

PRESENTERS & PANELISTS



Elizabeth Albro, Ph.D.

Commissioner of Education Research, National Center for Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences

Elizabeth Albro, commissioner of education research at the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education, is committed to building bridges between the basic sciences of learning and education practice. Trained in the behavioral and social sciences, cognition and communication, she received her Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Chicago. Since joining IES in 2002, she has served as a program officer for multiple research portfolios and as associate commissioner of teaching and learning. She has participated on multiple interagency committees focused on open science and the federal research investment in language and communication. She has edited several books in reading comprehension, and has published articles in *Discourse Processes*, *Scientific Studies of Reading* and *Educational Psychology Review*. Prior to joining IES, Albro was a faculty member, first at Whittier College, and subsequently at Wheaton College (Norton, Mass.). All her research is grounded in her own experience as a preschool teacher in Cochabamba, Bolivia.



Gracie Branch, Ph.D.

Associate Executive Director for Professional Learning, National Association of Elementary School Principals

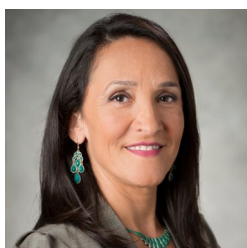
Gracie Branch is associate executive director for professional learning for the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), a professional organization serving elementary and middle school principals and other education leaders throughout the U.S., Canada and overseas. In her role, she works with principals to promote leadership development and mentor public school administrators.



Mary Bratsch-Hines, Ph.D.

Senior Manager for Research and Evaluation at the University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning

Mary Bratsch-Hines is senior manager for research and evaluation at the University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning. A primary goal of her research is to identify experiences that are most likely to improve children's early language and literacy skills. She previously served as an advanced research scientist in the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute and adjunct assistant professor in the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is project director and investigator for the Early Learning Network research team at UNC-Chapel Hill.



Gloria Corral

President and Chief Executive Officer, Parent Institute for Quality Education

Gloria Corral is president and chief executive officer of the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) based in San Diego, California. PIQE aims to engage, empower and transform families by providing knowledge and skills to partner with schools and communities to ensure their students achieve their full potential. Corral's passion for K-12 and higher education spans more than 25 years and includes work at the U.S. Department of Education, House of Representatives and the Senate.



Tonia Durden, Ph.D.

Clinical Professor and Birth through Five Program Coordinator, Georgia State University

Tonia Durden is a clinical professor and Birth through Five (B-5) program coordinator within the Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education at Georgia State University. Durden is committed to using teacher education and research as an informative vehicle to develop educators and leaders who become culturally-responsive change agents in their classrooms and communities.



Caroline Ebanks, Ph.D.

Team Lead for Early Childhood Research, National Center for Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences

Caroline Ebanks is the early childhood team lead for the National Center for Education Research (NCER) at the Institute of Education Sciences and program officer for two current NCER research grant programs, the Early Learning Programs and Policies research topic and the Early Learning Research Network. She served as the program officer for the National Research and Development Center for Research on Early Childhood Education and the Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research program, a multi-site evaluation study of preschool curricula. Ebanks has worked on several federal research initiatives addressing children's early learning and development and early childhood programs, policies and practices. She has an undergraduate degree in psychology from Wellesley College. She received her Ph.D. in developmental psychology from Cornell University.



Erika Gaylor, Ph.D.

Principal Senior Researcher and Early Childhood Program Leader, SRI International

Erika Gaylor is a senior researcher and early childhood program leader for SRI International based in Menlo Park, California. Gaylor uses mixed-methods designs to study both the implementation and impact of policies, programs, and practices affecting young children and their families with expertise in developmental assessments, early literacy and math, social-emotional competence, and high-quality instruction and environments.



Ross Harold

Chief of Staff, Nursing Unit, Office of School Health, New York City Department of Education

Ross Harold is chief of staff for nursing in the New York City Department of Education's Office of School Health, which provides more than 2,200 school nurses for students in prekindergarten to grade 12 citywide. In this role, he collaborates with leadership and staff to enhance quality and advance nursing initiatives. Harold previously served as the department's senior director of early childhood program assessment and early childhood health.



Lauren Jenks-Jones, M.Ed.

Executive Director of Early Childhood Education, Oklahoma State Department of Education

Lauren Jenks-Jones is executive director of early childhood education at Oklahoma State Department of Education. Previous roles in the department include director of early childhood and instructional specialist for Oklahoma Excel Math. Jenks-Jones also served as manager of teacher leadership development for Teach for America and as an elementary school educator for Oklahoma City Public Schools.



Laura Justice, Ph.D.

Distinguished Professor of Educational Psychology and Executive Director of the Crane Center for Early Childhood Research and Policy and Schoenbaum Family Center, Ohio State University

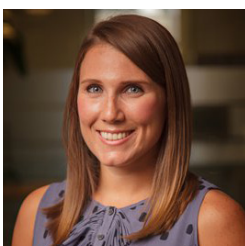
Laura Justice is an expert in early cognitive development and disabilities. Her research primarily focuses on young children who exhibit developmental vulnerabilities in language and literacy acquisition. Much of her work considers the effects of teacher or parent implemented interventions on children's learning, including the effective use of storybooks. She is also interested in the state of classroom quality in early childhood and how various aspects of quality affect children's gains in the classroom. She is principal investigator for the Early Learning Network research team at Ohio State University.



Lisa Knoche, Ph.D.

Co-Director and Research Associate Professor, Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools and Director, Nebraska Academy for Early Childhood Research, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Lisa Knoche is an applied developmental psychologist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) with expertise in design, development and evaluation of early childhood intervention and prevention programs to support healthy development in young children and family engagement in early learning. She is particularly interested in identifying and supporting effective professional development strategies for early childhood professionals and has extensive experience in implementing collaborative research programs with community partners. She is co-director of the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools and director of the Nebraska Academy for Early Childhood Research. Knoche is co-principal investigator for the Early Learning Network's UNL research team and lead team.



Meghan McCormick, Ph.D.

Senior Research Associate, Family Well-Being and Children's Development, MDRC

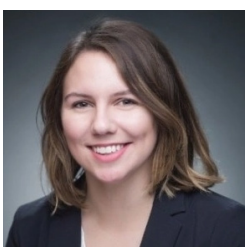
Meghan McCormick is a research associate in the Families & Children Policy Area at MDRC, a New York City based nonprofit, nonpartisan education and social policy research organization dedicated to understanding what works to improve programs and policies that affect the poor. Her research examines how school- and home-based programs and policies influence children's development and ameliorate the negative effects of poverty on child and family well-being. She is co-principal investigator for the Early Learning Network research team at MDRC, which works closely with Boston Public Schools.



Shantel Meek, Ph.D.

Founding Director and Professor of Practice, Children's Equity Project, Arizona State University

Shantel Meek is a professor of practice and the founding director of the Children's Equity Project (CEP) at Arizona State University, where she provides leadership and manages strategic partnerships with CEP partners at 16 universities and non-profit organizations, policymakers and national organizations. Meek previously worked as a consultant in early childhood policy and strategy at the Bipartisan Policy Center in Washington, D.C. and served in the Obama Administration as a senior policy advisor for early childhood development at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and as a senior policy advisor for education in the Domestic Policy Council at the White House.



Sara Mickelson

Director of Early Childhood Initiatives, Harris County Office of County Administration, Texas

Sara Mickelson leads early childhood initiatives for the Harris County Office of County Administration in Texas. She has worked as an independent consultant on strategy and implementation of early childhood efforts with state government, philanthropy and think tank partners and was chief of programs for the Oregon Early Learning Division, where she oversaw implementation of federal and state early childhood programs and led an effort to double the state's early childhood funding.



Alissa Mwenelupembe

Senior Director, Early Learning Program Accreditation, National Association for the Education of Young Children

Alissa Mwenelupembe is senior director of early learning program accreditation at the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and has more than 20 years of experience working in early childhood education as a teacher, director, trainer and consultant. She has a long history with NAEYC as a member, volunteer, editor of NAEYC's bestseller, "Each & Every Child," and past governing board member. Mwenelupembe is currently pursuing a doctorate in early childhood education from Ball State University.



Daniel Nowak

Teacher, Omaha Public Schools

Daniel Nowak teaches second grade at Chandler View Elementary in Omaha, Nebraska. He has nearly 20 years of experience teaching with Omaha Public Schools and has partnered with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (Network Lead) team on its Early Learning Network research studies.



Jennie Patterson

National Programs Manager, National Black Child Development Institute

Jennie Patterson is a public policy expert and national programs manager for the National Black Child Development Institute in Washington, D.C. She recently graduated with a master's degree in public policy from Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy. She previously worked as senior program coordinator at the Health Promotion Council, a public health non-profit based in Philadelphia.



Nicole Patton Terry, Ph.D.

Olive & Manuel Bordas Professor of Education in the School of Teacher Education, Director of the Florida Center for Reading Research and Director of the Regional Education Lab (REL) - Southeast, Florida State University

Nicole Patton Terry is an Olive & Manuel Bordas Professor of Education in the School of Teacher Education, director of the Florida Center for Reading Research and director of the REL-Southeast at FSU. Prior to joining FSU, she was an associate professor of special education at Georgia State University (GSU). She is founding director of the Urban Child Study Center at GSU and The Village at FCRR, two university-based research entities that aim to promote student success among vulnerable children and youth. Terry's research, innovation and engagement activities concern young learners who are vulnerable to experiencing poor language and literacy achievement in school, in particular, African American children, children growing up in poverty and children with disabilities.



Jason Sachs, Ed.D.

Executive Director for Early Childhood, Boston Public Schools

Jason Sachs leads Boston Public Schools' Department of Early Childhood, which focuses on prekindergarten (pre-K) through second grade. Prior to joining BPS in 2005, he worked in community-based organizations and at the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. He completed his dissertation in 1996 at Harvard Graduate School of Education on the relationship between quality and student outcomes for pre-K for low-income students in comparison to middle- and high-income students. Sachs partnered with the Early Learning Network on its MDRC-led research studies with BPS.



Ashley Adams Sanabria, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

Assistant Professor of Speech Language and Director of the Language Impairment, Bilingual Reading and Observational Research (LIBRO) Lab, San Diego State University

Ashley Adams Sanabria is an assistant professor in the Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences Department and director of the LIBRO Lab at San Diego State University. She is a certified bilingual speech-language pathologist with clinical experience in prekindergarten and early elementary environments. Sanabria's research focuses on improving reading outcomes for dual language learners with language disorders, using individual- and classroom-level interventions. She completed her

postdoctoral work in the School of Education at the University of California, Irvine with Carol Connor, Ph.D., where she was project director and co-principal investigator for the Early Learning Network's assessment team.



Susan M. Sheridan, Ph.D.

Director, Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools; Associate Dean for Research and Creative Activity, College of Education and Human Sciences and George Holmes University Professor of Educational Psychology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Susan Sheridan is an educational psychologist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), where she leads the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools. Much of her work aims to understand effective relationships and partnerships for children and youth. She is particularly interested in relationships between parents and teachers and identifying meaningful ways to establish

home-school partnerships. Sheridan's primary grant work and research focus is in a model of service delivery known as Teachers and Parents as Partners (also known as conjoint behavioral consultation), focused on bringing parents, teachers, and other care providers together to develop constructive relationships and address concerns they share for children. Sheridan is principal investigator for the Early Learning Network's UNL research team and lead team.



Pamela Truelove-Walker, Ed.D.

Senior Director, Early Learning and Early Education, Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education

Pamela Truelove-Walker is senior director for early learning and early education in the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education. She previously served as preschool director for First Presbyterian Church Preschool in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and as a transition/training coordinator and Early Head Start specialist for children ages birth to five years. Pamela received her bachelor's degree in psychology and her master's degree in human environmental science from the University of Alabama. Pamela also holds a second master's degree in education from the University of West Alabama.



Deborah Vandell, Ph.D.

Chancellor's Professor of Education Emerita, School of Education, University of California, Irvine

Deborah Lowe Vandell is Chancellor's Professor of Education Emerita at the University of California, Irvine, where she is the Founding Dean Emerita of the School of Education. Vandell is a developmental psychologist whose longitudinal research extends from infancy to early adulthood. Her research focuses on the effects of developmental contexts (i.e., early child care, K-12 schools, afterschool programs, organized activities, families) on social, behavioral and academic functioning. Vandell is principal investigator for the Early Learning Network's assessment team at UC, Irvine.



Virginia Vitiello, Ph.D.

Associate Research Professor, Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL), University of Virginia

Virginia Vitiello is a developmental psychologist, early education researcher and associate research professor in the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia (UVA). She previously served as research and evaluation director for Teachstone, where she worked with partners to develop evaluation strategies and bring research to practice. She is co-principal investigator for the Early Learning Network research team at UVA.