revision of the Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten. Linscott currently serves as President of the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children. She has presented extensively on teacher training models, family engagement, inclusion and cultural competence. In 2017, Linscott was appointed to the Early Childhood Investment Corporation Executive Committee by Governor Rick Snyder.



Robin Zeiter
Professional
Development
Specialist, Office of
Great Start at the
Michigan Department
of Education

Robin Zeiter is the professional development specialist in the Office of Great Start at the Michigan Department of Education. Prior to joining MDE, Robin supported early childhood providers with quality improvement efforts as part of the Great Start to Quality Central Resource Center. She spent her early career as an infant toddler teacher and then as the administrative director of a NAEYC accredited early childhood program. In Robin's current role, she focuses on workforce initiatives that support the early childhood and out of school time workforce. She facilitates a series of stakeholder groups to inform Michigan's professional development system, including a group focused specifically on career pathways for infant and toddler professionals. She has been instrumental in launching Michigan's workforce registry—MiRegistry. MiRegistry houses trainer and training approval and captures workforce data including qualification, professional development, wage, employment and retention data. She currently participates in several state level initiatives focused on teacher recruitment, career pathways, career technical education opportunities, articulation, and compensation.

Other Collaborators



Infants and Toddlers

Infants and toddlers have experiences and ideas to share which contribute to the development of curriculum. Infants and toddlers from partner classrooms provide input and feedback on the curriculum through their meaningful behavior, which we learn as we observe their engagement and reactions, communication with them verbally and non-verbally, and examine the artifacts they generate.



Families and Community Members

Families and community members have rich information and insights related to curriculum. Families and community members from the Detroit Metropolitan area provide input through formal focus groups and informal interactions.



Featherstone Web Design Team

Featherstone is a Detroit-based digital marketing and public relations agency, owned and operated by POC and immigrants, serving the needs of POC and immigrant-businesses. It was founded in 2015 as Featherstone Moments, but with time, its name, business model, and purpose shifted. As of 2021, Featherstone is on its way to become a worker-owned agency. Featherstone served as the web developer of Great First Eight. Anaelmarlon Luzayamo was the Full Stack Developer. Juan Carlos Dueweke-Pérez was in UX and the point of contact. Ashley Michelle was the Project Manager.



C. Felice Gonzales Project Assistant

C. Felice Gonzales, is the office and program manager for the Center for Education, Design, Evaluation, and Research (CEDER) at the University of Michigan School of Education. Felice supports the evaluation, design, and research development teams at CEDER, along with the work being done by the Great First Eight teams. Another role Felice serves in is as a co-facilitator for the University of Michigan Voices of the Staff-Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion network team. Her early career history includes being a school social work and special education coordinator in the south suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. She has a master's of social work from the University of Chicago Social Service Administration with a clinical concentration, and a master's of educational administration with a focus on principalship and chief school business areas from Governors State University.



Illustrators and Graphic Designers

Great First Eight Infant and Toddler has been privileged to work with a number of talented illustrators including: Marisa Dengage, Dilan Huang, Diana Galicia Heredia, Michelle Kim, Nia Parks, and Sierra Smith.