

# CONFERENCE PROGRAM BOOK

APRIL 11-13 AND APRIL 18-20, 2023

Virtual Conference



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23<sup>rd</sup> National Conference on Child Abuse & Neglect

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## **Doing Things Differently:** Moving from the Challenge to the Change



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## FROM THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY



### ADMINISTRATION FOR **CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20201 | [www.acf.hhs.gov](http://www.acf.hhs.gov)

Dear Colleagues:

On behalf of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), welcome to the 23<sup>rd</sup> National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN). It is our pleasure to gather community to support families, and to collaborate to ensure that every young person in our country who experiences abuse or neglect knows that they are not alone.

Our nation has a responsibility to build a safe, equitable, and nurturing society to support and promote the well-being of all of our citizens. In the State of the Union address, President Biden spoke about the Department of Health and Human Services' work to improve the health and well-being of Americans — no matter who they are or where they live. At ACF, this is at the heart of what we do for children, youth, and families.

Today, we are building safety and wellness informed by dialogue with young people and families who have experienced the foster care system, as well as survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence and those who support them. We are increasing supportive services to refugees and strengthening our care for unaccompanied children. I have met with LGBTQIA2S+ youth who share ways to better support them in ACF-funded systems, with tribes to discuss protecting the Indian Child Welfare Act gold standard values, and with grandparents and other kin who are seeking more equitable support when they take over caregiving roles. These are all part of strengthening safety and wellness.

We are also supporting the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). We have adopted a 50-state strategy to engage with human services and child welfare leaders to support children and families with greater access to mental health services, substance use disorder prevention and treatment, and in-home parenting skills training. We are also meeting with tribal and territorial leaders to understand the opportunities and challenges ahead. In short, we are committed to the intent of FFPSA—providing targeted, supportive services to families, and moving services upstream to keep more families together.

The theme of the 23<sup>rd</sup> NCCAN is *Doing Things Differently: Moving from the Challenge to the Change*. It is an opportunity to showcase how jurisdictions across the Nation are employing creative solutions to tough problems and kicking off new initiatives. I am proud that ACF is a partner on so many key priorities that support children, youth, and families, and I am grateful to each of you for partnering in this effort to support families in ways that empower them not only to survive challenging times but to thrive.

January Contreras  
Assistant Secretary  
Administration for Children and Families



## FROM THE COMMISSIONER



### ADMINISTRATION FOR **CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

Administration on Children, Youth & Families | 330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20201  
[www.acf.hhs.gov/acyf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/acyf)

Dear Colleagues:

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the virtual 23<sup>rd</sup> National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN).

Since coming to the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), I have been impressed by the commitment I see across the country to improve the well-being of children, youth, and families in a way that is respectful of and actively embraces the voices of individuals with lived expertise. At ACYF, we are actively working to evolve and alignment with principles of equity and fairness, and to be thoughtful about how we honor, support, and partner with families, young adults, and tribes to better understand and learn from them how to build upon their strengths and address their needs.

I know from first-hand experience that transforming children and family services systems into family well-being systems that serve children, youth, parents, and families as a whole cannot be done in isolation. It requires a collaborative approach involving public and private partners, Tribal Nations, community and faith-based partners, and others with diverse perspectives. The foundation of this transformation, however, must be a focus on advancing equity and inclusion. In systems across the nation, we see disproportionality at every decision point, especially impacting communities of color, Tribal Nations, and rural and other families and communities that have been historically marginalized. These populations are often disproportionately impacted by poverty, limited access to services and resources, situational or pervasive, and disparate outcomes. We can no longer passively stand by and place responsibility of the impacts of these disparities on individuals and families and must take action as a system to end the ways in which we may further harm families and foster actionable strategies that capitalize on their strengths.

This 23<sup>rd</sup> NCCAN focuses on *Doing Things Differently* – changing the way that child welfare has traditionally worked with children, youth, and families, and transforming our system into one that is equitable, inclusive, and supportive. With this in mind, I encourage you to take full advantage of opportunities at this NCCAN to engage with your peers and learn about innovative strategies for advancing our work. I look forward to partnering with you in making child welfare the child well-being system that our nation's children and families deserve.

Rebecca Jones Gaston, MSW  
Commissioner  
Administration on Children, Youth & Families



## FROM THE ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER



### ADMINISTRATION FOR **CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

Children's Bureau | 330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20201  
[www.acf.hhs.gov/cb](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb)

Dear Colleagues:

The 23<sup>rd</sup> National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) is upon us, and I am pleased and excited to be sharing this opportunity with you.

The conference theme, *Doing Things Differently: Moving from the Challenge to the Change*, reflects the efforts of the Children's Bureau and child welfare systems across the nation to take bold actions to shift its focus toward prevention, advance equity, and adopt a family centered approach, including support for kinship caregivers. These actions include efforts to employ a multigenerational strategy to invest in children, youth, and families to prioritize what they need to be set-up for success in the future. However, achieving lasting change will only be possible when young people and caregivers are actively involved and leading each decision to ensure effective planning, implementation, and evaluation of services and resources.

In my time at the Children's Bureau, I have made it a priority to listen to youth, young adults, parents, and our organizational partners, as well as colleagues throughout federal government. These conversations have reinforced that in order to achieve transformational change, we need to lean into challenging conversations and actively meet with and learn from families, particularly those disproportionately impacted by the child welfare system. NCCAN is an opportunity for us to join together to explore strategies in which child welfare professionals and families work together to create lasting change. NCCAN also offers an environment in which we can intentionally engage in systemic evaluation and self-reflection, which are integral to change and meaningful progress.

Furthermore, the 23<sup>rd</sup> NCCAN offers a forum for discussing the challenges and opportunities that we are experiencing along this journey, and to learn about innovative programs and strategies that are being implemented around the country. To truly do things differently, there must be active engagement, and professional and personal commitment. I look forward to partnering with you as we make this journey together to move from the challenge of pursuing equity for all families to the change that ensures that all families have what they need to be empowered and supported in their paths toward success.

Aysha E. Schomburg, JD  
Associate Commissioner  
Children's Bureau



## FROM THE DIRECTOR



### ADMINISTRATION FOR **CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

Children's Bureau | 330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20201  
[www.acf.hhs.gov/cb](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb)

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

It is an honor and a pleasure to welcome you to the 23<sup>rd</sup> National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN), *Doing Things Differently: Moving from the Challenge to the Change*. This biennial conference is the premier training and technical assistance event for the Children's Bureau's Office on Child Abuse and Neglect (OCAN). It brings together a diverse group of parents, volunteers, and professionals from a variety of disciplines who are committed to ensuring child and family well-being.

We are excited to have you participate in the 23<sup>rd</sup> NCCAN, during which time we will promote innovative prevention strategies being implemented across the nation to improve the well-being of families. Through partnerships with jurisdictions on the Community Based Child Abuse and Prevention (CBCAP) program and the Family First Prevention and Services Act (FFPSA), we have seen great progress nationwide. Jurisdictions are meeting challenges through cross-system efforts to reframe and strengthen their networks of prevention services and to build continuums of resources to better meet the needs of children and families in their communities.

Since the passage of FFPSA, the Children's Bureau has approved title IV-E Prevention Plans in 40 jurisdictions. Through these prevention plans, children and families will have expanded access to in-home parenting skills programs, mental health programs, and substance use prevention and treatment programs. At the Children's Bureau, we are committed to supporting jurisdictions as they embark on this critical work to help foster a more equitable, comprehensive prevention framework in support of children, youth, and families.

Finally, I want to thank my colleagues in OCAN, and the many partners involved in planning the 23<sup>rd</sup> NCCAN. This includes those who participated in the National Planning Committee meetings, and those who served as proposal reviewers, for their support and contributions to develop a top-notch program, one that features outstanding speakers and presenters who represent the diversity of our workforce. I also want to extend my sincere gratitude to the Children's Bureau Learning & Coordination Center staff and the NCCAN Logistics team, who have worked to ensure that the planning and implementation of this event was substantive and seamless.

I am proud to welcome you to this conference, and I thank you for all that you do for children, youth, and families.

Elaine Voces Stedt  
Director, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect  
Children's Bureau





## 2023 CHILDREN'S BUREAU CHAMPION AWARDS

The Children's Bureau Champion Awards honor those who have made exceptional contributions to advancing equity, building community capacity, preventing child maltreatment, promoting child and family well-being, and supporting the workforce. We are proud to announce this year's award recipients, each of whom serves as a shining example of leadership, innovation, and service excellence.

### FOR ADVANCING EQUITY



#### DR. DARCEY MERRITT

Dr. Merritt is a professor with the University of Chicago and co-Editor in Chief of the journal, *Children & Youth Services Review*. With her experience as a social worker and supervisor, Dr. Merritt began research into the unheard voices and lived experiences of systems-impacted parents and children from within their own communities and neighborhoods. She has since received a National Institute of Child Health and Human Development-funded grant to develop a new, decision theoretic perspectives on correlates of specific types of child neglect. For her outstanding leadership, research, and teaching, Dr. Merritt received the prestigious 2020 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Faculty Award.



#### FOSTER & ADOPTIVE CARE COALITION

The Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition (Coalition) strives to create permanency in the life of every child in foster care by recruiting and supporting foster and adoptive families in the St. Louis metropolitan community. For the past 10 years, the Coalition's programs have reduced the overrepresentation of African American youth in foster care. These programs reduce how long children spend in foster care, increasing their chances to grow into healthy, happy, and productive adults and breaking the cycle of abuse. Programs such as Family Connections, Families United, 30 Days to Family®, RESPOND, and Extreme Recruitment® seek to create meaningful chances for permanency for all children and youth.

### FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY



#### JACQUELINE FORD

Jacqueline Ford is a Community Outreach Coordinator for the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF). As a social worker, she has dedicated her 31-year career to serving children and families. She holds a master's degree in social work and is an adjunct professor, inspiring young people to help others. Her initiatives include the Nutmeg Television DCF show called Doors to Hope with Healing, a community center, and the Olive Branch store where families with active DCF cases can shop for gifts for their children at no cost. Additionally, she bridges gaps between the police association, DCF, and the families they serve. She also connects children served by DCF with a sleep-away camp to provide respite.



### ARAB-AMERICAN FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

The Arab-American Family Support Center (AAFSC) is a nonprofit that provides culturally competent, trauma-informed social services to low-income immigrant and refugee communities. Established in 1994, it serves over 10,000 community members throughout New York City. Overall, AAFSC is building a movement of change. It targets financial insecurity, health risks, mental health challenges, and social strains through holistic programs, including adult education, youth enrichment, resource navigation, mental health counseling, emergency financial assistance, and legal services. The AAFSC Research Institute provides high-quality, data-driven information. It also actively participates in 15 coalitions for underserved communities. Additionally, it ensures its communities have a voice in political decisions.

## FOR PREVENTING CHILD MALTREATMENT



### FAMILIES FIRST DC

Families First DC (FFDC) provides community-based, neighborhood-driven supports to families in the most under-resourced neighborhoods of Washington, DC. FFDC has three goals: empower communities, integrate services, and focus upstream. FFDC programs build upon child and parental strengths and support family well-being. FFDC includes families with lived expertise in DC's discussions about more thoughtful programming and in neighborhood-led Community Advisory Councils to determine each family success center's focus and service array. Further, FFDC emphasizes increasing protective factors in the communities and mitigating trauma to build on community and family strengths. Staff partner with other DC agencies to break down barriers. In 2022, FFDC received an additional \$500,000 from local sources to provide food resources and educational programming directly to families.

## FOR PROMOTING CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING



### DR. JUDY KRYSIK

Dr. Judy Krysik is a Professor of Social Work and Associate Director of the School of Social Work at Arizona State University. She has created innovative child safety programming and is evaluating the Safe Baby Court Teams program. Additionally, she created the Advanced Child Welfare Training Academy, founded the National Children of Incarcerated Parents annual conference, and is a leader in the Citizen Review Panel Program. She received the 2019 Council on Social Work Education Award and was a 2017 Fellow of the Society for Social Work and Research. Among her many publications is *Research for Effective Social Work Practice*, now in its fourth edition.





## FLORENCE CRITTENTON SERVICES

Florence Crittenton Services (FloCrit) has been empowering teen families in Denver, CO, for 130 years. FloCrit provides education, health and wellness, and economic and social asset building through partnerships with Denver organizations, and also operates an early childhood education center, a health center, and FloCrit High School. Young parents receiving services through FloCrit's trauma-informed approach have a high school graduation rate that is more than double the national average for teen mothers, and the programs ensure that their children are kindergarten-ready. In the 2021-2022 school year, FloCrit positively impacted 125 pregnant and parenting teen mothers and 100 infants and toddlers. Of its eligible seniors, 93% graduated and 79% had post-secondary plans.

## FOR SUPPORTING THE WORKFORCE



### MICHELLE LAVALLEE

Michelle Lavallee is the Chief Executive Officer of Children's Home Society of South Dakota (CHS). The organization's mission is to prevent, treat and heal trauma for vulnerable and diverse children, families, and individuals across South Dakota. Ms. Lavallee's commitment to staff has helped build CHS' strong workforce. She ensures that CHS offers competitive wages and benefits; addresses staff stress and burnout; and fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion. In addition, Ms. Lavallee founded CHS University, an internal leadership development program that helps participants leverage their leadership styles and strengths to increase effectiveness and learn to coach, develop, and retain staff.



# CHILDREN'S BUREAU PRIORITY AREAS/ CONFERENCE TRACKS

## ADVANCE EQUITY

This track will focus on strategies to address long-standing inequities within child welfare, including deepening our understanding of how race and equity issues feed into the over-identification of neglect; addressing inherent biases in the system; addressing the intersection between poverty and neglect; and building workforce capacity to recognize and address race equity issues, including internal bias.

## PREVENT CHILDREN FROM COMING INTO FOSTER CARE

This track explores new strategies for preventing children from coming into formal care, including new partnerships on the ground and new approaches to working in and with communities; efforts to address poverty; re-examining the front end of the system, especially around neglect; legal supports for families; and support for LGBTQIA2S+ youth.

## SUPPORT FOR KINSHIP CAREGIVERS

This track explores how to better support kinship care providers, including addressing barriers to licensing; building a support system that goes beyond navigation; supporting informal care providers; managing complex family relationships within the context of kinship care; and looking at the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on kinship care.

## ENSURE YOUTH LEAVE CARE WITH STRENGTHENED RELATIONSHIPS, HOLISTIC SUPPORTS, AND OPPORTUNITIES

This track explores new strategies to ensure youth leave care with the relationships, supports, and opportunities necessary to succeed in life. It includes youth voice in decision-making; strategies for relational permanence; and supports during transition. There will be a special focus on LGBTQIA+ youth and parenting youth in care.

## INVEST IN THE CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE

This track explores strategies focused on the well-being of the child welfare workforce, including workplace and organizational culture; recruitment and retention; understanding trends in the workforce; building capacity and focus on race equity in the workforce; and the impact of COVID and “the great resignation” on the workforce. There will also be a special focus on non-traditional workforce members, including peer workers and those with lived experience.



# SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

## DAY 1: LIFT EVERY VOICE

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Eastern

*Plenary Session*

Listening to Learn—Learning to Change

1:00 – 1:30 p.m. Eastern

### Posters & Exhibits

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. Eastern

- **Making Permanency a Reality (featured session)**
- **How Collaborative Courts, Judges, and Attorneys Can Prevent Family Separation**
- **Strategies to Improve Domestic Violence Prevention, Response and Outcomes for Children and Families**
- **Kinship Caregiving in American Indian/Alaskan Native Communities**
- **Connecting Families to Resources: A New Approach to Mandated Reporting**

3:00 – 4:00 p.m. Eastern

- **Developing a Peer Workforce to Support Foster Parents**
- **Supportive Supervision and Resiliency**
- **The Impact of Child Welfare Involvement on Families**
- **Collaborative Strategies to Improve Outcomes for Adolescents Affected by SUD involved in Child Welfare**
- **A Test of a Supervision and Resiliency Intervention to Improve Workforce Outcomes in Ohio**

## DAY 2: UNITING TO SUPPORT FAMILIES

Wednesday, April 12, 2023

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. Eastern

*Plenary Session*

Transforming Our Work: Creating New Pathways Toward Child and Family Well-being

2:30 – 3:00 p.m. Eastern

### Posters & Exhibits

3:00 – 4:00 p.m. Eastern

- **Stepping Forward, Stepping Back—How Child Welfare is Partnering Deeply with Communities to Address Root Causes (featured session)**
- **Child, Family, and Community Well-Being: Reducing and Eliminating Systemic Barriers to Supports**
- **It Takes a Village: Moving from a Child Welfare System to a Child Wellbeing System**



- **Advancing Equitable Outcomes: Exploring Proven Results for Child Safety and Parental Recovery for Black Families**

### **DAY 3: INSPIRATION FROM TRANSFORMATION**

Thursday, April 13, 2023

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. Eastern

- **The Importance of Collective Wellness: Building Relationships of Hope (featured session)**
- **Skills-Based Coaching to Improve Child Welfare Outcomes**
- **Building and Integrating Benefits Coordination into a Kinship Navigator Program**
- **Increasing ECE Participation among Child-Welfare-Involved Families**
- **Implementing LifeSet: Perspectives from Program Staff, Young People with Lived Experience, and Researchers**

2:30 – 3:00 p.m. Eastern

Posters & Exhibits

3:00 – 4:00 p.m. Eastern

*Plenary Session*

**Economic Hardship, Racial Inequities, and Child Welfare: Transforming Systems by Investing in Families**

### **DAY 4: COMMUNITY-DRIVEN RESPONSES**

Tuesday, April 18, 2023

12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Eastern

Week 2 Opening Plenary

**Rebuilding it Together: Community-Partnerships to Transform Child Welfare**

1:00 – 1:30 p.m. Eastern

Posters & Exhibits

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. Eastern

- **Partnering with Impacted Individuals to Build Exploitation and Violence-Free Communities (featured session)**
- **Supporting Kinship Families and Promoting Shared Parenting**
- **Child Safety Forward: Equitable Solutions to Better Support Families**
- **Virginia's Safe and Sound Task Force**
- **Safety Culture: An Approach to Supporting Staff and Improving Family Outcomes**

3:00 – 4:00 p.m. Eastern

- **Dads Matter: An Approach to Enhancing Perinatal Home Visitation**
- **Promoting Racial Equity in Child Welfare: Perceptions of Public Child Welfare Administrators**
- **Transforming the Legal Representation of Children and Youth**



- **Levers of Change: Promoting Better Outcomes for Families Experiencing Domestic Violence**
- **Creating a Culture of Inclusion for Those with Lived Expertise**

## **DAY 5: ADVANCING EQUITY AND JUSTICE**

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. Eastern

Plenary Session

**Moving Toward Race Equity in Child Welfare: Changing Realities, Evolving Strategies**

2:30 – 3:00 p.m. Eastern

Posters & Exhibits

3:00 – 4:00 p.m. Eastern

- **Moving through the Challenge of Change (featured session)**
- **Assessing Staff Attitudes Around Kinship Placement**
- **The Role of Pre-Petition/Preventative Interdisciplinary Legal Services in Supporting Family Preservation**
- **Advancing Equity Through CQI**
- **Enhancing Primary Prevention in Philadelphia: Support Line, Prioritized Services, and Benefits**

## **DAY 6: UNLEASHING YOUR INNER CHANGE AGENT**

Thursday, April 20, 2023

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. Eastern

- **True Engagement for True Transformation (featured session)**
- **Warning Signs from the Front Lines**
- **Community and System-Level Factors That Contribute to Foster Care Entry and Strategies to Resolve Them**
- **The Kinnections Kinship Navigator Program: Supporting Kinship Caregivers**
- **Indian Child Welfare Act: Key Principles and Considerations**

2:30 – 3:00 p.m. Eastern

Posters & Exhibits

3:00 – 4:00 p.m. Eastern

Closing Plenary

**Co-Creating Dynamic Change: A View from Inside and Out**



DAY 1: TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2023

## LIFT EVERY VOICE

### OPENING PLENARY SESSION: 12:00–1:00 P.M. EASTERN

#### Welcome

**Aysha E. Schomburg**, Associate Commissioner, Children's Bureau

#### Opening Remarks

**Rebecca Jones Gaston**, Commissioner, Administration on Children, Youth and Families

#### Panel Discussion

##### LISTENING TO LEARN—LEARNING TO CHANGE

In this discussion, we'll hear directly from a foster care alumna, a parent who has been impacted by child welfare, and a kinship parent about the why, how, and what of engaging those with lived experience. We'll focus not just on why it is important to engage those with lived experience, but what it looks like when we do it right.

##### SPEAKERS

**Aysha E. Schomburg**, Associate Commissioner, Children's Bureau, moderator

**Hailey D'Elia**, Young Adult Consultant, Capacity Building Center for States

**Toni Miner**, Advocate, Circle of Parents Program Manager

**Melissa Zimmerman**, Birth Parent, FRIENDS NRC Parent Advisory Council

### CONCURRENT SESSIONS: 1:30–2:30 P.M. EASTERN

#### FEATURED SESSION

##### MAKING PERMANENCY A REALITY

Hear from youth previously in foster care. We'll be focusing on the solutions that prioritize relationships and respond to the complex realities of older youth in care. This session will include an extended Q & A. Bring your own issues to the table and hear youth perspectives on the ideas and solutions that would have made a difference for them.

##### SPEAKERS

**Angel Petite**, Senior Policy Manager, FosterClub, moderator

**Bianca Bennett-Scott**, Young Adult Consultant, Capacity Building Center for States

**Sixto Cancel**, Founder and CEO, Think of Us

**Kristen Nicole Powell**, IMPACT Steering Committee, National Crittenton

#### WORKSHOPS

##### HOW COLLABORATIVE COURTS, JUDGES, AND ATTORNEYS CAN PREVENT FAMILY SEPARATION

Infants and young children age birth to 3 are the largest age group entering foster care. A highly disproportionate number of this population are Black and American Indian children, and many have





a parent with a substance use disorder. The trauma associated with separating a child from their parent(s) has detrimental emotional and long-term psychological consequences. Collaborative courts, judges, and attorneys play an essential role in engaging families earlier in the child welfare process to prevent out-of-home placement and the trauma of family separation. Achieving this goal requires strong partnership, cross-agency coordination, mitigating bias towards historically marginalized communities, and a family-centered approach that builds on family strengths to protect and care for their children. This presentation will explore strategies to engage families earlier including serving families prior to filing a petition, early and quality legal representation, expanding services for infants and young children, and utilizing pre-and post-natal Plans of Safe Care to better serve expectant parents and families affected by prenatal substance exposure. The presentation will also share key lessons and best practices from family treatment courts and outcomes from the National Quality Improvement Center for Collaborative Community Court Team's (QIC-CCCT) engagement with 14 collaborative court teams and their journey to improve systems of care for infants and families affected by prenatal substance exposure.

#### **PRESENTERS**

**Ashay Shah**, Senior Program Associate, Center for Children and Family Futures

**Alexis Balkey**, Deputy Program Director, Center for Children and Family Futures

#### **STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION, RESPONSE AND OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

Specialized Services for Abused Parents and Children (SSAPC) grantees are building evidence for services, strategies, advocacy and interventions that help enhance the well-being of all survivors of domestic violence. In this session, presenters will share actionable insights from their work. ¡Vamos Juguemos! at Caminar Latino is piloting non-traditional ways of strengthening the relationship between adult survivors and youth, hosting family activities that support resiliency, healthy communication and problem-solving. The Center for Resilience and Well-Being is implementing and evaluating Let's Connect, a dyadic, parent-child intervention that builds parents' capacities and teaches behaviorally-specific, emotion-focused parenting skills. The Family Enrichment and Support Program at Children's National Hospital provides mental health care to children and their non-abusive parent, conducts parent education workshops, and trains community partners. Interventions to Mitigate Parent and Child trauma (IMPACT) at My Sister's Place provides comprehensive, age-appropriate, evidence-based intervention to mitigate the impacts of ACES for children and their non-abusive parent and build parent's belief in their own competence. WEAVE is adapting and implementing Celebrating Families!, a two-generation approach to mitigating impacts, interrupting intergenerational transmission of violence, and keeping families out of the child welfare system.

#### **PRESENTERS**

**Shellie Taggart**, Program Director, Futures Without Violence

**Allison Jackson, MD**, Division Chief, Child & Adolescent Protection Center, Children's National Hospital

**Paloma Baldovinos**, Youth Program Manager, Caminar Latino

**Kimberly Shipman, PhD**, Senior Research Associate, Clinical/Developmental Psychologist, Colorado Center for Resilience and Well-Being, University of Colorado, Boulder

#### **KINSHIP CAREGIVING IN AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVE COMMUNITIES**

Kinship caregiving, especially the phenomenon of grandparents providing sole care for their grandchildren, occurs at a higher rate in American Indian/Alaskan Native (AIAN) communities than in any other demographic group. In 2017 the state of Washington allocated resources to seven tribes



to build and implement tribal derived and tribally adapted kinship navigation programs. This session will provide historical context of the phenomenon of kinship caregiving in AIAN communities; background on how culturally derived kinship navigator programs were built by seven tribes in Washington State, which a specific deep dive into one program, Port Gamble; and share research findings related to how AIAN caregiver needs differ from nontribal kinship caregivers, and how the opportunity for culturally derived kinship navigator services impacts services access and utilization of different types of services.

**PRESENTERS**

**Angelique Day**, Associate Professor, University of Washington School of Social Work

**Cheryl Miller**, Director of Children and Family Services, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe

**CONNECTING FAMILIES TO RESOURCES: A NEW APPROACH TO MANDATED REPORTING**

In 2020, NYS passed legislation that required the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to reimagine and revamp its statewide online mandated reporter training to include ACEs/Protective Factors, implicit bias, and information on identifying child abuse virtually. The training will now focus on alternatives to calling CPS (except when there is immediate danger to a child). Prevent Child Abuse NY (PCANY) partnered with OCFS to develop the training, particularly by convening discipline-specific advisory groups (including parents) and creating handouts for each training module. Now--what happens after you've taken the training? In this session, PCANY staff will provide an overview of the training and the efforts that led to its creation. Attendees will think through and share thoughts on how their work environment can support this new approach. The audience will then walk through a case study and discuss community resources--what services are available, what gaps exist, and what needs to happen at the organizational level to support staff and families in making referrals and finding services. The group will be prompted to examine next steps for approaching this perspective shift as a "mandated supporter" more effectively. What professional development opportunities will support the concrete skill building necessary to do this work more authentically? How do we support staff to not just learn these skills but build the muscle memory to practice them with less effort?

**PRESENTERS**

**Jenn O'Connor**, Director of Policy and Advocacy, Prevent Child Abuse NY

**Kari Siddiqui**, Senior Policy Associate, Prevent Child Abuse NY

**CONCURRENT SESSIONS: 3:00–4:00 P.M. EASTERN**

**DEVELOPING A PEER WORKFORCE TO SUPPORT FOSTER PARENTS**

A 2018 survey of 1,000 foster parents, as well as more than two decades of providing statewide resources to foster parents and the expertise of a project Leadership Team, informed the development of Encompass: Community and Collaboration for Foster Families. Overwhelmingly, foster parents share that their experiences are rewarding, but that they need more support, particularly in trauma-informed parenting. Encompass is designed to improve foster caregivers' knowledge, skills, and confidence in providing trauma-informed care, through training and individual support from Peer Trauma Coaches, who are all current or former foster parents. Encompass Peer Trauma Coaches deliver valuable on-the-ground support to foster families to promote foster parents' enhanced skills and knowledge as well as placement stability for children in care. We will explain how the Resource Parent Curriculum (RPC) is the foundation of the content delivered to foster parents and will outline the creative ways that Encompass has provided tailored opportunities for



professional development for each Peer Trauma Coach through the RPC, such as train-the-trainer, co-facilitation of RPC sessions, and our internally developed “RPC+ Case Consultation.”

#### PRESENTERS

**Sarah Ahola**, Project Coordinator, Encompass, Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

**Diane Lanni**, Lead Trauma Coach, FaCES Clinic, UMass Memorial Health Care

**Jill Cummings**, Trauma Coach, Encompass, Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

#### SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION AND RESILIENCY

The National Foster Care Youth & Alumni Policy Council members (individuals with lived experience as children/youth in foster care) are involved from the local to national level in informing policy and practice to lead to better outcomes for children and youth served by the system. Recent years have seen an increase in attention to children who enter the United States as immigrants. While the focus has largely been on those who enter via the southern border, the experiences of youth who are in both the immigration and foster care systems remain under-examined. The Council decided to elevate this topic due to direct experience by current members of navigating both systems simultaneously. Whether you are directly serving young people in foster care or working on system change, learn how you can ensure your work is informed by youth perspective. Explore the profound impact including youth expertise can have when working to effectively serve children, youth and families who experience both immigration and foster care. Join an interactive dialogue with members of the Council on how to ensure immigrant children and youth are connected to key relationships, supported through their journeys and have equitable opportunities to thrive.

#### PRESENTERS

**Angel Petite**, Senior Policy Manager, FosterClub

**Aliyah Zeien**, Member, National Foster Care Youth & Alumni Policy Council

**Daysha Reed**, Member, National Foster Care Youth & Alumni Policy Council

**Franz Utomo**, Member, National Foster Care Youth & Alumni Policy Council

#### THE IMPACT OF CHILD WELFARE INVOLVEMENT ON FAMILIES

This workshop offers a rare opportunity to hear from parents about their involvement with the front end of the child welfare system and the impact on their families. In 2022, three foundations, researchers, a national non-profit and parents came together to design and implement a participatory research project that explored the front end of the child welfare system. The center of this work included 10 strong parent partners with lived experience with the system who interviewed 100 parents to learn more about their experiences when they were investigated for allegations of child abuse and neglect. The goal was to better understand how the system works and its impact on families and to begin to explore how to make improvements to be more supportive of the families involved. Come join us to learn from these powerful parent voices through a project that incorporates a partnership approach between funders, researchers and parents with shared power, shared resources, and shared information.

#### PRESENTERS

**Meryl Levine**, National Director of Parent Partnerships, Children's Trust Fund Alliance

**Dee Bonnick**, Research Project Core Team Member, Children's Trust Fund Alliance

**Jennifer Brooks**, Senior Impact Advisor and President, Jennifer L. Brooks, LLC

**Tiffany Allen**, Research Director, Child Focus, Inc.



## COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR ADOLESCENTS AFFECTED BY SUD INVOLVED IN CHILD WELFARE

Adolescence is a stage of life with specific health and developmental needs. A successful transition from childhood to adulthood can be difficult even under the best circumstances. For youth in foster care, and particularly those affected by substance use disorders, this transition can be further complicated by a lack of supports tailored to this stage of development. Both parental and adolescent substance use disorders can disrupt family well-being and require a coordinated and collaborative response. This presentation will examine common assumptions, biases and disparities related to youth involved in child welfare, detail the unique risks and needs of adolescents and transitional aged youth who are affected by substance use disorders, delinquency and trauma. Strategies to prevent or treat adolescent substance use disorders, promote resilience, recovery, and positive youth development will be reviewed. The presentation will highlight successful collaboration strategies and approaches for engaging youth, their families, and key stakeholders across systems including healthcare, mental health, substance use disorder treatment, child welfare and the judicial system to improve outcomes for adolescents and their families. This session will include a didactic presentation, Q&A session and polling questions for audience engagement.

### PRESENTERS

**Claudia Alvarez-Valber**, Senior Program Associate, Regional Partnership Grant (RPG) Program, National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW)

**Kelly Jones**, Senior Program Associate, National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare

## A TEST OF A SUPERVISION AND RESILIENCY INTERVENTION TO IMPROVE WORKFORCE OUTCOMES IN OHIO

The workshop will include a presentation of the needs assessment results, process for intervention development and implementation and evaluation results from one of the Children's Bureau funded QIC-WD workforce intervention studies. A state central office administrator in a state supervised, county administered system will describe why their state applied to be a study site and the process for recruiting counties to be involved. An implementation specialist from the QIC-WD team will describe the multi-level Coach Ohio intervention, the theory of change and how administrators and supervisors were trained and coached in the ACCWIC Coaching Model to reinforce supportive supervision. Representatives from two of the intervention counties will describe how they implemented the Resilience Alliance program, the logistics involved, the role of county implementation teams to execute the project and how well the program was received by staff (video testimonies will also be included). The QIC-WD evaluation lead will describe how well the program was implemented by sharing implementation results, the impact of the intervention on changes in coping skills, short-term outcomes like intent to leave the agency, actual turnover, organizational culture and climate and the impact of the intervention on transitioning during the pandemic. Representatives from the two counties will describe how they have sustained the intervention.

### PRESENTERS

**Anita Barbee**, Professor, University of Louisville

**Vince Ciola**, Bureau Chief of Systems and Practice Advancement, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

**Amy Davidson**, Deputy Executive Director, Social Services, Summit County Children's Services

**Deanna Nichols-Stika**, Executive Director, Wayne County Children Services Board



DAY 2: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 2023

## UNITING TO SUPPORT FAMILIES

### PLENARY SESSION: 1:30–2:30 P.M. EASTERN

#### TRANSFORMING OUR WORK: CREATING NEW PATHWAYS TOWARD CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Many issues that bring families to child welfare are broader and deeper than child welfare interventions can impact alone. Addressing the underlying social challenges and structural inequities that lead to child welfare involvement requires cross-sector collaborations as well as partnerships with families and communities. More focused efforts are necessary, beyond intervention, or even prevention, to proactively support family and child wellbeing outcomes. This session will focus on broadening the child welfare lens and creating new pathways to family and child well-being. We will discuss implications for policies, practices, structures, and cross-sector relationships that promote partnering with families and communities.

##### SPEAKERS

**Elaine Voces Stedt**, Director, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, Children's Bureau, moderator  
**Zeinab Chahine**, Executive Vice-President of Child and Family Services, Casey Family Programs  
**Samantha Mellerson**, Executive Director, W. Haywood Burns Institute

### CONCURRENT SESSIONS: 3:00–4:00 P.M. EASTERN

#### FEATURED SESSION

#### STEPPING FORWARD, STEPPING BACK—HOW CHILD WELFARE IS PARTNERING DEEPLY WITH COMMUNITIES TO ADDRESS ROOT CAUSES

Learn from leaders in Kansas and DC about how they are collaborating with communities to drive change in child welfare. This session will dive deep into the process of building trust with communities, learning from those with lived experience, and constructing deep community partnerships.

##### SPEAKERS

**Tamika Thurston**, Senior Practice and Policy Advisor to the Associate Commissioner, Children's Bureau, moderator  
**Sylvia Brown**, Kinship Care Provider  
**Pastor John Davis**, Co-founder, Keep It Moving Empowerment Ministries  
**Robert L. Matthews**, Director, DC Child and Family Services Agency  
**Nina Shaw-Woody**, Executive Director, Kansas Family Advisory Network

#### WORKSHOPS

#### CHILD, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING: REDUCING AND ELIMINATING SYSTEMIC BARRIERS TO SUPPORTS

This session will focus on a Child, Family and Community Wellbeing System building journey in San Diego, California. This cross-sector effort, launched through initial funding by the Children's Bureau, has evolved from a community-based prevention collaborative to a public-private partnership



driving systems transformation grounded in equity, inclusion and shared power. The project's theory of change assumes that all families have strengths and that increasing family protective factors decreases the risk of child maltreatment. We believe that reducing and eliminating systemic barriers to supports are the most promising and impactful approach to preventing entry into foster care and increasing child, family and community wellbeing. The presentation will share how the initiative has leveraged local, state and national legislation to catalyze change around what and how family strengthening and support services are provided, including shared multi-sector approaches to best practice service delivery, assessment and referral and outcomes tracking. The presentation will highlight key relationship building approaches, shared visioning, strategic alignment processes, resource sharing and sustainability planning activities that have begun to yield some promising new best practices and positive impact on families across the county. Specific engagement efforts, with both community partners and individuals impacted by the child welfare system, will be shared, including staffing structures, compensation models and feedback loops. Session will include: introduction and context setting, overview of processes and strategies identified, partners engaged, timeline of activities, evaluation and continuous quality improvement activities, and reflections on successes and lessons learned.

#### PRESENTERS

**Aimee Zeitz**, Director of Strategic Advancement, YMCA of San Diego County

**Brandi Paniagua**, Coordinator and Trainer, Partners in Prevention

**Penny Randazzo**, Family and Parent Partner

#### IT TAKES A VILLAGE: MOVING FROM A CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM TO A CHILD WELLBEING SYSTEM

The DC Child and Family Services Agency's Kinship Model assists in providing a more structured and organized way to approach practices challenges, respond to emergencies, make the best collaborative decisions for child and families and foster relationships and long-lasting partnerships from outside agencies. The goal of the Kinship Model is to create a true "village" that focuses uniquely on the specific individual, their families and communities that support them. The primary focus is prevention and the reduction of recidivism. The program is comprised of four teams: Informal Relative Caregivers, Family Team Meeting (FTM), Parent Engagement, Education and Resource (PEER), and Kinship licensing. Kin (birth parent and kin) are supported by a "village" as they maneuver through a confusing and frustrating child welfare system. This session specifically targets Child Welfare workers, frontline workers, supervisors, and Kinship care providers.

#### PRESENTERS

**Angela Russell**, Supervisory Resource Development Specialist,  
DC Child and Family Services Agency

**Tyreis Pierce**, Family Team Meeting Supervisor, DC Child and Family Services Agency

**Richard Howard**, Supervisory Resource Development Specialist,  
DC Child and Family Services Agency

**Tasha White Sims**, Family Team Meeting Supervisor, DC Child and Family Services Agency

**Beverly Brown-Myers**, Kinship Licensing Supervisor, DC Child and Family Services Agency

**Erica Booker**, Resource Development Specialist Supervisor, DC Child and  
Family Services Agency





## ADVANCING EQUITABLE OUTCOMES: EXPLORING PROVEN RESULTS FOR CHILD SAFETY AND PARENTAL RECOVERY FOR BLACK FAMILIES

An urgent need exists for child welfare and substance use disorder interventions that safely preserve families of color. Participants of this workshop will be introduced to Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START), an evidenced-based child welfare service delivery model with proven results for Black families. Join us for this critical and timely discussion as we: 1) acknowledge the historical inequities disproportionately impacting families of color with child welfare involvement; 2) explore effective strategies for engagement and retention of families of color in treatment and family stabilization services; and 3) partner to promote collaboration and systems-level change for equitable outcomes for all families affected by parental substance use and child maltreatment. This session will critically address the historical inequities disproportionately impacting families of color with child welfare involvement. Effective strategies for engagement and retention of families of color in treatment and family stabilization services will be explored. Ways to partner to promote collaboration and systems-level change for equitable outcomes for all families affected by parental substance use and maltreatment will be examined and discussed.

### PRESENTERS

**Tina Willauer**, Program Director, Children and Family Futures

**Meredith Russo**, Program Associate, Children and Family Futures

**Terri Lucas**, National Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START) Family Mentor, Kentucky Department for Community Based Services

**Dawnia Flonnoy**, Senior Program Associate, START Training and Technical Assistance Program

**Carmel Cline**, Lead Family Mentor, START, University of Kentucky College of Social Work, Department for Community Based Services



DAY 3: THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 2023

## INSPIRATION FROM TRANSFORMATION

CONCURRENT SESSIONS: 1:30–2:30 P.M. EASTERN

### FEATURED SESSION

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLECTIVE WELLNESS: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS OF HOPE

Personal wellness is essential to community and collective wellness. Join us for a conversation about realizing wellness for ourselves in support communities; leveraging local expertise and sovereignty; shifting power dynamics; and creating positive relationships of hope.

#### SPEAKERS

**Tabitha Temple**, Social Science Analyst, Office of Head Start, moderator

**Tecoria Jones**, Lived Experience Expert

**Anita Shannon**, Senior Director, Casey Family Programs

### WORKSHOPS

#### SKILLS-BASED COACHING TO IMPROVE CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES

Coaching has become an increasingly common practice to strengthen knowledge and skills for child welfare professionals. This presentation will describe how collaboration among diverse partners enhanced the implementation of a skills-based coaching program for child welfare supervisors statewide. In addition to building supervisors' coaching skills, the program centered on several priority topics determined by the collaborative efforts of the partners that would improve child welfare practices. The six priority topics are: Kin/Relative Connections, Strength-Based Engagement, Family Centered Assessment and Case Planning, Risk and Safety Assessments, Secondary Traumatic Stress and Antiracism. The presentation will explore how collaborative spaces were provided to supervisors to explore, learn, and reflect on how to improve outcomes in their work utilizing the defined priority topics. For this session we highlight the "Antiracism" collaboration offered to supervisors.

#### PRESENTERS

**Alanea Hanna**, Program Coordinator, KanCoach, Kansas Strong, The University of Kansas

**Taryn Atkins**, Program Coordinator, KanCoach, The University of Kansas

**Natasha Santiago-Mason**, Program Coordinator, KanCoach, The University of Kansas

**Vickie McArthur**, Program Manager, KanCoach, Kansas Strong, The University of Kansas

#### BUILDING AND INTEGRATING BENEFITS COORDINATION INTO A KINSHIP NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

Navigating and accessing federal, state, and local benefits programs is consistently identified as one of the most pressing needs of kinship and adoption families. There are often high barriers to accessing benefits programs, including obtaining information about the qualifying details, filling out the application, and successfully appealing a benefit denial decision, particularly while applying for a kinship or adopted child. The OhioKAN Kinship and Adoption Navigator program added a Benefits Coordinator to their staff to work directly with families who need extra support accessing benefits programs, train navigator staff to actively engage families about benefits programs from the first point of contact,



host benefit information sessions for kinship and adoption families, and build partnerships across state-wide systems to lower systemic barriers to access. This presentation will review the innovative design and comprehensive integration of benefits coordination throughout the OhioKAN Kinship and Adoption Navigator program. It will discuss the outcomes data and impact on benefits support with kinship families, and will provide guidance to kinship navigator programs specifically, and family-serving programs broadly, about how and why to integrate benefits coordination support. The presentation will include a slide deck, discussion, question and answer period, and handouts with examples of work supports and processes.

**PRESENTERS**

**Samantha Steinmetz**, Policy Analyst, Chapin Hall Center for Children

**Amber Robinson**, Statewide Benefits Coordinator, OhioKAN Kinship & Adoption Navigator Program

**INCREASING ECE PARTICIPATION AMONG CHILD-WELFARE-INVOLVED FAMILIES**

Early childhood education (ECE) participation has significant benefits for young children and families with child welfare systems involvement, particularly in helping to reduce disparities over the lifespan. ECE participation of children in foster care remains low despite federal efforts to prioritize enrollment. Through analysis of integrated, statewide administrative data and interviews with foster and biological families, child welfare workers, ECE providers and state agency staff, barriers and facilitators to ECE participation for young children in foster care have been identified. Group differences in ECE experience by race/ethnicity and geography (i.e., rural, urban, suburban) were also analyzed. This session will share study analysis results and learnings and offer potential strategies for increasing interagency collaboration to address policy, practice and knowledge challenges contributing to ECE participation for young children in foster care.

**PRESENTERS**

**Kristine Piescher**, Director of Research and Evaluation, Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, University of Minnesota

**Traci LaLiberte**, Executive Director, Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, University of Minnesota

**Amy Dorman**, Child Welfare Researcher, Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, University of Minnesota

**IMPLEMENTING LIFESET: PERSPECTIVES FROM PROGRAM STAFF, YOUNG PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE, AND RESEARCHERS**

The interactive workshop will focus on how the implementation of LifeSet has changed the way Illinois is preparing youth in foster care for their transition to adulthood. The workshop will include (1) a practitioner and researcher panel; (2) a video featuring young people participating in LifeSet; (3) interactive dialogue between attendees and panelists; and (4) breakout rooms in which attendees will reflect on the LifeSet model and their own experiences working with transition age youth in care.

**PRESENTERS**

**Kauna Morrison**, LifeSet Scholar and Participant, Youth Villages, moderator

**Elissa Gitlow**, Researcher, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

**Sam Shapiro**, Associate Researcher (Data Analytics), Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

**Tracey Silas-Patterson**, VP of the Older Adolescent Program, Lawrence Hall



**Ashley Estalote**, Child Welfare Supervisor, Extended Foster Care, Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services

## WEEK 1 CLOSING PLENARY: 3:00–4:00 P.M. EASTERN

### Opening Remarks

**January Contreras**, Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families

### Panel Discussion

#### ECONOMIC HARDSHIP, RACIAL INEQUITIES, AND CHILD WELFARE: TRANSFORMING SYSTEMS BY INVESTING IN FAMILIES

In this session, we'll be looking at how economic hardship drives family involvement in child welfare systems. Presenters will discuss how child welfare can collaborate with system and community partners to address family economic and concrete needs, prevent child welfare involvement, and address racial inequities. We'll hear about what matters for parents and families, what the research says about why it matters and engage in an open dialogue about the challenges and opportunities to move our work in this direction.

#### SPEAKERS

**Melissa Lim Brodowski, Ph.D.**, Deputy Director, Office of Early Childhood Development, moderator

**Yasmin Grewal-Kök**, Senior Policy Analyst, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

**Jeannette Pai-Espinosa**, President, National Crittenton

**Shrounda Selivanoff**, Director of Public Policy, Children's Home Society of Washington



DAY 4: TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2023

## COMMUNITY-DRIVEN RESPONSES

WEEK 2 OPENING PLENARY: 12:00 – 1:00 P.M. EASTERN

### REBUILDING IT TOGETHER: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS TO TRANSFORM CHILD WELFARE

The speakers in today's session are forging new and exciting partnerships that are putting communities at the center of transforming child welfare. Hear more about what these partnerships look like, how they operate, and how to overcome the barriers and mistrust that often stand in the way.

#### SPEAKERS

**Dianne Kelly**, Regional Program Manager, Region 4, Children's Bureau, moderator

**Sandra Gasca-Gonzalez**, Vice President, Center for Systems Innovation, The Annie E. Casey Foundation

**Margaret Jackson**, Executive Director, Cultural Brokers, Inc.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS: 1:30–2:30 P.M. EASTERN

#### FEATURED SESSION

### PARTNERING WITH IMPACTED INDIVIDUALS TO BUILD EXPLOITATION AND VIOLENCE-FREE COMMUNITIES

This session explores innovative efforts to partner with communities and individuals who have been impacted to address exploitation and violence. Hear from those who work with individuals and communities impacted by exploitation and violence and those who work with people who have caused harm in relationships. Explore how putting the needs and perspectives of those impacted by exploitation and violence at the center can lead to new prevention approaches.

#### SPEAKERS

**Lauren Devine**, Child Trafficking Prevention and Protection Coordinator, Office on Trafficking in Persons, moderator

**Juan Carlos Areán**, Program Director, Children & Youth Program, Futures Without Violence

**Samantha Sahl**, Supervisor, Child Sex Trafficking Recovery Services Team, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

**Paula Bibbs-Samuels**, FRIENDS Parent Advisory Council

**Tien Ung**, Associate Director, Children & Youth Program, Impact & Learning, Futures Without Violence

#### WORKSHOPS

### SUPPORTING KINSHIP FAMILIES AND PROMOTING SHARED PARENTING

In 2021, five jurisdictions were awarded Improving Child Welfare through Investing in Families (ICWIF) grants to develop strategies to support kinship families and promote Shared Parenting (SP). The goal of SP is for parents and caregivers to “co-parent” foster children collaboratively focusing on mutual respect for each other's roles in the child's life, frequent contact and communication, and regular opportunities for parents to remain actively engaged in parenting their child. Three ICWIF grantees conducted focus groups and surveys collecting stakeholder feedback on opportunities and barriers to



implementing SP. Findings from these focus group/surveys will be presented. Participants will learn how the grantees have used these research findings to inform the design of their ICWIF program models. Four breakout discussions will focus on: (1) how to promote shared parenting via staff training, including what types of issues/concerns training should address; (2) ways to infuse SP into team decision-making meeting protocols; (3) the application of SP to parent-child visitation/contact policies and practices; and (4) caseworker practices during parent and caregivers visits that support SP.

#### PRESENTERS

**Sacha Klein**, Associate Professor, Michigan State University School of Social Work

**Samantha Martin**, State Policy Analyst/Foster Care Alumnus, Children's Defense Fund

**Amanda Brown**, Associate Researcher, University of Kansas School of Social Work

### CHILD SAFETY FORWARD: EQUITABLE SOLUTIONS TO BETTER SUPPORT FAMILIES

Children in the U.S. are healthier and safer than ever before, and medical advances in treating childhood diseases have made enormous strides over the last few decades. Although the overall U.S. child mortality rate has improved over time, the number of child deaths due to abuse and neglect has remained steady or even increased. The Department of Justice has designed a federal demonstration initiative, Child Safety Forward, whose goal is a child and family wellbeing system where child protection agencies, community partners, neighbors, and families share a responsibility to ensure children thrive. This session previews what we are learning about equitable solutions that support resilient families and keep children safe in their homes. We take a very difficult problem of child abuse fatalities and breaking it down into concrete, community-based strategies. Participants will engage in a conversation about equitable solutions to child safety and family well-being, reflect, and share some of the assets in their own communities, systems, and organizations that can contribute to a transformed child and family wellbeing system.

#### PRESENTERS

**Amy Templeman**, Director, Practice Excellence, Social Current

**Regina Dyton**, Independent Consultant, Hartford Parent Engagement Group

**Delmarys Serrano**, Leader, Hartford Parent Engagement Group

**Kayla Waters**, Leader, Hartford Parent Engagement Group

### VIRGINIA'S SAFE AND SOUND TASK FORCE

Virginia's child welfare system has been making concerted efforts over a number of years to transform its child-serving system by developing strategies to ensure that youth leave care with relationships, supports, and opportunities to succeed in life. These efforts were taken to new heights in April 2022, when the Governor's Office launched the Virginia Safe and Sound Taskforce, a multi-agency effort to support alignment and collaboration across child-serving agencies. The results and strategies used during Phase 1 will be shared, along with key policy and systems strategies used by the Task Force to generate successful results for transition youth in foster care and how concurrently systemic challenges across child serving systems are being addressed. Phase 2 of the Task Force process will also be discussed.

#### PRESENTERS

**Mira Signer**, Special Advisor, Safe and Sound Task Force Assigned to Health & Human Resources, Commonwealth of Virginia

**Alexis Ablasca**, MD, FAAP, FAPA, Chief Clinical Officer, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services





**Em Parente**, LCSW, PhD, Assistant Director, Permanency, Policy and Practice, Virginia Department of Social Services

### **SAFETY CULTURE: AN APPROACH TO SUPPORTING STAFF AND IMPROVING FAMILY OUTCOMES**

Investing in the workforce and improving systems to better meet families' needs are interconnected. Workplace culture is strengthened by enhancing the ability of the system, the team and the individual's ability to meet child/family needs. Providing direct care staff and their supervisors with the skills, tools and resources to help those they serve is often experienced as meaningful investment by the workforce. Our systems are best strengthened in co-creation with youth, families and direct care professionals who experience the problems and vulnerabilities we are working to repair. Indiana has been working to: 1) build and strengthen psychological safety and connectedness across the workforce; and 2) better harness restorative accountability practices and "systems thinking" in quality reviews. Early evidence suggests the presence of psychological safety correlates to higher retention in child welfare and an increase in mindfully organized, team-based casework practices. Mindful organizing practices also correlate to improved youth and family-outcomes, such as an increase in parent-child visits and decrease in placement disruptions. In this session, we will describe Indiana's journey, including successes and barriers, to demonstration and spread of safety culture values and practices in child welfare.

#### **PRESENTERS**

**Tiffany Lindsey**, Assistant Professor, University of Kentucky

**Ashley Krumbach**, Program Director, Indiana Department of Children's Services

**Jordan Constantine**, Senior Policy Analyst, University of Kentucky

**Elizabeth Riley**, Assistant Professor, University of Kentucky

### **CONCURRENT SESSIONS: 3:00–4:00 P.M. EASTERN**

#### **DADS MATTER: AN APPROACH TO ENHANCING PERINATAL HOME VISITATION**

This session will introduce the Dads Matter enhancement to perinatal home visitation, developed with parents of young children, home visitors, and prevention researchers. We will overview the rationale and approach of Dads Matter services, and summarize the findings from a recently completed randomized trial from 19 home visiting programs in the Chicago metropolitan area. Participants engage in exercises and discussion on working with fathers in the context of child abuse prevention services.

#### **PRESENTERS**

**Neil Cuterman**, Paulette Goddard Professor and Dean Emeritus, New York University Silver School of Social Work

**Jennifer Bellamy**, Professor and Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development, University of Denver School of Social Work

**Aaron Banman**, Assistant Professor, University of Nebraska, Omaha Grace Abbott School of Social Work

**Justin Harty**, Assistant Professor, Arizona State University School of Social Work

#### **PROMOTING RACIAL EQUITY IN CHILD WELFARE: PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC CHILD WELFARE ADMINISTRATORS**

This session will present the results of a qualitative study of perceptions of sixteen diverse public child welfare administrators regarding the inequities they observe, challenges experienced in promoting racial equity/antiracist practice, and strategies with the greatest potential for moving the field forward.



Participants will have the opportunity to respond to the results and implications for practice and policy, as well as provide examples of initiatives underway in their jurisdiction.

**PRESENTERS**

**Crystal Collins-Camargo**, Professor and Interim Dean, University of Louisville Kent School of Social Work and Family Science

**Andrew Winters**, Assistant Professor, University of Louisville Kent School of Social Work and Family Science

**TRANSFORMING THE LEGAL REPRESENTATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

Why does a legal system dedicated to the safety and well-being of children all too often deny young people meaningful participation in the proceedings which most impact their lives? By design. The presentation will first provide a landscape for children's legal representation historically and in modern contexts, including the prior 2001 recommendations and the need for revision. There will also be an overview of the user-centered design protocol that guided this work, emphasizing the attention to history, context, identity, and bias, as well as the novel methods of inquiry, feedback and reflection used throughout the process. Next, presenters will share the updated Recommendations, which establish 10 primary duties for children's attorneys and explain the lived experience perspectives that shaped each one. The audience will be provided with meaningful insight into the process of identifying and defining the 10 duties. For example, the session will detail how lived experience perspectives prioritized anti-racism in the process and product, elevating equity to one of 10 key principles for children's lawyering. Special focus will be given to areas that pose the greatest potential areas of challenge to improving legal representation, such as the sharp increase in out-of-court client contact. Finally, the session will encourage attendees to use the Recommendations and user-centered design methodology as a starting point for revamping practices, training, and supervision in their own communities.

**PRESENTERS**

**Allison Green**, Legal Director, National Association of Counsel for Children

**Nicole Wong**, Member of the National Advisory Council for Children's Legal Representation (NACCLR), National Association of Counsel for Children

**LEVERS OF CHANGE: PROMOTING BETTER OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

The National Center to Advance Peace for Children Youth, and Families (NCAP) works to ensure that domestic violence cases involving children and youth are handled in a manner that recognizes the intersection of complex legal, cultural, and psychological dynamics of domestic violence. The NCAP was created in response to the reality that involvement for in the child welfare and child custody systems can cause irreparable harm to survivors of domestic violence and their children; especially those from Black, Indigenous, and Latinx families. This session will introduce the mission, goals, and innovative initiatives of the NCAP, examine the barriers, inequities, and system challenges that result from unjust domestic violence and child welfare responses, and highlight the Levers of Change that are required to promote better and safer outcomes for children, youth, and families in the child protection system who have experienced domestic violence.

**PRESENTERS**

**Ruby White Starr**, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Latinos United for Peace and Equity (LUPE)

**Selena Hernandez**, DV Survivor/Parent Advocate

**Sharwline Nicholson**, Public Speaker/Child Welfare Advocate



## CREATING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION FOR THOSE WITH LIVED EXPERTISE

This session will highlight the Setting the Stage: Creating the Space for People With Lived Experience to Thrive that was developed for the Child Welfare Virtual Expo by the Center for States, which provides best practice information on topics such as: assessing readiness, organizational culture and climate, compensation, authentic engagement, tokenism, strategic sharing, and advocacy. The session will present foundational information to level-set the importance of incorporating lived expertise into the workforce. Presenters will discuss the development of the guide as examples of best practice. Sections of the guide will be presented to participants for reflection and discussion. Small group breakouts will follow each section of discussion. Discussion topics will include: 1) Essential jurisdictional considerations prior to bringing individuals with LE into the workforce; 2) How to secure leadership and field buy in and promotion of having PWLE integrated into the workforce; 3) Tips for engaging PWLE as professionals within the child welfare space; 4) Technical/strategic pieces that must be addressed when successfully integrated PWLE.

### PRESENTERS

**Katie Biron**, Family Consultant, ICF

**Eshawn Peterson**, Tailored Service Race Equity Training Manager, ICF

**Tracy Tippet**, Senior Workforce Consultant, ICF



DAY 5: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2023

## ADVANCING EQUITY AND JUSTICE

### PLENARY: 1:30–2:30 P.M. EASTERN

#### MOVING TOWARD RACE EQUITY IN CHILD WELFARE: CHANGING REALITIES, EVOLVING STRATEGIES

While issues of racial disproportionality and inequities in child welfare have not gone away, they have evolved over time. This session will explore what we know about the race and equity issues we face today and how our strategies need to evolve to address today's problems.

##### SPEAKERS

**Bryan Samuels**, Executive Director, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, moderator

**Vannessa Dorantes**, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Children and Families

**Devon Gilchrist**, Supervisor, African American Child Well-Being Unit, Minnesota Department of Human Services

### CONCURRENT SESSIONS: 3:00–4:00 P.M. EASTERN

#### FEATURED SESSION

#### MOVING THROUGH THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

How do we engage staff in the hard work of confronting racism and bias in our child welfare programs and systems? How do we create the emotional space that will allow us to deal with and address uncomfortable truths about our work, our own biases, and the inequities in the systems to which so many of us have dedicated our lives? This session will focus on the difficult questions we must ask ourselves as we address race and equity issues in child welfare.

##### SPEAKERS

**Gabrielle Newell**, Senior Advisor on Equity, Administration for Children and Families, moderator

**Christine Norbut Beyer**, Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Children and Families

**Alan-Michael Graves**, Senior Director of Learning & Capacity Building, Good+ Foundation

**Jacqueline P. Martin**, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Preventive Services, NYC Administration for Children's Services

#### WORKSHOPS

#### ASSESSING STAFF ATTITUDES AROUND KINSHIP PLACEMENT

While many factors impact placement of children with kin, child protective services workers' attitudes towards kinship placements may drive decision-making around when children can be placed safely with kin instead of unrelated foster families. This session highlights New Jersey Department of Children and Families' systematic approach to measuring staff attitudes towards kinship placement, using results to collaboratively diagnose challenges statewide and locally, and creating targeted strategies to increase kinship placement rates. Staff attitudes fell under 5 domains: perceived benefits of kinship placement for the child; attitudes towards kin caregivers; perceptions of kinship-related policy and process; supportive environment for kinship-related work; and risk aversion. Each was targeted



with social, educational and policy strategies. Since implementing these approaches, the proportion of children placed with kin in the state has increased.

#### PRESENTERS

**Pamela Lilleston**, Director, Office of Applied Research and Evaluation, New Jersey Department of Children and Families

**Jennifer Kirkman**, Assistant Director of Case Practice, Division of Child Protection and Permanency, New Jersey Department of Children and Families

**Clifton Tokley**, Director, Office of Resource Family Licensing, Division of Child Protection and Permanency, New Jersey Department of Children and Families

### THE ROLE OF PRE-PETITION/PREVENTATIVE INTERDISCIPLINARY LEGAL SERVICES IN SUPPORTING FAMILY PRESERVATION

In Santa Clara County, we are doing things differently. The number of petitions filed and children entering foster care has dramatically declined. Removal has become a last resort. Learn about how the Santa Clara County Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), juvenile dependency justice partners and community-based organizations have partnered to keep children safe in their communities while limiting court intervention. This panel will cover the legal framework supporting prevention and family preservation from the perspective of both County Counsel and Parents' Counsel; examine the practice models and policy frameworks shifting the way DFCS engages families; and explore the collaborative efforts to provide services and supports to families in order to prevent deeper child welfare system involvement.

#### PRESENTERS

**Sarah Cook**, Corridor Managing Attorney, Dependency Advocacy Center

**Katie Joh**, First Call for Families Managing Attorney, Dependency Advocacy Center

**Ana Nevaraz**, First Call for Families Mentor Parent, Dependency Advocacy Center

**Bhavit Madhvani**, Deputy County Counsel, Office of County Counsel, Santa Clara, CA

### ADVANCING EQUITY THROUGH CQI

Our workshop will explore how jurisdictions can use effective CQI practices to identify, understand and address systemic inequities. Using a practical example grounded in a jurisdiction's exploration of its Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) data, participants will see how the jurisdiction uses the data to identify differences in outcomes across racial and ethnic groups and then apply the CQI process to gather additional evidence to understand and address these disparities. Throughout the session, participants will provide feedback and offer input at key decision points in the CQI process. The workshop will integrate content on data analysis, problem exploration, root cause analysis, and effectively engaging families and young people throughout an equity-focused CQI process. Participants will leave with strategies to use the CQI process to create a common language with decision makers and funders that results in action to advance equity in their jurisdictions.

#### PRESENTERS

**Carla Carpenter**, Senior Manager, CQI/Data and Research, ICF, Capacity Building Center for States

**Angela Braxton**, National Family Leadership Consultant, ICF, Capacity Building Center for States

**Kyla Clark**, Child Welfare Program Administrator, Utah Department of Health and Human Services

**Brandy Hudson**, National Racial Equity Consultant, ICF, Capacity Building Center for States



## ENHANCING PRIMARY PREVENTION IN PHILADELPHIA: SUPPORT LINE, PRIORITIZED SERVICES, AND BENEFITS

Assessment is defined as the collection of information to inform decision-making about a child, youth or family. In child welfare, risk and safety assessments are separate but related processes that are foundational to identifying the issues facing a family, designing a plan, and providing services to support the family in addressing the issues. This workshop focuses on the risk and safety assessment process in child protective services and brings attention to the impact the process has on families when poverty is assessed as “risk.” How individual and structural racism impact risk and safety assessment and how workers, supervisors and agencies can identify and overcome these biases.

### PRESENTERS

**Samantha Rivera Joseph**, Director of Implementation Science, City of Philadelphia Office of Children and Families

**Allison Thompson**, Senior Research Officer, City of Philadelphia Office of Children and Families

**Darcey Merritt**, Professor, University of Chicago Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice

**Cynthia Peterson**, Prevention and Child Protection Lead, Strategic Consultant, Child Welfare Information Gateway





DAY 6: THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2023

## UNLEASHING YOUR INNER CHANGE AGENT

CONCURRENT SESSIONS: 1:30–2:30 P.M. EASTERN

### FEATURED SESSION

#### TRUE ENGAGEMENT FOR TRUE TRANSFORMATION

Kinship families, youth and young adults in foster care, Hispanic migrant communities, and American Indian Nations face unique challenges in child welfare. This session illustrates how programs designed to support specific communities can inform all of our work. Learn how four unique efforts strengthen engagement, reduce barriers, build on community strengths and resources, and practice cultural humility to increase equity and promote child and family well-being.

#### SPEAKERS

**Jennifer Haight**, Director, Division of Performance Measurement and Improvement, Children's Bureau, moderator

**Ana Beltran**, Director, Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network: A National Technical Assistance Center at Generations United

**Mary Keane**, Adoptive Parent and Senior Director, You Gotta Believe

**Alicia Mousseau**, Vice President, Oglala Sioux Tribe

**Juan Ramirez**, Public Health Manager, Health Education Department, Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic

### WORKSHOPS

#### WARNING SIGNS FROM THE FRONT LINES

The child welfare workforce will be on the front lines of any child welfare change effort. If this workforce beliefs are not aligned with the goal of doing empowering practice with families that enhances well-being – and isn't solely focused on loosely or poorly and oftentimes arbitrary notions of safety and risk – then any change effort is doomed to fail. Further, if they themselves are burned out and disempowered, parallel practice tells us that they will not be able to do empowering practice with the marginalized families that are on the receiving end of their interventions. Prior evaluations have demonstrated that various worker and organizational characteristics impact client outcomes, even when case circumstances are controlled for. Research also tells us that caseworker turnover has a detrimental impact on case trajectories. Simply put, the circumstances of a family aren't the only thing that influences how a family moves through the child welfare system; who their worker is and where they work also matter. By sharing data on the child welfare workforce in one county run, state administered system, we can hypothesize how casework may be impacted by the current state of the child welfare workforce. By shedding light on the relationships between these workforce characteristics and case outcomes the stakes for a healthy workforce will be highlighted.

#### PRESENTERS

**Heather Allan**, Evaluation Manager, Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse & Neglect



**Kayla Rockewell**, Senior Research Assistant, Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse & Neglect

**Ida Drury**, Principal Investigator, Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse & Neglect

### **COMMUNITY AND SYSTEM-LEVEL FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO FOSTER CARE ENTRY AND STRATEGIES TO RESOLVE THEM**

Indiana communities and leaders are increasingly involved in work to make communities and systems, specifically the child welfare system, more proactive to enhance child and family wellbeing. These endeavors include increasing the effectiveness, alignment, and coordination of existing child maltreatment prevention efforts, especially primary prevention, as well as identifying new opportunities to enhance child and family wellbeing and resilience. Four family resource centers in central Indiana now operate as a one-stop-shop where families can access the supports and resources they need to be connected and safe. Centers are located in the zip codes with the highest foster care entry rates and while all centers have the core components (e.g., concrete supports, navigators, family fun events, etc.), each center looks different as it is tailored to the community needs. Cross-system collaborations have been critical for the implementation of these centers and other prevention efforts. This session will discuss community and system risk factors, protective factors and resilience, and will provide an overview of Indiana primary child maltreatment prevention initiatives, funding alignment, implementation and evaluation progress, and lessons learned.

#### **PRESENTERS**

**E. Susana Mariscal**, Associate Professor, Indiana University

**Bryan Victor**, Assistant Professor, Wayne State University

**Jill Kelly**, Vice President of Prevention Services, Firefly Children and Family Alliance

**Hannah Robinson**, Prevention Manager, Indiana Department of Child Services

### **THE KINNECTIONS KINSHIP NAVIGATOR PROGRAM: SUPPORTING KINSHIP CAREGIVERS**

Kinnections is a multi-agency partnership that seeks to build credible evidence of the effectiveness of Kinship Navigator (KKN) programs in supporting kinship caregivers. Child Trends is conducting a rigorous independent evaluation of the KKN program. During our presentation, KKN staff will describe the KKN services, how the model was developed, and how it is implemented, including staff training and qualifications and the CQI process. One of the kinship caregiver advisory board members will describe their experiences with KKN services and the role and function of the advisory board. Child Trends will present initial findings from the process and impact evaluation. The session will include time for discussion regarding facilitators and barriers participants have experienced in either providing services to kinship caregivers or accessing and receiving services as kinship caregivers. We will conclude with a summary of recommendations for program adjustments and improvements gathered through the evaluation as well as through the session discussion, and description of next steps in the project.

#### **PRESENTERS**

**Berenice Rushovich**, Senior Research Scientist, Child Trends

**Brooke Derrick**, Program Director, Wayfinder

**Linda Leighton**, Parent Liason, Wayfinder

### **INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT: KEY PRINCIPLES AND CONSIDERATIONS**

Since 1978, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) has inspired, challenged, and created focus areas for child welfare programs. There are consistent activities specific to providing leadership for improved



Indian child welfare outcomes. The development of innovation and resiliency, inclusive of the individual and administratively, will be described. Each level of the tribal child welfare field can identify specific opportunities that exist within their jurisdictions and utilize proven resources and lived experience to implement successful strategies and improved outcomes. Participants will learn aspects of ICWA that are documented regularly in both tribal and state child welfare systems; identify principles and practices of ICWA that are relevant to their child welfare program area; gain resource knowledge of successful models of collaboration, and priority setting that reflects the tribes' values and have applicability for public child welfare settings; and learn individual professional touchpoints that will encourage continued commitment and attention to the values of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978.

### **PRESENTER**

**Jackie Crow Shoe**, Universal Services Managing Director, Capacity Building Center for Tribes

## **CLOSING PLENARY SESSION: 3:00–4:00 P.M. EASTERN**

### **CO-CREATING DYNAMIC CHANGE: A VIEW FROM INSIDE AND OUT**

End the 23rd NCCAN on a creative high note as Melody Centeno uses her unique modeling and teaching style to help us identify our opportunities and potential to drive change. Get inspired, get excited, and get concrete about how to push through the challenges and help to lead transformational change from wherever you are.

### **Remarks**

**Aysha E. Schomburg**, Associate Commissioner, Children's Bureau

### **Keynote**

**Melody Joanne Centeno**, Founder & CEO, Foster Care Unplugged



## POSTERS

**Advancing Equity Through Data Accessibility**

**Advancing Equity Through Data Analysis and Data Visualization**

**Building Evidence about Parent Advocacy in Child Protection: Reducing Entry into Foster Care**

**Caregivers' Experiences of the Kansas Serves Native American Families Project**

**Centerstone's Partnership to Help Children and Families Flourish (FLOURISH)**

**Characteristics Of Pregnant Women and New Mothers at Risk for Substance Use**

**Colorado Community Response: A Promising Practice for Supporting Families.**

**Early Childhood Services are a Significant Protective Factor Against Removals into Foster Care**

**Engaging and Valuing Families in Child Welfare Development and Pilot of Family Engagement Scales**

**Evaluating Early Implementation Outcomes for a Resilience Intervention Addressing Child Welfare Workforce Well-being**

**Examining Multi-level Protective Factors Predicting Positive Adolescent Functioning in Youths Following Child Maltreatment**

**Proving Promise and Support: Preliminary Evaluation of the Indiana Family Preservation Services**

**The Experience of Maternity Group Homes for Youth Aging Out**

**Transracial Adoptions Conversations (TRAC) Coaching Model: Preparing and Supporting Child Welfare Staff in Discussing Race and Racial Identity with Caregivers Parenting and Adopting Transracially**

**Unequal Outcomes: Decreasing Racial Disparities in Permanency**

**Using New Historical Administrative Data from NDACAN to Study Racial and Ethnic Inequalities in Child Welfare Involvement**



## EXHIBITORS

Capacity Building Center for States

Child Welfare Information Gateway

Childhelp, Inc.

Children's Bureau Learning & Coordination Center (CBLCC)

Children's Trust Fund Alliance

FRIENDS National Center for CBCAP

National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare

National Child Abuse Prevention Month Prevention Resource Guide–  
Child Welfare Information Gateway

National Children's Alliance

National Family Support Network

Prevent Child Abuse America

Prevent Child Abuse Vermont



## PRESENTER BIOS

### JUAN CARLOS AREÁN

#### Program Director, Children and Youth Program



#### Futures Without Violence

Juan Carlos Areán, Ph.D., is an internationally recognized activist, public speaker, trainer and facilitator, and published author. Since 1991, he has worked to engage men

across different cultures to become better fathers, intimate partners, and allies to end domestic violence and achieve gender equity. He presently works as a Program Director at Futures Without Violence. Previously, he served as Director of the National Latin@ Network at Casa de Esperanza and as a Sexual Assault Prevention Specialist at Harvard University.

Dr. Areán is a founding member of the United Nations Network of Men Leaders to combat violence against women created by former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. He is an active trainer and facilitator, who has led hundreds of workshops and presentations throughout the United States, the Americas, and the Caribbean, as well as in Europe, Asia, the US Congress, and the United Nations in New York and Geneva.

### ANA BELTRAN

#### Director, Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network: A National Technical Assistance Center



#### at Generations United

Ana Beltran is an attorney and director of the Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network: A National Technical Assistance Center at Generations United. For over twenty years, Beltran

has worked with Generations United on the array of issues impacting grandfamilies, providing in-person technical assistance and training to state agencies, legislatures, nonprofit organizations, and legal providers in over 35 states and virtual technical assistance in almost all 50. She is also

a prolific writer who has authored many articles, reports, and resources to support the families. In a joint collaboration, Beltran co-authored the first set of comprehensive National Model Family Foster Home Licensing Standards on which the federal government “relied heavily.” Prior to joining Generations United in 1999, Beltran worked in all three branches of the federal government and was a practicing attorney. She found her true passion when she began helping support grandfamilies. Beltran credits this passion to her amazing grandma who helped raise her.

### BIANCA BENNETT-SCOTT

#### Young Adult Consultant, Capacity Building Center for States



Bianca Bennett-Scott is a Young Adult Consultant for the Capacity Building Center for States. With lived experience in the New York Foster Care System, Bianca has

developed a personal and professional career cultivating opportunities for children and families through advocacy. She is a Program Manager and Senior Advocate at You Gotta Believe, a New York-based adoption agency, and a National Foster Care Youth & Alumni Policy Council member. Bianca is a first-generation college graduate with an A.S. in Business Administration from SUNY Broome Community College and a B.A. in Law and Government from Florida Memorial University. She is a first-year MPA student at Cornell University with a concentration in Human Rights and Social Justice. Bianca strives to utilize her experience and education to re-humanize social programs and elevate the needs of vulnerable communities.

### CHRISTINE NORBUT BEYER

#### Commissioner New Jersey Department of Children and Families

NJ Department of Children and Families (NJ DCF)  
Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer brings years





of public/private experience and a visionary's perspective to the topic of child welfare transformation. Under her leadership, NJ DCF has reduced removals, improved kinship placement and created Offices of Family Voice, Resilience, Diversity, Equity and Belonging, and Staff Health and Wellness. With a progressive lens, she pioneered including family voice and healing-centered practice to inform departmental policies, and initiated a Race Equity Steering Committee to study and correct disparities in reporting, investigating and removing children of color from their families. Through her collaboration and determination, New Jersey is set to exit its nearly 20 year federal lawsuit settlement, elevating the state as a national leader in child welfare transformation. Most recently, in 2021, she was selected as an Aspen Institute Ascend Leadership Fellow.

#### PAULA BIBBS-SAMUELS



##### **FRIENDS Parent Advisory Council**

Paula Bibbs-Samuels, MS, is a Licensed Professional Counselor with over 20 years of parent leadership experience, including serving

as a commissioner for the Texas Children's Commission for two terms, a parent liaison for the Texas Parent Collaboration Council, and Region 1 Parent Liaison. Paula is currently working with Texas PEI and Thriving Families, Safer Children Phase II to help bring attention to and eradicate racial inequities within systems. Paula, a Licensed Professional Counselor, continues to work in parent leadership efforts within birth, foster, and kinship families. Paula is a mother of 7 as a result of a blended family, and a former kinship placement.

Paula has been an exciting, engaging, and truth talking public speaker for over twenty years. In this capacity she has created an atmosphere to learn and find comfortableness with being uncomfortable. Paula participates on several workgroups and committees addressing racial

disparities, disparate representation and treatment, prevention methods, and improving practice and procedure to make lives better for children and families. Paula expresses that the work she does for families is her passion. Helping others is her drive.

#### MELISSA LIM BRODOWSKI

##### **Deputy Director, Office of Early Childhood**



##### **Development, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

Melissa Lim Brodowski is the Deputy Director for

the Office of Early Childhood Development (ECD) at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), HHS. In this role, she provides leadership and guidance on early childhood initiatives across ACF and with federal partners and other stakeholders. She was previously a Senior Policy Advisor at ECD working on the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships and a Senior Program Specialist with the Children's Bureau leading child maltreatment prevention efforts. Through various positions, she has overseen grant programs, technical assistance, research and evaluation activities, interagency coordination, and public-private partnerships related to early childhood, child maltreatment prevention, child welfare, and the implementation of evidence-based home visiting programs. She has over 20 years of experience working in the field of child welfare, health and human services. Prior to her federal career, she worked at the Alameda County (CA) Department of Children and Family Services and started her career as a substance abuse counselor working with pregnant and parenting women. She received her BA in Psychology from Temple University, her MSW and MPH from the University of California at Berkeley, and her Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, Baltimore, School of Social Work.





**SYLVIA BROWN**  
**Kinship Care Provider, Team Decision Making Supervisor**

Sylvia Brown, LMSW, is currently employed as a Team Decision Making Supervisor with the Kansas Department

for Children and Families in the Wichita Region. Sylvia has a Bachelor of Science degree in Family Studies and Gerontology. Sylvia also has a Master of Science degree in Social Work. Sylvia obtained her license as a Master Social Worker in the State of Kansas in 2013. Sylvia has 17 years' experience in the Child Welfare field, to include case management and supervision. Sylvia currently is also a kinship provider for three beautiful grandchildren. Sylvia is passionate about working alongside parents/caregivers in the community to make sustainable behavioral changes necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of their children.

**SIXTO CANCEL**

**Founder and CEO, Think of Us**



Sixto Cancel is the Founder and CEO of Think of Us. Think of Us (TOU) is a Research + Design Lab driving systematic change in child welfare. Through focused projects and sweeping initiatives, TOU

drives structural changes in child welfare policy and practice.

Sixto was named as Forbes Top 30 Under 30 Social Entrepreneurs and is on the 2021 Forbes Under30 Lister Board. Sixto has been recognized by the White House as a "White House Champion of Change", a "Millennial Maker" by BET, and named "Top 24 Changemakers in Government under 24" by the Campaign for a Presidential Youth Council and Sparkaction. Sixto has served as a Young Fellow at Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative since 2010 where he has played a key role in the initiative's work of extending foster care permanency for older youth.

Sixto is a Clinton Global Initiative University Alum, a FastForward Alum, an Ashoka Fellow, a Board Member of Adventr – an interactive SMART video tech company – and most recently on the Advisory Board for Box, Inc. Sixto and the team at Think of Us are working to ensure that every person has the conditions they need to heal, develop and thrive.

**MELODY JOANNE CENTENO**

**Founder & CEO, Foster Care Unplugged**

Melody Joanne Centeno, LMSW, is a remarkable



individual who wears many hats. She a motivational speaker, public advocate, psychodrama practitioner, ABA therapist, talk show host, actress, film director, film editor, and producer.

Melody's passion for helping others led her to graduate from Adelphi University's School of Social Work, where she is recognized as a NYS Licensed Master Social Worker approved by the State Association of Social Work Boards. She now shares her expertise as an Adjunct Professor at Adelphi University's Field Education department, where she supervises undergraduate and graduate social work students in field study. She also uses her SiFi certification and platform to supervise students at New York University.

Melody's unique style of leadership is a result of her ability to model and teach through the lens of personal experience, merged with professional practice. As a former foster youth herself, Melody founded Foster Care Unplugged in 2016 with the goal of enriching the lives of children in care through the development of positive resiliency skills. Her personal experience has driven her to share her story around the world, empowering youth and enlightening professionals in the field about the importance of being culturally responsive within the culture of child welfare.

Melody has an impressive portfolio of producing youth-focused projects that aim to empower and inspire young people. One of her notable



projects is “Foster Care Unplugged: The Stage Play,” which highlights the experiences of current and former foster care youth through theatrical performances. She has also produced short films featuring foster care youth, which shed light on their unique struggles and triumphs. Foster Care Unplugged is not only dedicated to producing creative projects, but also to hosting annual events that foster a sense of community among young people. These events include a toy drive, a fashion show, and a basketball game with the NYPD.

Melody’s dedication to supporting foster youth has expanded to include those who are at risk of being human trafficked. She co-created and facilitated the grant-funded “Mitigating Trauma Through Drama” group therapy model, which combines psychodrama techniques with human trafficking awareness to help mitigate the impact of trauma on young people’s lives. Through her work, Melody has become a beacon of hope for many foster youth and vulnerable populations, providing them with the tools and support they need to thrive.

#### **ZEINAB CHAHINE**

**Executive Vice President of Child and Family Services, Casey Family Programs**



Dr. Zeinab Chahine joined Casey Family Programs in 2007 and became an executive vice president in 2021. Casey Family Programs is the nation’s largest operating foundation focused on safely reducing the need for foster

care in the United States. The foundation’s mission is to provide and improve — and ultimately prevent the need for — foster care. Dr. Chahine oversees the foundation’s direct practice work with children and families as well as its engagement with American Indian and Alaska Native tribes. Prior to joining the Executive Team, she served as managing director for strategic consulting in Systems Improvement, where she helped lead the foundation’s efforts to safely reduce the need

for foster care and to support improvement to the safety and well-being of children and families. Before joining Casey Family Programs, she served at New York City’s Administration for Children’s Services in multiple roles, including as executive deputy commissioner for child welfare programs.

#### **JANUARY CONTRERAS**

**Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

January Contreras is the Assistant Secretary for the Administration for Children and Families



(ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ACF is the United States’ largest human services administration. It was created to focus on the needs of America’s children and

families.

Assistant Secretary Contreras was appointed by President Biden and confirmed by the United State Senate with bipartisan support. In her role, she works under the leadership of HHS Secretary Becerra to strengthen the well-being of the nation’s children and families with a focus on prevention, safety, economic stability and equity. She does so alongside ACF’s 1,500 employees and in partnership with state, tribal, territorial and local governments, as well as a diverse network of non-profit and philanthropic organizations.

Throughout her career, Assistant Secretary Contreras has been motivated by a sense of duty to children, families and individuals, especially when they are facing their most difficult moments.

#### **PASTOR JOHN DAVIS**

**Co-founder, Keep It Moving Empowerment Ministries**



Pastor John Davis is native of Washington, DC. In 2009 Pastor Davis accepted the call to preach the gospel and upon completing his Biblical Studies, he was ordained in



2014. Pastor Davis is a compassionate and faithful disciple of Christ and committed to sharing the Word of God and leading by example (letting people know how God changed his life). He has served as a counselor with Volunteers of America Chesapeake-RPC Program, worked one on one with the men and women of the Residential Re-Entry program in Washington, D.C., facilitated prayer meetings in clients' homes of the Prince Georges County Mental Health Program, and was a counselor with Sasha Bruce Youthwork Program.

He currently serves as an Outreach Community Service Worker where he provides clothing, food, Narcan and other essentials to the Homeless Community. He also works with the ANC Commissioners in Ward 6,7,8, works with Trauma Life Coaches, helping trauma victims that suffer with substance abuse disorders, homelessness and returning citizens from jails and institutions, as well as with many other Religious Interfaith Organizations such as the Place of Worship Advisory Board – POWAB. Love More Movement, Life Coach and Co-Chair D.C. Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)/Thriving Families Safer Children (TFSC)/Keeping DC Families Together (KDCFT) Warmline and Community Response Subcommittee; and member of CFSA/ KDCFT Lived Experience (LEx) Advisory Council.

Pastor John Davis and his wife Pastor Rochelle Davis are the founders of Keep It Moving Empowerment Ministries a 501c3 Outreach Organization (also known as KIM Ministries) in Alexandria VA. A vision given to them by God in 2011, that started as a small group bible study in their home. Together they are dedicated to empowering men, women, and children from all walks of life through God's love and His Word to overcome obstacles and keep moving towards their God given destiny as disciples of Jesus Christ. He is a devoted Husband, Father, Grandfather, Pastor, and Mentor.



**HAILEY D'ELIA**  
**Young Adult Consultant,**  
**Capacity Building Center for**  
**States**

Hailey D'Elia is a national child welfare consultant, advocate, and researcher.

Hailey's first-hand experiences are a driving force behind her passion to reform the child welfare system. Hailey is a Research Assistant in the Income and Benefits Policy Center at Urban Institute analyzing workforce and post-secondary education and training programs. She currently serves as a Young Adult Consultant for the Capacity Building Center for States, National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Reviewer and FosterClub Lived Experience Leader as a consultant for New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF). Hailey completed a Policy and Advocacy Fellowship at the Center for Adoption Support and Education where she advocated for the mental health needs of the foster care and adoptive community. D'Elia holds a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics and Sociology with a Certificate of Undergraduate Study in Social Justice and Social Change from Rowan University.

In 2020, she participated in Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute's COVID-19 Pandemic Working Group and researched and wrote federal policy recommendations on bridging the digital divide with broadband and technology access for vulnerable youth and families. The following year, she participated in the Foster Youth Internship Program® writing a congressional report on increasing mental health supports for youth aging out of foster care and interning for Senator Robert Menendez. Hailey served two years on New Jersey's DCF's Youth Council where she worked directly with the DCF Commissioner to enact statewide transformation.



## LAUREN DEVINE

**Child Trafficking Prevention and Protection Coordinator, Office on Trafficking in Persons, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**



Lauren Devine is the Child Trafficking Prevention and Protection Coordinator at the Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). In this

role Lauren coordinates with offices across HHS, with federal partners, and with external stakeholders to prevent and respond to human trafficking among children and youth. Prior to OTIP, Lauren worked in various capacities as a social worker in domestic and international child welfare settings. Lauren received a Master of Social Work in Clinical Global Practice from Boston College and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with a focus on international relations and African studies from the University of Florida.

## VANNESSA DORANTES

**Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Children and Families**



Vannessa Dorantes, LMSW, is Commissioner of The State Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF). Dorantes has worked for DCF since 1992. She holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology

from Teikyo Post University and an MSW from UCONN School of Social Work. From 2004 until appointment as commissioner, she was an adjunct faculty member at Central CT State University.

In 2019, Dorantes was appointed DCF Commissioner as the first African American to serve in that role for the State of Connecticut. Commissioner Dorantes cochairs Connecticut's Alcohol & Drug Policy Council, the Governor's Council on Women & Girls. With an annual

operating budget over \$868M (plus management of an additional \$35M in American Rescue Plan Allocation (ARPA), Commissioner Dorantes oversees a workforce of 3200.

Commissioner Dorantes has had the distinct privilege of participating in several roundtable discussions on topics including the rippling impacts of child poverty, gun violence, emerging trends in child welfare and children's mental health alongside various stakeholders within the Biden Administration including with Vice President Kamala Harris.

Dorantes espouses a deliberately transparent, collaborative, and relational leadership approach which resulted in her successful ushering the State of Connecticut out of three decades of the federal Juan F Consent Decree. Her work in CT has been featured nationally on NBC's TODAY Show and Nightly News.

Commissioner Dorantes serves on The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) Executive Governing Board, Chair of National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators and on the Child Welfare League of America, Inc. (CWLA) Board of Directors.

## SANDRA GASCA-GONZALEZ

**Vice President, Center for Systems Innovation  
The Annie E. Casey Foundation**



Sandra Gasca-Gonzalez is the vice president of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Center for Systems Innovation, which entails overseeing national and state reform efforts in three key areas: child welfare, young people transitioning into adulthood, and juvenile justice.

Prior to assuming this role in 2018, Sandra served as the director of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative®, which aims to equip young people leaving foster care with the relationships, resources and opportunities needed to achieve well-being and success as they transition into adulthood. In that role, she led national,





state and local efforts to improve policies and practices to ensure young people have opportunities to successfully transition from foster care to adulthood.

Sandra became director of the Jim Casey Initiative after serving as executive vice president of Practice and Leadership Integration for KVC Health Systems, where she led nationally recognized initiatives to transform child welfare systems with clinical best practices, change management skills and results-based measurement.

Before that, she was on assignment from KVC Health Systems to the Washington, D.C., Child and Family Services Agency, where she helped implement best practices and championed a culture shift. This work led to remarkable outcomes for D.C. children and families, including sharp reductions in the length of time children spent in foster care and dramatic increases in the number of children being placed with families.

She is an alumna of the Annie E. Casey Foundation Fellowship and a graduate of the National Hispanic Leadership Institute, and she received an Executive Leadership Certificate from Harvard University. She holds a master's degree in psychology from Emporia State University and a bachelor's degree from Southwestern College.

#### **REBECCA JONES GASTON**

**Commissioner, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**



Rebecca Jones Gaston is the commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, at the Administration for Children and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The

Administration on Children, Youth and Families

manages the Children's Bureau and the Family and Youth Services Bureau.

Before joining the Biden Administration via confirmation by the U.S. Senate in December 2022, Gaston was the child welfare director for the state of Oregon's Department of Human Services that oversees child protection, foster care and adoption services, a position she held since 2019. During her time as director, Oregon launched a major transformation built on trauma-informed, family and community-centered and culturally responsive programs and services.

Prior to joining the Oregon senior management team, Gaston served as the executive director of the Maryland Department of Human Services' Social Services Administration with oversight of child welfare and adult services. She has worked in the field of human services and child welfare for nearly 25 years as a social worker, advocate, therapist, consultant and administrator. Previously, she was a director with Casey Family Programs providing technical assistance to child welfare agencies throughout the United States and served as the national campaign director for AdoptUsKids, a collaboration with the Children's Bureau and the National Ad Council. This major campaign, which she now oversees as commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, continues to help increase the numbers of foster and adoptive families across the country.

A proud mother of two young adults, Gaston holds a degree in psychology from Georgetown University and a master's degree in social work from the University of Pennsylvania.

#### **DEVON GILCHRIST**

**Supervisor, African American Child Well-Being Unit, Minnesota Department of Human Services**



Devon currently works in the Minnesota Department of Human Services as the supervisor of the African American Child Well-Being Unit. He has over 20 years of experience



as a child welfare professional at the community, county, and state level. Devon holds bachelor's degrees from the University of Colorado in Communication and Sociology as well as a master's degree in Social Work from the University of Minnesota. He is currently pursuing master's degrees in public policy from the University of Minnesota and Organizational Leadership from Concordia University. He is a current participant in the National Black Administrators in Child Welfare Sankofa Leadership Institute. He has remained committed to creating equitable solutions collaboratively to meet the needs of individuals, families, and communities over the course of his personal life and professional career.

#### **ALAN-MICHAEL GRAVES**

**Senior Director of Teaching and Capacity Building, Good Plus Foundation**



Dr. Alan-Michael S. Graves serves as the Senior Director of Teaching and Capacity Building with the Good Plus Foundation where he focuses on a broad range of multi-disciplinary activities, from

research and program development to training and advocacy for policy change. Currently leading a National Initiative on policy change through training social workers in Fatherhood Engagement, Dr. Graves has worked in the human services field, with extensive experience as a facilitator and administrator, for both public and private agencies, for the past 18 years. He has brought these diverse perspectives to his work helping agencies develop, implement and evaluate interagency systems of care, family partnerships and community programming. Dr. Graves serves as a Community Advocate to address Disproportionality and Disparity within organizations and systems across the country. A resource parent himself, he utilizes both his personal and professional knowledge and experience to strategically and positively impact the lives of children, families and communities.

#### **YASMIN GREWAL-KÖK**

**Senior Policy Analyst, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago**



Yasmin's work focuses on supporting large-scale system change efforts to positively impact the lives of children and their families, particularly those who

are most marginalized. She brings expertise in cross-sector partnerships and early childhood and child welfare research and policy, and has over a decade of legal experience in both the private and nonprofit sectors. As a Senior Policy Analyst at Chapin Hall, Yasmin leads efforts to provide research-driven implementation and capacity-building assistance to jurisdictions across the country. She co-leads Chapin Hall's economic and concrete supports portfolio and is a national thought leader on economic and concrete supports as a child welfare prevention and race equity strategy. She is also currently guiding several child welfare agencies in their efforts to leverage the Family First Prevention Services Act to build child and family well-being systems.

#### **JENNIFER HAIGHT**

**Director, Division of Performance Measurement and Improvement, Children's Bureau Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**



Jennifer Haight is the Director of the Division of Performance Measurement and Improvement at the Federal Children's Bureau housed in ACF within HHS.

In that role, she oversees the

Child and Family Services Review Team, and Data Analytics and Reporting Team. The Division is responsible for conducting the Child and Family Services reviews, as well as data collection, analysis, and reporting of state-level data reported to the Children's Bureau (CB) through mandated data collection. Prior to joining CB, Jennifer



spent 19 years at Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago where she worked as Policy Fellow and as a senior staff member at the Center for State Child Welfare Data. Jennifer started her policy career as a senior budget examiner for the New York Budget Division, where she was responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring the New York State Corrections Budget.

### MARGARET JACKSON

#### Executive Director, Cultural Brokers, Inc.



Margaret Jackson, Executive Director of Cultural Brokers, Inc., is a licensed clinical social worker committed to providing practice approaches and treatment interventions that are culturally congruent

and specific to the individual needs of children and families. Margaret has 30 years of child welfare experience as a line worker, Supervisor, Coach, Trainer and Consultant. Margaret designed the Cultural Broker Family Advocate Program which utilizes a model approach that has been recognized by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare. Margaret has served as a Trainer/Consultant for the Central California Child Welfare Training Academy at California State University of Fresno for the past 20 years. Margaret has served as an Adjunct Faculty member at California State University of Fresno for more than 12 years, teaching child welfare, diversity and practice courses in the social work program. Margaret is also a certified facilitator in Racial Sobriety for the National Training Center in Washington DC under the direction of Founder FR. Clarence Williams, CPPS, PhD.

### TECORIA JONES

#### Lived Experience Expert



Tecoria A. Jones is mother to six. She is an active change agent and national lived experience consultant. Local parent leadership includes professional work like being a parent peer partner with

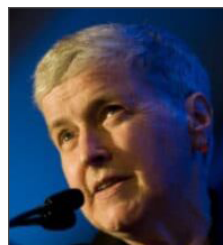
the Federation of Families South Carolina as well as volunteer opportunities such as The Carolinas Pandemic Preparedness Taskforce and as an officer on several Richland District Two's School Improvement Councils.

At the state level, Jones was chosen to be the first parent leader on the South Carolina Child Well Being Coalition, working in her state with FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention and SC Children Trust. Recently, Jones joined the SC Bench Bar Committee, through the Children's Law Center at the University of South Carolina-Columbia as the first community/lived experience member. National professional relationships include as a Parent Leader and trainer with the National Family Support Network. Work with NFSN includes parent expertise leadership in the first revision of the Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening & Support. Jones actively led Radical Family Engagement Week 2021, an initiative sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). She also serves on the board of Be Strong Families as Secretary.

Jones is currently on project with Thriving Families, Safer Children as a Lived Expertise National Partner and Advisory Board member for the state lead team. Her restorative work focuses on health, specifically mental wellbeing, racial justice, food policy, and therapeutic massage. Jones is a licensed massage therapist with goals to open a massage clinic for community access and supporting research in the field of neuroscience as it relates to therapeutic massage for mental health and physical endurance.

### MARY KEANE

#### Adoptive Parent and Senior Director, You Gotta Believe



After a lifetime of working in the non-profit health care industry and knowing almost nothing about foster care, I, Mary Keane "discovered" it mid-life and it turned my life around. I was working as a health care consultant and was visiting a





residential treatment center. It is then that I first saw the tragedy of older kids housed at an RTC who were being raised away from family. What struck me at the time was the inherent difficulties just being a teen, but to be a teen without family seemed overwhelming. And to be “raised” in such an environment where there were more cars and staff than there were kids.

In February, 2000, my first girl of 15 was brought to me from a crisis center where she had spent 21 days. Realizing that I knew absolutely nothing about what I was doing – because in retrospect my training had not really prepared me at all – I took the time to be open and to learn from this young lady. Jennifer was kind enough to begin my real education as to what it was like to spend her whole life in foster care. She was one of 8 siblings all of whom were pretty much raised by the system.

This young lady was the first of the 14 kids that I would claim over the next 20 years and from whom I learned all of their varied stories and struggles. They were very patient with me as they recognized how clueless I really was, but they took the time to teach me about their lives, their hopes and dreams and heartaches. What little I know about life in foster care, I owe to their patience and their teachings.

Also as a result of my learning from my kids, I joined You Gotta Believe, the older child adoption and homelessness prevention agency 19 years ago to ensure that more older kids, such as mine, got unconditionally committed loving parents to guide them through life. During this time, I have worked with many, many foster care agencies and been privy to their internal workings on many levels. This exposure has taught me the other side of the puzzle.

This year marks my 23rd year as a parent to my kids and we celebrate every anniversary that they have been with me. I have watched them blossom and turn into amazing adults and loving and nurturing parents. They have certainly struggled along the way and their earlier traumas have made their

journey more difficult than for most, but because they had a loving person in their corner during all of their challenges, they have been able to get up every day and try again. They are the most inspiring people I have ever known. I say all the time that my grandkids lives are now so normal as to be boring. They have not experienced the trauma of their parents and know it only as stories that are told.

While my kids might have had positive outcomes in the end, it is in no way a tribute to the foster care system. Frankly, it is in spite of the foster care system. And knowing what I now know about the system, I also know that most of their trauma and abuse while in the system, was avoidable.

#### **DIANNE KELLY**

**Regional Program Manager, Region 4,  
Children’s Bureau, Administration on Children,  
Youth and Families, Administration for Children  
and Families, U.S. Department of Health and  
Human Services**



Dianne Kelly, MS, LPC, LMHC is the Region 4 Regional Program Manager for the Children’s Bureau (CB).

Dianne is a CB “equity ambassador” and serves on the ACF Equity Advisory

Group. She has over twenty-five years of experience in child welfare practice and administration, policy and program development, training and clinical services. Dianne’s career reflects her deep affinity for serving children and families and the child welfare practitioners that serve them. She is a member of BLK Child Welfare, a healing, learning and advocacy space for child welfare practitioners. She has a Master of Science degree in Human Services Counseling and is a licensed clinician in Georgia and Florida.



### JACQUELINE P. MARTIN

#### Deputy Commissioner, Division of Prevention Services, Administration for Children's Services



Dr. Jacqueline Martin has been dedicated to improving the child welfare system in New York City for over twenty-five years. She currently serves as the Deputy Commissioner

for the Division of Prevention Services at the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). As a social work professional, she leads the agency's nationally recognized prevention services continuum promoting a collaborative best practice and policy agenda. She is also a Senior Advisor to the Racial Equity and Cultural Competency Committee (RECCC), fostering racial equity and social justice throughout the ACS child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care systems. Jacqueline holds a Master's in Social Work from Hunter College and a doctorate in Strategic Leadership from Regent University.

### ROBERT L. MATTHEWS

#### Director, DC Child and Family Services Agency



Robert L. Matthews is the Director of the DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA). In this role, he manages the District's child welfare and family strengthening system. Previously, Director

Matthews has served as the Deputy Director of Entry Services of CFSA and most recently, Principal Deputy Director for the agency. A seasoned child welfare leader and manager, Director Matthews brings to the helm more than two decades of experience within child- and family-serving organizations.

As CFSA's Principal Deputy Director, Director Matthews was charged with oversight of all the agency's clinical practice, programmatic operations including Child Protective Services and the Office of Youth Empowerment, and clinical

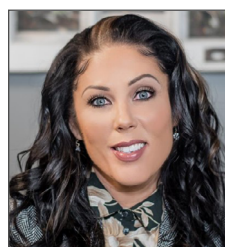
and health services. During his tenure at CFSA, Director Matthews has led improvements in kinship care programming, child abuse and neglect investigations, and community-based prevention services. Additionally, he is credited with implementing the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) practice known as "The Finish Line" that allowed the agency to meet the performance standards required to exit Federal Court oversight via the District's 32-year *LaShawn A. v. Bowser* class-action lawsuit.

Director Matthews career began in Tennessee within the Department of Children's Services. Since that time, he has held numerous roles within social services including Assistant Commissioner of Adult and Family Services for the Tennessee Department of Human Services and Chief of Staff for Maryland's Social Services Administration. Much of his experience in national child welfare reform comes from his time spent with the Annie E. Casey Foundation where he provided consultation to jurisdictions within Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Tennessee, and Georgia. With a proven track record of success in leadership within child welfare, Director Matthews has presented his initiatives and practices at the Child Welfare League of America Conference, the National Family Foster Treatment Association Conference, and the Black Administrators on Child Welfare Conference.

Director Matthews received his Bachelor of Science in Social Science from Tennessee State University and holds a Master of Science in Public Administration from Cumberland University.

### SAMANTHA MELLERSON

#### Executive Director, W. Haywood Burns Institute



Samantha Mellerson is one of three Executive Directors with the W. Haywood Burns Institute. Through the design and implementation of this shared leadership structure, Sam is part of a team of



leaders who strive to demonstrate the benefits of power sharing while working towards transformational change. As such, her work involves strategic planning, organizational development, financial oversight, project development and managing relationships with community leaders and system decision makers, funders and other partners across the nation. Sam is a graduate from the University of Toronto, and brings over 20 years of experience working with issues of social justice, racial and ethnic equity, education, diversity, youth justice, child welfare and community wellbeing. She also brings a depth of knowledge around nonprofit capacity building and organizational development and is a certified empowerment and diversity coach. Sam has worked across public and private sectors in various capacities such as non-profit direct service and management, local and state government and philanthropy.

#### **TONI MINER**

##### **Advocate, Birth Parent National Network**



Toni Miner is a strong and well-respected advocate for parents and caregivers in Colorado. She is the mother of three children. She is the kinship caregiver for her three grandchildren, a

teenage granddaughter, a teenage grandson and a toddler granddaughter.

Toni understands the importance of kinship providers understanding the very complex family serving systems that they will encounter while providing care for the children and young adults. She has been a kinship caregiver for 18 years.

Toni struggled with drug addiction issues and during that period of her life, her two oldest children were in and out of placements with relatives and friends. She has been sober for 21 years and continues to actively be involved in a recovery program. She is currently employed as the Circle of Parents Program manager at Illuminate Colorado. Toni has extensive experience working to develop a Parent Partner Program to provide

peer support and mentoring to parents at risk or involved in the child welfare system. Prior to this, she worked as a Family Support Partner with Jefferson County Colorado Child and Youth Leadership Commission. In addition to mentoring families, she provided training to case-workers, Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteers and kinship care providers.

Toni has been active in various councils, committees, and task forces at the local, state and national levels such as the Child Welfare System Team Decision-Making meetings, Domestic Violence/Child Protection Services Coordinating Council, State IV-E Waiver Oversight Committee, Children's Justice Act Task Force, Juvenile Justice Subcommittee, Human Trafficking Subcommittee, the Birth Parent National Network and Reimagining Child Welfare Blueprint Steering Committee. She spoke at the State Capital with the Governor for the roll out of the state's new Child Protection hotline. Toni is the recipient of the 2016 Casey Excellence for Children Award.

#### **ALICIA MOUSSEAU**

##### **Vice President, Oglala Sioux Tribe**



Dr. Alicia Mousseau is the daughter of the late John and Vera Mousseau and the granddaughter of the late James and Lena Mousseau from Porcupine, South

Dakota. Her hunka parents are Howard Brown and Karen Spoonhunter-Brown of Arapahoe, Wyoming. Her hunka children are Marcella and Alexander Brave Heart and Sarayah, Cia, and Jo Weston. Dr. Mousseau received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Wyoming in 2012. Before becoming the Vice President for the Oglala Sioux Tribe, she culturally adapted, implemented, and evaluated prevention and intervention programs with American Indian youth and families. Dr. Mousseau's commitment to her Tribe, community, and Oyate (people) has influenced her Vice Presidential platform to



bring trauma/healing informed care as well as a Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) Research and Training Center to the Oglala Sioux Tribe. Overall, Dr. Mousseau is dedicated to promoting prevention and health equity in American Indian communities through culturally and contextually relevant ways of knowing and capacity building.

#### **GABRIELLE NEWELL**

**Senior Advisor on Equity, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**



As a career civil servant in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Gabrielle is dedicated to advancing equity through improving program effectiveness and responsiveness. Since 2017,

Gabrielle has worked in the research office for ACF known as the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. In her role as a project officer she oversees large-scale evaluations of employment and work support programs, and also guides the incorporation of participatory methods into our research and evaluation processes. Since March 2021, Gabrielle has served a part-time special assignment with ACF's Immediate Office of the Assistant Secretary, coordinating efforts to advance equity across ACF's 1) workforce, 2) use of data, 3) grants and procurements, and 4) programmatic and policy change. Gabrielle is also a community organizer in her non-federal employee capacity and believes, in the words of Toni Morrison, that we should "dream a little before [we] think" in our efforts to improve ACF programs.

#### **JEANNETTE PAI-ESPINOSA**

**President, National Crittenton**



Jeannette has led National Crittenton through the reinvention of this 140-year-old national advocacy organization since 2007. Her commitment to advocating for

issues of importance to cis and trans girls, young women and gender expansive young people began as a young activist in the mid 70's. This is where her firm belief in the "nothing about us without us" practice and a dedication to following the leadership of those most impacted by all forms of oppression and the intersections of them was born. Her prior experience includes being a partner in a social change consulting agency; working in human and civil rights at the city, county and state levels; serving as senior policy advisor on Oregon Governor Barbara Roberts team; founding a non-profit education program for middle and high school students; and holding leadership roles in student services in public and private four-year universities. Jeannette holds a master's degree of education in student development theory, counseling and administration. She and her husband are the parents of four "grown" children ages 37-42.

#### **ANGEL PETITE**

**Senior Policy Manager, FosterClub**



Angel graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Superior with a Bachelors of Arts in Communicating Arts & Political Science. Before coming to FosterClub, Angel worked at a non-profit providing parenting resources

to young parents and also at a County Human Services supporting individuals applying for and accessing public benefits. Through the years, Angel's desire to "make a difference" has transformed from one of providing service to recognizing that individuals and communities must be supported to make the changes in their own lives according to their own measures of well-being. Angel is a volunteer CASA in Clatsop County.

As Senior Policy Manager at FosterClub, Angel feels proud of her work when Lived Experience Leaders share the growth they've experienced during engagement and when field leaders and policymakers meaningfully engage LEx leaders as vital partners in transforming the system. Angel hopes to equip, connect and facilitate





more LEx leaders across the country who will transform the system, ensuring young people have what they need to thrive.

**KRISTEN NICOLE POWELL**

**IMPACT Steering Committee, National Crittenton**



Kristen Nicole Powell works with National Crittenton as an IMPACT (Invincible Mamas Pushing Action and Change Together) Steering committee member. She is a mom of 3 and aspires to go to law school. She started her career

as a Prosperity Coach working at the Center for Combating Human Trafficking. While at CCHT, Kristen worked to create survivor informed, survivor led services and was integral in developing programming that focused on holistic healing for victims and survivors of human trafficking. Kristen also worked as a journalism intern and researcher for author/journalist Nell Bernstein where she researched youth advocacy and the movement to close youth prisons. Kristen graduated from Wichita State University with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and also has experience in advocacy, organizing and social justice. Kristen has lived experience in the Foster care, Juvenile Justice and Criminal Justice systems and is a survivor of Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence.

**JUAN RAMIREZ**

**Public Health Manager, Health Education Department, Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic**



Juan Ramirez has lived in both the United States and Mexico. In both countries, he has worked with underserved and migrant populations. Currently, he has the privilege to work at Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic as

a Public Health Manager, where he is the head of the Health Education Department. Juan is passionate about social justice, health equity and helping others to improve their health

outcomes. He is grateful for having the opportunity to serve communities throughout the states of Oregon and Washington through chronic disease self-management, parenting education, and children literacy programs. His commitment to the community, has also given him the opportunity to serve as La Casa Hogar's Board Secretary in Yakima, WA. He is also a member of the Prevention Mindset Institute led by FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention. Juan Ramirez has a Master of Public Health from The University of Texas at El Paso and a Bachelor of Law from Mexico.

**SAMANTHA SAHL**

**Supervisor, Child Sex Trafficking Recovery Services Team, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children**



Dr. Samantha Sahl, DSW, LCSW is the Supervisor of the Child Sex Trafficking Recovery Services Team (RST) at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). RST is a team of regionally assigned Resource Specialists

who provide case-based assistance and support to child welfare professionals and other multidisciplinary team members in the development of trauma-informed and victim-centered recovery plans for survivors of child sex trafficking who are reported missing to NCMEC. Prior to joining the team at NCMEC, Dr. Sahl coordinated the response to child sex trafficking in New Orleans, first through the New Orleans Children's Advocacy Center, and then with the Respect, Invest in, Support & Empower (RISE) Initiative at the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court. Dr. Sahl has provided national training and technical assistance on child sex trafficking identification, survivor engagement, and proactive recovery planning. She completed a Doctor of Social Work degree with the University of Southern California and focused her doctoral research on youth voice and choice through shared decision-making tools and practices.



## BRYAN SAMUELS

**Executive Director, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago**



Bryan Samuels is the Executive Director of Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, a nonprofit policy research institute focused on connecting research to action. Under Samuels' leadership, Chapin Hall is actively

working in more than 40 states in building knowledge and creating solutions with and for public system partners, community leaders and members, and families—all with an aim to improve the well-being of children and youth and ensure all families thrive.

Across his career, Samuels' work has centered on identifying and addressing inequities using evidence in policymaking. Key accomplishments include the creation and application of a well-being framework based on the best developmental understanding of normal childhood development; formation of a shared and actionable understanding of the effects of exposure to violence, trauma, poverty, and adverse childhood experiences on the mental, emotional, behavioral, and physical health of children; and emphasis on the importance of building the capacity of public and private child- and family-serving systems and organizations to focus on and produce positive outcomes.

Samuels was appointed by President Obama as the Commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF), where he served from 2009 to 2013 and leveraged the work of federal departments including Health and Human Services, Justice, and Education, among others, on behalf of children in foster care, youth experiencing housing instability, and families impacted by domestic violence. He received his B.A. in Economics from the University of Notre Dame in 1989 and his M.P.P. from the University of Chicago-Harris School in 1993.

## AYSHA E. SCHOMBURG

**Associate Commissioner, Children's Bureau Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**



Aysha E. Schomburg, J.D., joined the Biden Administration in March 2021 as the Associate Commissioner of the United States Children's Bureau within the Administration for

Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In this role, she advises the Administration on matters related to child welfare, including child abuse and neglect, child protective services, family preservation and support, adoption, foster care, and independent living. The Children's Bureau recommends legislative and budgetary proposals, operational planning system objectives and initiatives, and projects and issue areas for evaluation, research, and demonstration activities.

Aysha previously served 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. 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 front-line staff. She also provided recommendations to ACS's Office of Equity Strategies regarding addressing inequities and racism in child welfare. In October, the Aspen Institute named Aysha a 2021 Ascend Fellow, joining a network of visionary leaders who are transforming the trajectory of children and families across the country.

Aysha received her B.A. from the University of Virginia, her M.A. from New York University and her J.D. from New York Law School.



## SHROUNDA SELIVANOFF

**Director of Public Policy, Children's Home Society of Washington**



Shrounda Selivanoff is the Director of Public Policy at the Children's Home Society of Washington. She brings a fierce and passionate voice advocating for systemic change for parents and their children involved

with the child welfare system. She was previously involved with the child welfare system and has since reunited with her daughter. Shrounda's child welfare experience birthed an advocate seeking to destigmatize parents and move towards a system that empowers and values parents as partners. Shrounda's work prioritizes marginalized and disenfranchised families and relentlessly pursues policy change and system reform toward preserving and strengthening families.

## ANITA SHANNON

**Senior Director, Casey Family Programs**



Anita Shannon, Strategic Consulting Senior Director with Casey Family Programs, leads system reform efforts to support CFP's mission of ensuring that every child has a forever family, and that

every family has the support of a strong and thriving community. Anita's work includes creating and sustaining collaborative partnerships with community members, the executive, judicial and legislative branches of government, community-based organizations, and child welfare advocates. Anita's primary focus is on cultivating hope and equitable opportunities in the state of Michigan and the Commonwealth of Kentucky, while supporting the safe reduction of their respective foster care populations. She has also led Casey's system reform work in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C., IL, Mississippi, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico by way of forging

strategic partnerships to infuse best practices into these jurisdictions.

Throughout her career, Anita has used a hands-on approach to identifying and utilizing meaningful, community inclusive partnerships for positive impact on this nation's families, and communities.

## MIN. NINA SHAW-WOODY

**Executive Director, Kansas Family Advisory Network**



Min. Nina Shaw-Woody was born and raised in the Bronx, New York. She left New York to join the United States Army where she served 4 years before migrating to Kansas. Nina always had a motto that, "I'll do everything with kids at

least once," and that motto has become a reality living in Kansas.

Nina began working at a child placing agency in 2002. She started as a Foster Care Recruiter/Supervisor and worked for several child placing agencies as the child welfare contracts changed approximately every four years. In 2014, while working for one of the child placing agencies, Nina became the part time Executive Director of Kansas Family Advisory Network (KFAN). In 2016, Nina committed to working full-time at KFAN.

The Ministry of KFAN assists families who desire to change the trajectory of their lives and are wanting to create a new vision for themselves. KFAN walks alongside them and strives to equip them with the tools to be successful in their own right. Min. Nina has a love for families and a passion to make a difference not only to those families involved in child welfare but also to families who desire to bring about positive change to impact their future.

Nina is an ordained Minister of the Gospel, has a Master of Social Work degree from Newman University, a Bachelor's degree in Organizational Management and Leadership from Friends University, and also attended classes at Butler County Community College. Nina acknowledges





that she was “called” to be a social worker just as much as she was called to be a minister of the gospel. Nina and her husband Min. Conway Woody are the proud parents of eight beautiful children and 20 grandchildren.

**ELAINE VOCES STEDT**

**Director, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect,  
Children’s Bureau**

**Administration on Children, Youth and**



**Families, Administration for  
Children and Families, U.S.  
Department of Health and  
Human Services**

Elaine Voces Stedt, MSW,  
is the Director of the Office  
on Child Abuse and Neglect

(OCAN), housed within the Children’s Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C. In this role she oversees and manages OCAN activities including 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 and formula grant portfolios, including the Regional Partnership Grant Program, implementation of Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act programs and the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Title IV-E Prevention Plans; initiating and maintaining federal interagency communication regarding child abuse and neglect issues; and convening national conferences, professional meetings, and other special initiatives. For the past several years, Mrs. Stedt 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. Mrs. Stedt earned her Masters degree in Social Work (MSW) from Virginia Commonwealth University.

**TABITHA TEMPLE**

**Social Science Analyst, Office of Head Start  
Administration for Children and Families, U.S.**



**Department of Health and  
Human Services**

Tabitha Temple is a Social  
Science Analyst with the  
Office of Head Start. In that  
role, she provides policy and  
practice expertise in services

to pregnant women and people, including supporting the implementation of Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships. As a licensed social worker, Ms. Temple has 25 years of macro, mezzo, and micro experience ranging from family preservation to early childhood education.

**TAMIKA THURSTON**



**Senior Practice and Policy  
Advisor to the Associate  
Commissioner, Children’s  
Bureau, Administration  
on Children, Youth and  
Families, Administration for  
Children and Families, U.S.**

**Department of Health and Human Services**

**TIEN UNG**

**Associate Director, Children & Youth Program,  
Impact & Learning, Futures Without Violence**



Tien works to help individuals, organizations, and systems achieve transformative change by translating and applying relevant research, building usable knowledge, and generating culturally authentic evidence

to improve equitable outcomes for families impacted by adversity and trauma. At Futures she collaborates with colleagues and local partners to design practice, program, and policy solutions that integrates community wisdom, lived experience, and 21st century science. Tien draws from nearly 30 years of experience as a child protection expert, trauma therapist, social work educator, community-based researcher,

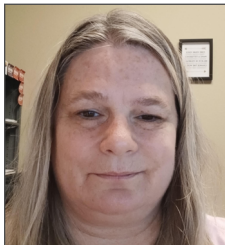


and systems consultant. She has worked across sectors—including child welfare, criminal justice/family law, schools, rape crisis centers, domestic violence shelters, and child and family trauma clinics to catalyze innovations in practice design, promote culturally responsive healing, enable authentic leadership, and foster sustainable organizational learning.

Prior to joining FUTURES, Tien was Director of Leadership Initiatives & Programs at the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. Tien is a licensed clinical social worker and has a PhD in Social Work.

### **MELISSA ZIMMERMAN**

#### **Birth Parent, FRIENDS NRC Parent Advisory Council**



Melissa Zimmerman lives in Phoenix, Arizona with her 13-year-old daughter, Taylor, and her husband. She is a dedicated family advocate in her community. She was previously involved with the

Department of Child Safety (DCS). She was able to successfully navigate the child welfare system and behavioral health systems. She was successfully reunited with her daughter. She advocates for the parents that she works with to be their voice in advocating for their families. She also advocates for parents and foster parents to have a shared

parenting relationship while their children are in care.

Today, Melissa has nine- and half-year sobriety and is currently a Care Coordinator for Terros Health with the Families F.I.R.S.T (Families In Recovery Succeeding Together) program helping families reunite with their children. Her knowledge is crucial in helping individuals and families navigate the complicated public health and child protective system in Arizona. Melissa currently holds a master's degree in Criminal Justice, is currently enrolled in her Master of Social Work program. She also is a Certified Peer Support provider, including Forensic Peer Support.

Melissa is part of the Parent Advisory Collaborative for Arizona and is currently a part of the Birth Foster Parent Partnership (BFPP) and the Birth Parent National Network (BPNN). Melissa has been with FRIENDS NRC Parent Advisory Council for two years. Melissa seeks to empower parents to have a voice to advocate for themselves, their families and to be responsible for their successes.