



ACT EARLY AMBASSADOR BIOS

2024-2026

 **ALABAMA**



Tish MacInnis
Alabama Partnership
for Children

Tish MacInnis earned a BS Education degree from the University of South Alabama. Tish is the Alabama Strengthening Families Coordinator. She is a certified trainer by the National Alliance for the Children's Trust Fund and provides statewide for the curriculum of the Protective Factors of the Strengthening Families™ Initiative and Zero to Three's "The Growing Brain". She also manages the distribution of the Smart Start Parenting Kit. This kit provided across the state to parents of newborns, resources from local, state, and national partners.

Tish is also the Alabama Ambassador of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention outreach program for Learn the Signs. Act Early. that aims to improve early identification of children with autism and other developmental disabilities so children and families can get the services and support they need.

Collaboration with many state departments, agencies and programs are strong in the work she does. To name a few: AL Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention, Help Me Grow Alabama, Early Intervention, Autism Society of Alabama, AI Department of Early Childhood Education, Home Visitation, DHR Kids N Kin, Head Start, Learn the Signs. Act Early. and local Children Policy Councils. Passionate about the work of strengthening families in Alabama, has allowed her opportunities to share the progress in Alabama at local, state, and national platforms. Presentations at Help Me Grow National Forums, National Family and Community Engagement Conference, Alabama Early Intervention and Toddler Conference, Alabama First Class Pre K Conference and Alabama Head Start Association.



📍 **ALASKA**



Carmen Wenger

All Alaska Pediatric
Partnership, Help Me Grow

Carmen Wenger is the Director of Programs for the All Alaska Pediatric Partnership (A2P2) where she has worked since 2017, both in this role and previously as the Program Director for Help Me Grow Alaska. She holds a bachelor's degree in Environmental Earth Science from Dartmouth College a Master of Public Health in International Health and Development from Tulane University and is pursuing a Doctor of Public Health in Leadership, Advocacy and Equity. She has worked in public health and community development in the United States, Latin America and southern Africa. Her work has centered around health equity primarily in the MCH field.

Carmen's prior work with children and families include being an Orphan and Vulnerable Child Advisor at Child Welfare South Africa, serving as both the Immunization Information System manager and deputy program manager for the State of Alaska's Immunization Program, the director of operations for the Joy Greisen Jewish Education Center and the director for the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness.

📍 **ALASKA (TRIBAL)**



Jessica Davis

Southcentral Foundation
Tribal Health Center

Jessica Davis is of Alaskan Yupik decent and is a shareholder in the Bristol Bay Native Corporation. She provides operational oversight at Southcentral Foundation's (SCF) Child and Family Developmental Services (CFDS) department as manager. CFDS provides statewide neurodevelopmental care for customer-owners (SCF's term for "patients" due to the unique structure of governance from tribal entities and IHS support) and their families. CFDS is an interdisciplinary team that includes developmental-behavior pediatric providers, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, board certified behavior analysts, pediatric neuropsychologists, and behavior health consultants. This team collaborates in providing a wide range of supportive care to children and families with developmental and behavioral needs. In her work within CFDS, Jessica develops strategies to strengthen collaboration and coordination for early care and intervention for those served within SCF's Nuka system of care. Her responsibilities include facilitating an organization-wide early childhood programming that is focused on incorporating infant and early childhood mental health initiatives.

She actively hires neurodiverse individuals and supports staff in their career development. In her prior managerial roles within SCF, Jessica helped incorporate Strengthening Families programming into the Health Education department's learning circles, which partners with families on making healthy choices in daily life through education and group activities. During her almost two decades of working at SCF, Jessica has held positions responsible for policy development, state advocacy, and community development, and has been dedicated the SCF mission of to working with the Alaska Native community to achieve wellness through health and related services.



 **ARIZONA**



Megan Wills

Easterseals Blake
Foundation

Megan Wills has been with the Easterseals Blake Foundation for 18 years, dedicated to shaping the agency's early childhood intervention and education services—including children with special needs— throughout Southern Arizona. Beginning initially at the direct service level and later in a supervisory/administrative level, she has had the opportunity to gain insight in this field from both perspectives.

In her current position as Director of Children and Family Services she spearheads several programs emphasizing early development monitoring and assessment including Nurse-Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, Early Head Start/Head Start, Neonatal Intensive Care Program and Early Learning Childcare Centers. In this capacity, as well as serving as Learn the Signs. Act Early (LTSAE) Deputy Ambassador for Arizona, she is intimately familiar with working with Head Start and Early Head Start, regional agencies such as WIC, early childhood state agencies, pediatric clinics and home visitation programs on a state-wide basis.

She has also served as United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona's Family Support Alliance Community Chairperson comprised of community leaders. She believes that a collective multi-level approach strengthens family and community through engagement at all stakeholder levels.

 **ARKANSAS**



Katie Clark

Arkansas Chapter of the
American Academy of
Pediatrics Foundation

Katie Clark (she/her) is the Project Director for the Arkansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Foundation. She started as the Project Coordinator in 2021 working with Arkansas' Act Early team to develop a digital toolkit that would allow families to navigate the early intervention system in the state. Since then, she has provided on going clinic trainings, developed social media campaigns, and created resources to help providers and families better understand developmental delays and how to intervene.



 CALIFORNIA



Patty Moore

Help Me Grow
Santa Barbara

Patty Moore is the director of Help Me Grow Santa Barbara County after serving for 30 years as manager of Children, Family & Advocacy Services at Alpha Resource Center. She began her journey in early intervention and family support after the birth of her third son who was born with Down syndrome and complex health needs. Patty has become a recognized leader in mentoring families in developing skills in informed decision-making; building parent-professional partnerships; individual and systems advocacy.

Her current affiliations include consultant to the development of Alpha's Family Empowerment Center, executive council member of Family Voices of CA, former chair and legislative liaison to the Family Resource Centers Network of CA, community representative to the CA State Interagency Coordinating Council on Early Intervention, member of Cen Cal Health Whole Child Model Family Advisory Council, former Commissioner First 5 Santa Barbara County, and former co-chair of the USCUCEDD Advisory Council.

She was actively involved in the planning and development of California's Early Start Program. Patty enjoys developing and training on a variety of topics including Family Voices of CA Parent Leadership, National Standards of Family Strengthening and Support, Communicating in Special Education, Turning Three: A transition from Early Start, Transition to Adulthood, and Future Planning. Patty received her certification in mediation in 2014 and currently serves as an IEP facilitator in Alternative Dispute Resolution with the Santa Barbara County Special Education Local Plan Area.

 CALIFORNIA



Michele Rogers

Early Learning Institute

Michele Rogers, Ph.D. is the Executive Director and Co-founder of the Early Learning Institute. She earned her PhD in psychology with an emphasis in early childhood mental health/neurobiology from the University of Colorado, Denver. Michele worked for several years on Sonoma County's Early Childhood Mental Health task force, focusing primarily on creating a system of care for children 0-5 that includes social-emotional supports.

Michele is a certified childbirth educator and lactation specialist; serves on the public policy committee of the Infant Development Association and is a First 5 Sonoma Commissioner. In celebration of all these efforts, Michele was honored as the 2014 Sonoma County Champion for Children. Michele is married with three grown children and 4 sweet grandchildren.



📍 **COLORADO**



Eileen Auer Bennett

Colorado Assuring Better
Child Health & Development

Eileen Auer Bennett has been the Executive Director of Assuring Better Child Health & Development (ABCD) for 16 years. Her passion for early identification of developmental delay, equitable access to developmental supports, and family engagement has led her to identify opportunities to expand ABCD's advocacy for young children at the local, state, and national levels. Before launching ABCD in Colorado, Eileen provided early intervention service coordination, training and technical assistance for 10 years at both the state and local levels.

Eileen's experience as a bereaved mom to a daughter with special health care needs, has led her on a journey to being trained as a Children's Hospital Colorado (CHCO), parent mentor. She provides support to other parents who have recently lost a child. Eileen also is working with the CHCO bereavement team to understand the immediate and long-term impact of legacy building for families when providing grief and bereavement support.

📍 **CONNECTICUT**



Bethanne Vergéan

University of Connecticut
UCEDD

Bethanne Vergéan provides technical assistance and training for Connecticut's Early Childhood system. Her work over the past 20 years has been centered on improving developmental monitoring in Connecticut. Through her dedicated advocacy, she has developed strong networking systems throughout the state to bring professionals together to create a universal system for developmental monitoring, screening, and early identification of developmental disabilities for young children.

Bethanne is working with local community colleges updating their Early Childhood course syllabi to improve the quality of existing Associate Degree programs that enhances the identification of developmental concerns for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. She has diverse professional and personal experiences, which have fostered her passion in all areas of child development and family engagement. Bethanne has been the Learn the Signs Act Early (LTSAE) Ambassador for the past three years; she is a CDC Mental Health Champion and CT Help Me Grow Advisory Co-Chairperson. Bethanne graduated from Quinnipiac University with majors in Healthcare Management and Public Health. She also attended St. Joseph University majoring in Early Childhood Special Education.



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



Yetta Myrick

DC Autism Parents

Yetta Myrick is the mother of a young adult son diagnosed with Autism, ADHD, and Intellectual Disability. She is the Founder and President of DC Autism Parents (DCAP), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the District of Columbia. Ms. Myrick has served as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Act Early Ambassador to the District of Columbia since 2016. She led the DC COVID-19 Response Team from 2020-2022 and is currently leading the DC Act Early Team. In 2022, she co-authored and self-published, *Mr. Marshall's Block Party*.

Ms. Myrick leads the DC Autism Collaborative's Developmental Monitoring, Screening, and Evaluation Subgroup, co-leads the Family Advisory Group, Outreach and Education Subgroup, and the Community Resources and Support Subgroup. She serves as the Parent Educator/Advocate on the ECHO Autism HUB Team at Children's National Hospital. Ms. Myrick co-leads the "Family Voices United to End Racism Against CYSHCN and Families" Project and served as the Co-Investigator for the "Building Capacity in the African American ASD Community for Patient-Centered Outcomes Research" Project funded through the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Award.

In 2021, she was appointed to the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee by Secretary of Health and Human Services, Xavier Becerra, J.D. Additionally, Ms. Myrick is a member of the DC Developmental Disabilities Council and was awarded the 2024 Advocate in Equity Award by the DC Developmental Disability Awareness Month Planning Committee. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communication Studies from The Catholic University of America.



DELAWARE



Ashley Steinbrecher

University of Delaware Center
for Disabilities Studies

Ashley Steinbrecher, M.S. is a health promotion implementation coach within the Health and Wellness Unit at the University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS). In this role, Ashley works to develop and disseminate health-related information, training, and resources to individuals with disabilities, families, caregivers, and the professionals who serve them. Working in close collaboration with colleagues and community partners in the state allows Ashley to ensure that community-facing projects and resources are accessible and meet the needs of Delawareans. Ashley takes a lead in promoting health literacy and early identification in Delaware through her work supporting Learn the Signs. Act Early. (LTSAE) grant activities and through her leadership on CDS's My Health. My Wellness. initiative.

She also has a robust background in providing training and professional development. She co-facilitates a seminar course for undergraduate students in the University of Delaware's Disabilities Studies minor program and serves as a trainer for the Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism (DNEA), where she delivers trainings to childcare providers and families of young children across the state. With her background in health promotion and program evaluation, Ashley also serves as a Co-PI and evaluator on a number of health and wellness unit data collection activities and community-based studies. Before joining the CDS and DNEA team, Ashley worked as a program supervisor at Easterseals Day Program. She received her M.S. in Health Promotion from the University of Delaware (UD), where she conducted research as part of the UD Health and Disability Lab.



FLORIDA



Sarah Fabrizi

Florida Gulf Coast University

Dr. Sarah Fabrizi is a fellow of the American Occupational Therapy Association with a wealth of experience and expertise in play, playfulness, creativity, and social relationships in early childhood. She has dedicated the last two decades to connecting research to practice in the settings where children and their families participate in everyday life at home and in the community. Dr. Fabrizi is committed to promoting environments where every child has opportunities for play as a support for a lifetime of health and well-being. Dr. Fabrizi's work on play and playgroups in early childhood settings has been presented internationally and published in textbooks and peer-reviewed journals.

Throughout her career, Dr. Fabrizi has served in various capacities, including her current role as an Associate Professor at Florida Gulf Coast University. Dr. Fabrizi collaborates with Early Steps, Florida's Early Intervention program, and Special Olympics Young Athlete program. She regularly collaborates with Little Eagles Learning Center and the Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida. Dr. Fabrizi mentors graduate students in fieldwork placements and research, providing early childhood training and project implementation. As a compassionate and dedicated professional, Dr. Fabrizi continues to make meaningful contributions to the early childhood community; she is co-chair of the Research Special Interest Section for the Florida Occupational Therapy Association and co-leads the American Occupational Therapy Association's Early Childhood Community of Practice.



FLORIDA



Liz Randall

Help Me Grow Florida

Liz Randall is the Senior Director of Help Me Grow Florida (HMGF). In this role, she collaborates with community partners, service agencies, and stakeholders and conducts data analysis and research on a statewide scale. As the co-lead for Florida's Act Early/COVID-19 Response Teams Grant, she works regularly with the statewide HMGF affiliates and other early childhood programs to increase awareness of the importance of developmental milestones, surveillance, and screening.

Liz has a master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education with a concentration on infants and toddlers. She has extensive experience working hands-on with children and families from a variety of cultures through her work with the Virginia Infant and Toddler Connection as an early intervention service coordinator. Liz enjoys collaborating and forming partnerships with other early childhood professionals to advocate for the needs of young children and families.



📍 **GEORGIA**



Bridget Ratajczak
Georgia Department of Early
Care and Learning

Bridget Ratajczak has an M.A. in early childhood special education from the University of Georgia. She has over 30 years of experience in early childhood education and special education and has held various roles including: an instructor at the University of Georgia's Birth through Kindergarten teacher preparation program, an early intervention specialist with the Babies Can't Wait, and a preschool special-education teacher in Athens, Georgia. Her areas of expertise include early identification of developmental delays, autism, and positive behavior supports and interventions for young children.

In her current role as the Child and Family Development Supervisor at Georgia's Department of Early Care and Learning, Bridget supports early childhood professionals in Georgia on developmental monitoring, child development and family engagement. She serves on a variety of committees and state-wide collaborative efforts geared at increasing developmental monitoring and positive outcomes for Georgia's children. In the past two years, Bridget has served as the Act Early Georgia Ambassador, implementing several initiatives to inform and train early childhood professionals about developmental monitoring through promotion of the Watch Me! online training modules and Learn the Signs. Act Early resources. She has successfully collaborated with multiple partners to provide training in a variety of child-serving systems, including foster care, home visiting, Early and Head Start programs, and other early childhood education programs. She has also served as a co-lead on the Act Early Georgia team.

📍 **GUAM**



Elaine Eclavea
Guam Early Learning Council

Elaine Eclavea is a native of Guam and has over 30 years of experience in working with parents and professionals to improve the outcomes of young children with disabilities and their families in Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Eclavea is the Guam's Early Learning Council (GELC) Chairperson since the initial establishment in 2008 and is the Early Childhood Consultant for the University of Guam (UOG) Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (Guam CEDDERS) and the Department of Public Health and Social Services -Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five.

She has extensive leadership experience in the development, implementation, and administration of early childhood projects and continues to provide training and technical assistance to improve, support, and strengthen coordination and collaboration among public and private agencies and organizations serving young children and their families. Eclavea earned a Master's in Education and a Bachelor of Arts in Special Education from UOG. Eclavea served as Guam's Act Early Ambassador from 2019 to 2022 and was the LTSAE Consultant for Guam CEDDERS - LTSAE Grant from 2016-2018. She was responsible for coordinating, supporting, and conducting LTSAE training and parent-interactive activities in villages to meet the objectives of the Project. In 2015, Eclavea was selected to participate as a BUILD Equity Leaders Action Network (ELAN) Fellow in efforts to promote early childhood systems work to identify and address root causes of disparities and support remedies to address them.



 **HAWAII**



Jeffrey Okamoto
American Academy of
Pediatrics, Hawaii Chapter

Dr. Jeffrey Okamoto is a Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrician at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children, and faculty in the Department of Pediatrics at the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Dr. Okamoto obtained his MD degree at JABSOM. His residency in Pediatrics was at Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles and his Fellowship in Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. He obtained a certificate from the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disorders (LEND) program at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

He was previously medical director and acting administrator for the Developmental Disabilities Division, Department of Health, State of Hawaii. He was responsible for the health and safety of over 2000 clients with developmental disabilities, including those with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disability. He has several teaching awards from the medical school. He also received the "Outstanding Community Contribution to Persons with Disabilities" award from the Center on Disability Studies at the University of Hawaii in 2006. From 2010 to 2011, he was a Kennedy Foundation Public Policy Fellow in Washington DC. He was placed with Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-Maryland) in her Subcommittee for Children and Families within the Committee for Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. In 2018 he was recognized as Professional of the Year by the Special Parent Information Network in appreciation of his outstanding service to families of children with disabilities. In 2022 he became president of the Hawaii Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

 **IDAHO**



Melissa Crist
University of Idaho

Melissa Crist is the Director of Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance at the University of Idaho's Center on Disabilities and Human Development (CDHD). In this role, Melissa directs the CDHD's early childhood projects that lead both quality improvement and professional development programs in the state of Idaho. This work includes administering the state quality rating and improvement system, professional development system and registry, childcare resource and referral system, childcare health consulting program, childcare subsidy and licensing support services, and the Act Early Idaho state team. Melissa has worked in the fields of early childhood education and early intervention for the last twenty years.

Melissa is an active member of national and state organizations, including the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). She is a current DEC Recommended Practices Ambassador, promoting improved outcomes for young children with developmental delays and disabilities and their families through implementation of the DEC Recommended Practices. She presents locally and nationally on topics related to early childhood inclusion, quality improvement, and early identification.



📍 **ILLINOIS**



Courtney Hill

DeKalb County Regional Office
of Education, Basics Illinois

Courtney Hill is the Team Lead for the implementation of The Basics in Illinois housed at the DeKalb Regional Office of Education. The Basics is an evidence-based public health campaign that raises awareness and builds capacity throughout communities for engaging families with young children around The Basics Principles and other supports. Courtney led the local county-wide initiative, Basics DeKalb County, as the first community in Illinois to adopt The Basics. With the success and excitement of the local campaign, she now leads a team to support the implementation of the statewide initiative, Basics Illinois.

Courtney believes that all children should have equitable opportunities for school and life success. She enjoys collaborating with organizations such as government agencies, housing developments, employers, healthcare, and more supporting a vision that everyone can play a role in positively impacting healthy development in young children. Courtney received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology with a focus on Child Development from Northern Illinois University. She also serves on multiple councils and committees on the Illinois Early Learning Council as a parent of young children with disabilities and developmental delays.

📍 **ILLINOIS**



Shannon Dault

Help Me Grow
Central Illinois

Shannon Dault is the Early Childhood Navigator for Help Me Grow Central Illinois. Grounded in the importance of children's optimal healthy development especially during early childhood (from birth through age five), the Help Me Grow (HMG) Model focuses on developmental promotion, early detection, referral, and linkage for all children, especially those at-risk for developmental or behavioral concerns. In her work with HMG she promotes the optimal development of young children by linking families to information and community resources related to child development and parenting, providing personalized care coordination, creating and facilitating partnerships within the community to improve the availability and quality of services for families. Prior to joining Help Me Grow, Shannon worked under Child & Family Connections #14 as a Parent Liaison and LIC Coordinator.

Through this role, she performed community needs assessments, identified, and coordinated resources in the community, completed Child Find activities, and promoted developmental screening and monitoring. Shannon is a member of Local Interagency Council 16, Tri-County All Our Kids Network, Coordinated Intake Collaborative, Family Connects Advisory Board, Good Beginnings Advisory Board, Peoria County Bright Futures Advisory Board, Peoria County ROE Early Learning for All Advisory Board, Human Rights Authority Advisory Board, Hope Network, Community Inclusion Team, Safe Kids Coalition, and serves as the Vice President of the Early Childhood Forum of Central Illinois.



📍 **INDIANA**



Stephan Viehweg

Indiana University
School of Medicine,
Department of Pediatrics

Stephan Viehweg, LCSW, ACSW, IECMH-E®, CYC-P has been the CDC's Learn the Signs. Act Early. Ambassador to Indiana since 2013. He is the Associate Director of the Indiana LEND, Division of Developmental Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, IU School of Medicine, the Associate Director of the IUPUI Center for Translating Research Into Practice, and Adjunct Professor in the IU School of Social Work. He has participated in a variety of statewide systems projects to enhance services to very young children.

He is founding chair of Infancy Onward (Indiana's association for infant mental health) and founding president of Family Voices Indiana, now Indiana Family to Family where he serves as Secretary to the Board. He is Treasurer of Mental Health America of Indiana, a Governor appointee to the Indiana Behavioral Health and Human Services Licensing Board and serves on the Nominating Committee of the Association of Social Work Boards. He has led efforts to support Early Head Start, Head Start and early care/education programs to integrate use of LTSAE into their programs. His clinical work focuses on infant and early childhood mental health supporting infants/toddlers and their families to address concerns with social/emotional development and relationship. He is co-author of Tackling the Tough Stuff: A Home Visitor's Guide to Supporting Families at Risk.

📍 **IOWA**



Michelle Holst

Iowa Department of Health
and Human Services

Michelle Holst serves as the Strategic Initiatives Coordinator for the Wellness & Preventive Health subdivision of the Division of Community Access and Eligibility within the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. In this capacity, Michelle coordinates and assists with performance improvement, quality improvement and strategic planning across WIC, SNAP-Ed, and Title V Maternal and Child Health efforts along with several other state and federal programs. Her position is situated within the Bureau of Nutrition and Physical Activity where WIC and SNAP-Ed are administered.

Her background includes over 30 years of consultation and program management for several health and human services programs including Medicaid Home and Community Based Services, TANF, SNAP, National Health Service Corps, and a variety of other initiatives. Immediately prior to her transition to her present role, Michelle's work focused on increasing rates of surveillance and standardized developmental screening in primary care as the program lead for the 1st Five Healthy Mental Development Initiative. Serving nearly a decade in this role, some of her work included service as Iowa's State Lead for Help Me Grow and a Certified Trainer for the Zero to Three curriculum, The Growing Brain. She participated in a variety of statewide workgroups including the Regional Autism Assistance Program Expert Advisory Panel, the Project LAUNCH Young Child Wellness Council, and the Pediatric Mental Health Advisory Council.



KANSAS



Peggy Kemp

University of Kansas Center on
Developmental Disabilities

Dr. Peggy Kemp serves as the Kansas Ambassador under the University of Kansas Center on Developmental Disabilities. Peggy is a returning ambassador. Peggy has worked in the field of early childhood since 1984. Early experience includes serving as a director and education specialist within the DoD childcare system. Since 1997, she has worked in the field of early intervention. Dr. Kemp has served in a variety of local and state leadership positions to include early childhood special education teacher/early interventionist, local Part C coordinator, state Part C coordinator, and state Part C technical assistance provider.

Dr. Kemp holds dual undergraduate degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education and a master's degree in Education with emphasis on Early Childhood Special Education. Areas of specialization include early intervention, infant mental health, families, and policy. Dr. Kemp currently serves as Executive Director for the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children.



KENTUCKY



Christine Hausman

University of Kentucky Human
Development Institute, Child
Care Aware of Kentucky

Christine Hausman works for the Human Development Institute (HDI) at the University of Kentucky as the Content Coordinator of Training at Child Care Aware (CCA), a statewide contract with the Kentucky Division of Child Care. Child Care Aware provides technical assistance, coaching, and education to childcare providers across the state. She is currently the lead trainer for early childhood professionals seeking their trainers' credential and utilizes those skills in promoting "Learn the Signs. Act Early" any chance she gets. She collaborates with 80+ Child Care Aware Coaches on the dissemination and integration of "Learn the Signs: Act Early" materials and resources with the goal of identifying children with developmental delays or disabilities as early as possible.

As the Content Coordinator of Training, Christine embeds this information into existing and newly developed training accessed by early care professionals from various agencies and organizations. Current LTSAE partnerships include Governor's Office of Early Childhood, Division of Child Care, Department for Health including Help Me Grow, First Steps (Early Intervention) and HANDS (Home Visitors). She recently served as the Lead Facilitator for Project Supporting Children of the Opioid Epidemic (SCOPE), participates on the Kentucky Strengthening Families Leadership Team and the Early Childhood Subcommittee of the KY Advisory Council on Autism. She is an Early Interventionist at heart having served as a Child Development Specialist, Case Manager and Early Childhood Special Educator in seven states across urban, rural and suburban settings.



📍 **LOUISIANA**



Julie Emory

LA Department of Health,
Bureau of Family Health

Julie Emory serves as the Pediatric Medical Home/EPSTD Coordinator for the Louisiana Bureau of Family Health. Her work focuses on strengthening the ability of healthcare providers to deliver comprehensive medical home services, ensuring positive outcomes for children with and without special healthcare needs. Recently, she completed a two-year project that successfully integrated caregiver depression screenings into pediatric well-child visits across multiple clinics throughout the state. Before this role, Julie led the place-based community initiatives under the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant. Under her leadership, the parish achieved significant advancements in access to developmental screenings, expanded parent education, and built a cross-sector coalition dedicated to improving child and family outcomes.

She also served as the Lead Agency Director for three parishes, contributing to the transformation of the childcare industry in Louisiana. Julie is a passionate advocate for community involvement and has actively participated on various committees and boards, including serving as the Executive Director of the Big Whit 77 Foundation, a board member of the Wellspring Alliance Against Domestic Violence, Sterlington Little League, and the Children's Museum of Northeast Louisiana. Additionally, she is a TrustBased Relational Intervention (TBRI) Practitioner and offers certification classes for families interested in foster care. She holds a Master's degree in Family and Child Development and a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education with a concentration in Child Life, both from Louisiana Tech University. Additionally, she earned a Graduate Certificate in Infant-Toddler Mental Health from Portland State University.

📍 **MAINE**



Nancy Cronin

Maine Developmental
Disabilities Council

Nancy Cronin, MA is the Executive Director of the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC) and has had the honor to serve in that role in 2013. Prior roles included serving Maine as the Autism Spectrum Disorders System Change Initiative Coordinator and before that the Executive Director of the Autism Society of Maine. Through the decades, she has built strong working relationships with Maine medical professionals, early childhood professionals, community support system professionals, policy makers, advocates, and families.

Nancy specializes in understanding how the systems that affect individuals with disabilities work and interact with each other. Her work at the local, state and national level focuses on the development and improvement of effective services and supports for persons with DD of all ages and their families. She truly embraces the mission of the MDDC to create a Maine in which all people are valued and respected. Nancy's recent focus has been to work with policy makers and all the stakeholders as they redesign the early childhood system in Maine with the goal of building an effective, quality system of care to provide support and services to children and their families.



📍 **MARYLAND**



Kristen Paul
The Parent's Place
of Maryland

Kristen Paul has been working in the field of education for over 20 years as a teacher, education advisor and administrator in a variety of environments. Shae has experience in providing technical assistance, training, and professional development to parents and colleagues through both her former position as a local Family Support Liason for Birth to Five Programs and her current position as the Early Childhood Specialist at the Parents' Place of Maryland (PPMD), the state's Parent Training and Information Center and Family-to- Family Health Information Center and the only cross-disability, stated family organization in Maryland.

Kristen is responsible for implementation of the Baby LEADers training program, which was developed in collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education- for parents/guardians of children ages 0-5 with suspected or diagnosed disabilities. The curriculum includes an introduction to CDC resources, including the Milestone Tracker app and other LTSAE materials. Ms. Paul serves on multiple state-level teams, including the pyramid Model State Leadership Team, State Systemic Improvement Plan Implementation Team, State Early Childhood Advisory Council, and the State Special Education and serving as an aRPY Ambassador. Kristen lives in Southern Maryland with her husband and young son, the latter of whom has multiple disabilities and inspires the work she does every day to help families and young children receive the services and supports they need.

📍 **MASSACHUSETTS**



Danielle Thibodeau
Meeting Street Early
Intervention

I am a Clinical Supervisor/Developmental Specialist at Meeting Street Early Intervention in Fall River, MA. I have worked with children and families in the Southeastern Massachusetts region for 17 years. I have experience working with children and families with a variety of cultures and backgrounds. I have a Bachelor's degree in Physical Therapy and have focused my work in Early Intervention on motor development. I have had the pleasure of watching many toddlers take their first steps over the years, and it is a celebration every time. I really enjoy helping young children and their families meet their goals and overcome obstacles.

I am also DIR Floortime certified. I have assisted families with children with a diagnosis of Autism get connected to the resources they need from other agencies, such as ABA agencies, to assist in their child's development. I am a member of our social communication team the purpose of which is to support staff and families in identifying and addressing characteristics of Autism and other Neuro Diverse Diagnoses. I have experience of running play groups in our community, working community resource fairs, and I am a member of the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium. I truly enjoy helping families identify the developmental needs of their child to enhance their child's development.



MICHIGAN



Jennifer Koenigsnecht

Early On Michigan, Build Up
Michigan, Help Me Grow

Jenny serves as a Public Awareness Supervisor for Early On® and Build Up providing outreach and support for intake and referral for children ages birth to five in Michigan. This position is grant-funded by the individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Parts C and B, through grants from the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential, and the Michigan Department of Education. Aiming to improve early identification of developmental delays and disabilities, Jenny attends conferences, exhibits and presents to inform early childhood educators and other primary referral sources on the availability of Early On and special education supports and services available to young children with delays and disabilities. In addition, Jenny is also a parent presenter for the Early On Center for Higher Education, where she shares her "story" of raising a child with a disability.

By visiting two-and four-year colleges and universities, Jenny presents to higher education students to deliver a 'real life' family experience about the birth to five years, the impact of early detection and intervention and how the Early On, Part C system operates in Michigan. Jenny earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing from Grand Valley State University in 1996. Jenny brings a strong parent voice to the Early On Michigan work due to her personal experience with the program and an overriding belief in early monitoring, screening & detection, improving early identification and intervention in young children.



MINNESOTA



Jennifer Hall-Lande

University of Minnesota,
Institute on Community
Integration

Jennifer Hall-Lande is a Developmental Psychologist, Researcher, and MN-LEND Faculty at University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration (ICI) and Masonic Institute on the Developing Brain (MIDB). Dr. Hall-Lande does clinical work in early child development, including early identification of developmental delays and disabilities. She conducts community-based research in improving identification of early developmental delays and disabilities. She is Principal Investigator on the MN Autism Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network and has successfully led many "Learn the Signs. Act Early" projects. Dr. Hall-Lande also serves on numerous statewide leadership committees on early screening, early identification, and early services and supports.

Dr. Hall-Lande's research and community outreach activities focus on early screening, assessment, and interventions for children at risk for developmental delays and disabilities. Dr. Hall-Lande has a specific interest in community outreach and training around developmental screening in universal access environments, such as childcare settings, home visiting, and Help Me Grow programs. Dr. Hall-Lande has a strong professional interest in outreach with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, with an end goal of increasing screening rates and reducing the age of identification diagnosis for all children. Additional areas of focus have been ASD prevalence rates and increasing access to early identification services and supports. She is well connected across statewide systems and has successfully led the Minnesota Act Early State Team. Through her MN Act Early work, she has built many strong and sustained professional partnerships and valuable community connections that have integrated LTSAE into numerous state systems and communities.



MISSISSIPPI



Leslie LaVergne

University of Southern
Mississippi, Institute for
Disability Studies

Dr. Leslie LaVergne is the Interim Assistant Director of the Institute for Disability Studies (IDS) housed at The University of Southern Mississippi. She completed a Master of Science in Art Therapy from Eastern Virginia Medical School in 2006 and PhD in Special Education in 2012 from The University of Southern Mississippi. Dr. LaVergne has been with IDS since 2014 and has worked directly with families of young and school aged children with developmental disabilities and concerns to obtain quality health care and support services. Further, Dr. LaVergne provides consultation and advocacy support directly to families transitioning from early intervention to school-based services.

Lastly, she chairs the Act Early State Team, an interdisciplinary team assembled in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to increase reach in promoting and sustaining the integration of family engaged developmental monitoring. As Mississippi's Ambassador to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Learn the Signs. Act Early. Program, Dr. LaVergne provides training and technical assistance to home visitors, community-based service providers, and healthcare professionals to increase awareness and education in early identification of children at-risk for developmental delays including autism. She serves on numerous advisory boards and committees dedicated to the advancement of quality services and supports for young and school-aged children.

MISSOURI



Alicia Curran

University of Missouri

Alicia Brewer Curran is the proud mother of four beautiful children. Following her son's diagnosis of autism, Curran devoted her professional career to the autism field, where she has worked in education and healthcare. Alicia has a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Drury University, a graduate certificate in Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders from the University of Missouri and is a Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) graduate. Currently, she is the Director of Strategic Initiatives for the University of Missouri ECHO Autism Communities (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes), Program Director for the Autism Care Network and has served as Missouri's Act Early Ambassador since 2016.

Alicia spent nearly a decade as Faculty for the LEND program at the University of Missouri, where she led family-professional programs and mentored many family and sibling fellows. Alicia has a specific interest in family resilience, empowerment, and advocacy, as well as autism research. Her personal and professional goals are driven by her belief that everyone should have the opportunity to live their best life.



📍 **MONTANA**



Lora Cowee

MT Department of Health &
Human Services/Healthy MT
Home Visiting Services

Working with children and families to better their lives has been at the heart of the work Lora has been doing for over 35 years. Lora has a bachelor's degree in psychology and history and master's degree in public administration both from the University of Montana. Lora began her career working for a non-profit providing direct care behavioral health services to children and families and after receiving her masters, she transitioned to management holding roles such as Director of Operations Chief, Operations Officer, and Human Resources Officer.

After 30 years, she transitioned to prevention services working with the Early Childhood and Family Support Division of the State of Montana DPHHS. Working as a Program Specialist for Healthy Montana Families Home Visiting Services with a focus on quality improvement, grant compliance, monitoring, administration activities, and work with contractors to improve services to families in communities in Montana. Through her work with home visiting in Montana, Lora currently serves as the CDC "Learn the Signs. Act Early." Montana Ambassador working to support professionals who work with families and help families monitor and learn developmental milestones; finding confidence to discuss their child's growth with medical professionals and educators. Working to increase early identification of developmental delays in Montana to improve the health of families in Montana.

📍 **NEBRASKA**



Rachel Schumacher

Munroe-Meyer Institute,
University of Nebraska
Medical Center

Rachel Schumacher, PhD is a licensed psychologist and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the Munroe-Meyer Institute for Genetics and Rehabilitation at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC). Dr. Schumacher completed specialized training in screening, diagnosing, and treating autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in early childhood. Her career goals align well with the Act Early mission and her clinical, research, and training activities have focused on early identification, screening, assessment, and treatment of young children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including ASD. She values working within a collaborative, systems approach to facilitate clients' most optimal development by strengthening supports across all familial, educational, medical, and community contexts. Dr. Schumacher is currently involved in a collaborative HRSA-funded project to increase access to developmental screening and evaluation for children birth to five years from underserved families at a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC).

She also conducts an autism diagnostic clinic and provides outpatient behavioral therapy to youth at the Munroe-Meyer Institute. Dr. Schumacher regularly conducts training with medical professionals and early childhood professionals on the early warning signs of autism and caregiver-engaged developmental monitoring and screening. She also worked with a team to identify best practices to support preschool mental health.



NEVADA



Swetha Wolfson

University of Nevada, Reno

Swetha Wolfson, DO is an Assistant Professor for the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR). She obtained her doctorate from Touro University Nevada. Following this, she completed a 3-year psychiatry residency and 2-year child and adolescent psychiatry fellowship at the University of Nevada, Reno. She transitioned to faculty as Assistant Professor in 2022 and has been an Associate Program Director for the psychiatry residency at UNR since this time. During her time in fellowship, she completed additional training with the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities (LEND) program.

She has continued her work with individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders in her current role by developing a diagnostic assessment clinic. Additionally, she has worked closely with the Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities (NCED) contributing to an interdisciplinary team for individuals at risk of removal from the home due to behavioral difficulties and a prenatal exposure assessment team for individuals with in utero substance exposure. She continues to engage in multiple settings in the community in her current role and is actively working towards developing new clinical entities that allow for increased collaboration.



NEW HAMPSHIRE



Jennifer Pineo

New Hampshire
Family Voices

Jenn is a parent of three children with autism spectrum disorder. As such, she understands the importance of developmental screening, and the challenges of navigating the complex system of care. Jenn currently serves as the Lead Trainer at NH Family Voices, and works in a variety of projects within the organization. In all of them, she works to put the child and family at the center. Jenn is currently the Co-Lead on The Watch Me Grow Team, NH's Screening and Development Monitoring System.

She works closely with the Title V's CSHCN program, the Bureau for Family-Centered Services, including providing input on the performance measure on developmental screening, and represents Title V on the NH Council on Developmental Disabilities. Jenn worked closely with the prior LTSAE Ambassador before assuming the role in 2020. Her professional training includes a bachelor's degree in Business Administration as well as minors in Marketing and Applied Group Leadership. Additionally, she completed NH-ME LEND program within the Family Discipline, and is certified both in the Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support and as a Brookes Ages and Stages Questionnaire trainer.



NEW JERSEY



Deepa Srinivasavaradan

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network of New Jersey

Deepa Srinivasavaradan has served as the CDC's LTSAE Ambassador for New Jersey since 2014. She is also the Division for Early Childhood Recommended Practices Ambassador and the State Parent Lead for NJ's Help Me Grow, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Prenatal- Three, and Home Visiting initiatives. She is the Director of Early Childhood Initiatives at SPAN Parent Advocacy Network and in that role, she leads several projects focused on improving early childhood and family engagement outcomes, including the NJ Inclusive Child Care Project. Deepa has received her Endorsement as an Infant Mental Health Specialist, is NJ's AMCHP Family Delegate, and an NJLEND Family Fellow. She is also the recipient of the 2020 Merle McPherson Award for her exemplary contributions to further family-professional collaborations within state Title V programs and AMCHP.

With the Boggs Center, NJ's UCEDD, LEND, and LTSAE Team lead, she provided parent-led screening trainings to FQHCs (2013) and Head Start programs (2015) under NJ's Act Early State Systems Grants, and currently co-leads the LTSAE COVID Response Project. In collaboration with the state team, she has helped create several NJ-specific resources to address gaps in connecting to services when developmental concerns are identified in young children. Deepa is committed to helping families with children with special needs to navigate systems of care because of her own experiences as an immigrant mother. She continues to actively collaborate with partners and programs to promote awareness about LTSAE, early identification, and early intervention services, so all children and families have the resources they need.

NEW MEXICO



Alyx Medlock

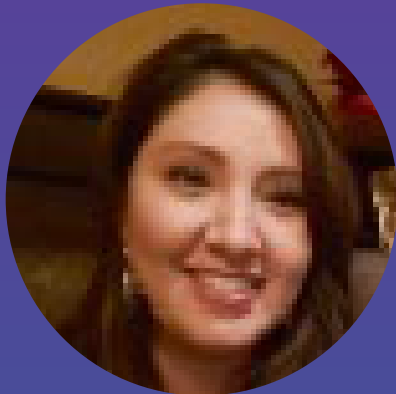
University of New Mexico Early Childhood Services Center

Alyx Medlock is the New Mexico LEND (Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities) training director and a speech-language pathologist who has worked with interdisciplinary, family-centered teams for over 20 years. She is a life-long New Mexican with deep family and cultural ties to the state.

She works clinically, providing interdisciplinary, developmental, and diagnostic evaluations for children under three. Her previous experiences, in directing an interdisciplinary clinic and running a private practice, fostered varied professional and personal connections throughout the state with a focus on early childhood and autism spectrum disorder. Alyx has also trained and consulted internationally in Tanzania and India.



📍 **NEW MEXICO
(TRIBAL)**



Nicole Loveless
Early Relational Health

I am a mother of five children ages 5 to 18 and reside in Albuquerque, NM. I am member of the Pueblo of San Felipe and am also connected with multiple tribes in New Mexico. It is important to me to share Native American experiences with our children so that our history can be a source of empowerment for our people. I am part of multiple projects and organizations where I bring my Native American perspective to influence programs, policy, and research. I served on the Community Advisory Board for three years. I serve as one of three parent leaders. I use my voice to advocate for changes in policy to make home visiting more equitable and responsive to families. I serve on a workgroup that is addressing the well-being of the workforce and I serve on the Internal Guidance Council and help set the direction for the Network.

I also serve on the Advisory Committee of the study and weighed in on the research questions and methodology, and the findings and recommendations. I serve as one of six parent leaders. In this role, I regularly connect with 10 parents in my home community and share information to help them build stronger relationships with their children. I also help connect families with one another. I attended the Stanford University Design School and provided parent input into the design of research questions on connecting parents and providers to build more effective systems. I serve as vice chairperson at the Indian education parent board. In this role I help implement policies and new education practices that serve the Native American Communities. We also connect with over 117 Native American tribes across the United States. New Act Early Coalition- A new act early coalition that recently developed while serving as one of CDC's Tribal Ambassadors.

📍 **NEW YORK**



Liz Isakson
New York Docs for Tots

Dr. Isakson is the Executive Director of Docs for Tots. She is a pediatrician and public health practitioner with decades of experience with Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) and the New York Zero-to-Three Network (NYZTT). Her passion and support for early childhood systems integration (health, education, family) stems from her exposure to the short-and long-term human outcomes of an under-funded and misaligned system for families with young children. Dr. Isakson has multiple publications published across the systems of early care and education, health, and family economic security.

She teaches advocacy to graduate level students at Mt. Sinai School of Public Health and is a sought-after speaker on issues of community and state systems to support healthy development in early childhood. As Executive Director of Docs for Tots since 2013, Dr. Isakson has been an active voice in the dissemination of critical knowledge in the field of early childhood at both the community and national academic levels. Dr. Isakson trained in General Pediatrics at Children's Hospital of New York where she served as Chief Resident and received her MD from University of Connecticut Medical School.



NEW YORK



Romina Barros

NYU Langone Hospital
Long Island

My name is Romina Barros and I am a Developmental- Behavioral Pediatrician. Presently, I'm the Chief Division Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics at the NYU Langone Hospital Long Island, and I maintain a faculty appointment as Clinical Assistant Professor at NYU Long Island School of Medicine. I have been also serving as one of the CDC Learn the Sign. Act Early. Ambassador for New York State since 2019. Before becoming the Chief Division Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics at the NYU Langone Hospital Long Island, I served as the Medical Director of Trauma Services and the Under Five Program at Montefiore Medical Center and had a faculty appointment as an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Einstein College of Medicine.

Before joining Montefiore Medical Center, I served as the Director of the Developmental-Behavioral Program and Director of Community Pediatrics and Advocacy Program at Brookdale Hospital Medical Center and held an appointment as Clinical Assistant Professor at New York Medical College. During my term at Brookdale I was awarded with two private funders and with the New York State OMH Grant to start a Healthy Steps Program which I implemented, oversaw and directed. I am Board Certified in Pediatrics as well as in Developmental- Behavioral Pediatrics. I completed my pediatric residency at Brookdale Hospital in 2004 and fellowship in Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics at Einstein/Children's Hospital at Montefiore in 2007. I obtained my medical degree from Universidad Maimonides, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

NORTH CAROLINA



Amanda Berry

FIRSTwnc – Community Parent
Resource Center

Amanda Berry serves as the Program Director for FIRSTwnc, a community parent resource center funded by OSEP. In this capacity, she works closely with families of young children who have delays and disabilities, navigating them through the special education process, including the critical transitions from IDEA Part C to Part B 619. Amanda is also a certified Infant Toddler Specialist for the North Carolina Child Development Services Agency, providing direct early intervention services to children aged 0-3. With over two decades of experience in early childhood education, Amanda leverages her comprehensive background in both her roles. She holds a B.S. in Early Childhood Education from Western Carolina University and a Master of Education in Leadership, Policy, and Advocacy in Early Childhood from the University of North Carolina Wilmington.

Additionally, she has earned a graduate certificate in Coaching and Mentoring from UNCW. Amanda is committed to continual professional development and application of evidence-based, developmentally appropriate practices. This commitment is demonstrated through her ambassadorship for the Division for Early Childhood recommended practices and her board membership with the North Carolina DEC subdivision. Recently, she was appointed to the OSEP-sponsored Circles of Expertise in Early Childhood. Beyond her professional achievements, Amanda is a devoted mother to four children. Her eldest son is an amazing autistic young adult. His journey inspired her dedication to enhancing the special education system and improving the lives of families and children navigating similar challenges. Personal Statement



NORTH CAROLINA



Laura Hiruma

Carolina Institute for
Developmental Disabilities,
UNC Chapel Hill

Laura Hiruma, PhD is a Clinical Assistant Professor and Psychologist at the Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities (CIDD) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which is North Carolina's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD). Laura received her doctorate in Clinical Psychology through the University at Albany, State University of New York while completing a graduate assistantship through the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities. She completed a predoctoral internship in psychology through the JFK Partners Developmental Disabilities Clinic at the University of Colorado School of Medicine as well as a postdoctoral fellowship through the CIDD specializing in interdisciplinary evaluation and clinical care for individuals with neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism, intellectual disability, and genetic syndromes affecting development.

Her areas of interest include early childhood development, developmental and diagnostic assessment practices, assisting families with treatment and care planning, and behavioral health interventions for individuals with complex developmental and behavioral needs. In her current role, Laura provides resource and referral navigation assistance as the Clinic Intake Coordinator for the CIDD and engages in teaching and supervision activities through the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) program. Her professional interests also include reaching families across the state through telehealth with an emphasis on developmental disability screening, family education and consultation, and resource support.

NORTH DAKOTA



Brooke Rosenau

Minot Infant Development
Program, ND Center for Persons
with Disabilities

Brooke Rosenau is the Assistant Program Director for North Dakota Early Intervention: Region 2, the Minot Infant Development Program, within the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities. She is also an Adjunct Professor for Minot State University's Department of Special Education, where she developed and teaches a course on early intervention and early childhood special education. Within her work at Infant Development, she has begun outreach to undergraduate students in related disciplines, medical professionals, related personnel, and early childcare providers on the differences between monitoring, screening, and evaluation and who is responsible for implementation, who can refer a child, what supports and services are available, and the importance and impact of a child's family.

Ms. Rosenau works collaboratively with agencies such as Ward County Right Track, and North Central Human Service Center, and recently started work with the North Dakota Home Visiting Coalition. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education and a master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education from Minot State University. She also earned an Early Intervention Leadership Certificate from the University of North Dakota.



📍 OHIO



Steph Weber

Cincinnati Children's Hospital
Medical Center

Stephanie Weber, PsyD, MPH, is a clinical psychologist and public health professional who specializes in serving early childhood populations and conducting interdisciplinary training. Dr. Weber is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. She serves as the Associate/Training Director for the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) program that provides interdisciplinary training to future leaders in Maternal and Child Health and the early childhood coordinator and Training Director for the University of Cincinnati Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDD). Clinically, Dr. Weber works from a patient/family-centered care approach to build skills and quality of life for children with developmental disabilities, challenging behaviors, or effects of prenatal substance exposure.

Dr. Weber has served as the CDC's Act Early Ambassador to Ohio through the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." program and leads the Act Early Ohio state team and initiatives to promote developmental monitoring and screening across state-wide systems, including healthcare and education. She is also a founding member of the Project SCOPE National Training Initiative focused on supporting children impacted by the opioid epidemic.

📍 OHIO



Dawn Greathouse

Research Institute at
Nationwide Children's Hospital

As an early career psychologist at Nationwide Children's Hospital and an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at The Ohio State University, my work centers around improving access to care for the Neurodevelopmental Disability population. I achieve this by increasing community engagement and resources, analyzing efficient treatment and evaluation methods, fostering knowledge and interest among newcomers to the field, and training future colleagues in evidence-based strategies through a population health lens. As the Population Health and Community Engagement Training Director, I facilitate connections between trainees and local/state organizations to carry out advocacy projects that enhance resources for families. I collaborate with various community groups, delivering training and resources both locally and across Ohio for professionals working with children and families.

I volunteer at health fairs in historically underserved communities, providing essential resources. Additionally, I serve on statewide stakeholder committees, advising state organizations on effective practices and collaborative strategies to enhance the well-being of children and families dealing with developmental delays, including autism. I'm in leadership roles for the Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics (SDBP), where I am actively involved in efforts to enhance membership and engagement, organize targeted training for different disciplines, and create newsletter highlights for the organization.



 **OKLAHOMA**



Bonnie McBride

University of Oklahoma, Health
Sciences Center

Bonnie McBride, Ph.D., BCBA-D is an Associate Professor in the Department of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. In addition to her faculty position, she is a LEND core faculty in ASD, teaches ASD content in other graduate programs on campus and provides professional development to educators and other professionals throughout the state. In addition, she has served as Oklahoma's LTSAE Ambassador since 2012 and co-led the Act Early COVID-19 Response Team as well as receiving on-going funding for The Early Access Program which has focused on raising awareness about the importance of developmental monitoring and screening for autism.

Dr. McBride actively pursues new ways to improve early identification and intervention practices through research and service to the community. She serves on statewide committees that address improvement of early identification and intervention services for children with developmental disabilities including autism. As a result of her involvement with the Act Early Ambassador Program as Oklahoma's Ambassador, she has linked together several state efforts to improve early identification and referral to services.

 **OREGON**



Sherri Alderman

Portland State University

Sherri L. Alderman, MD, MPH, IMHM-E®, FAAP, is faculty at Portland State University and a board certified Developmental Behavioral Pediatrician with over 15 years of experience in clinical and policy work in infant mental health. She has infant mental health Endorsement® at the highest level (mentor) in both clinical and policy. Dr. Alderman is American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) appointed Council on Healthy Mental and Emotional Development Executive Committee member and Immediate Past Chair of the AAP Council on Early Childhood.

She is an AAP Early Childhood Champion in Oregon, CDC Act Early Ambassador to Oregon, and received national distinction as the first National Help Me Grow Physician Champion. She is an appointee to the HRSA Secretary's Advisory Committee on Infant and Maternal Mortality and serves on the Oregon state government advisory council to the Oregon Health Authority Behavioral Health Division. She is a Master Trainer with the statewide Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education (OCCD) and has conducted over 200 publications, lectures, trainings, webinars, and key note presentations.

Dr. Alderman is Past President of the Oregon Infant Mental Health Association. She was principal investigator for the Nurturing Healthy Attachment project promoting secure attachment with incarcerated mothers and principal investigator on the Act Early Oregon COVID Parent Mentor Project focused on empowering migrant and seasonal farm-working communities. As faculty of the University of New Mexico School of Medicine, Dr. Alderman directed the development and operations of the New Mexico Developmental Screening Initiative across the state.



PALAU



Francesca Morei-Misech

Palau Parents Empowered

Francesca Morei-Misech, 62, has been married to her husband for 35 years. Together, they have been blessed with four children: one son and three daughters. Their eldest daughter, who is 29 years old, has multiple disabilities. This milestone marks the number of years Francesca and her husband have been dedicated disability advocates in Palau. Born and raised in Palau, Francesca pursued her college education at the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising (FIDM) in California and the University of Hawaii at Manoa, earning an Associate's degree in Fashion Merchandising and a Bachelor's degree in Fashion Design. She fulfilled her dream of returning home to manage the family business in fashion, which her mother started in the 1960s. Francesca's journey took a pivotal turn with the birth of her second child, her eldest daughter with disabilities. At the time, she and her husband were unaware of the condition and the profound impact it would have on their lives.

Currently, Francesca serves as the Executive Director of Palau Parents Empowered, a non-profit resource center for parents of children and youth with disabilities. Since October 2010, she has been educating parents on understanding their children's disabilities, teaching advocacy skills, bridging access to necessary services, and collectively advocating for systemic change and improvement.



PENNSYLVANIA



Angela Caldwell

University of Pittsburgh

Angela Caldwell is an occupational therapist, clinician scientist, and assistant professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of Pittsburgh. She has over 15 years of experience collaborating with young children with developmental delays and disabilities and their families to promote health and enhance participation. Caldwell serves on the Child and Family Health Special Interest Group Advisory Board of the Society of Behavioral Medicine and as a member of the Child and Youth Special Interest Section Committee of the American Occupational Therapy Association.

She has been recognized for promoting health for children at risk for health disparities at the state and national levels. She is also a core faculty member in the University of Pittsburgh Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disorders (LEND) program. Caldwell's federally funded research program focuses on developing family-centered interventions that activate daily routines and serve as a foundation for healthy behaviors and long-term outcomes. She has over 20 peer-reviewed publications and has provided over 30 presentations to disseminate her findings to regional, national, and international audiences. She is an associate member of the Healthy Weight Research Network, a recipient of the Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association Research Award and the Society of Behavioral Medicine's Child and Family Health SIG's Early Career Diversity Award, and a Faculty Trainee of the Training in Diversity for rehabilitation research education (TiDe) program. She is a proud mom to Isaac and Magnolia and enjoys hiking, traveling, and getting lost in a good book.



📍 PENNSYLVANIA



Shelley Chapin
Early Intervention
Technical Assistance

Dr. Shelley Chapin is an Early Intervention Technical Assistance Consultant. She provides technical assistance and training to Pennsylvania's Infant Toddler and Preschool Programs and is an active member on PA's Early Intervention Assistive Technology, Autism, Family Engagement, and Infant Toddler Service Delivery Initiatives. Most recently, she served as Project Lead for Parent to Parent of PA and Family Engagement Initiatives as well as served as PA's previous Ambassador for the CDC's Learn the Signs. Act Early campaign during the years 2018-2021. Shelley has a Doctor of Philosophy in Special Education/Early Childhood Special Education, from Pennsylvania State University. Her research focused on supporting early communication opportunities using augmentative and alternative communication tools and technology for very young children with autism spectrum disorders and complex communication needs. She also earned her M.Ed. at PSU, where she was awarded a Personnel Preparation Grant (Preparing 21st Century Early Childhood Intervention Professionals to Serve Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families).

She has authored and co-authored several research articles published in peer-reviewed education journals. Shelley advocates for the importance of family voice (through meaningful family engagement and family leadership opportunities) in the work that we do within and across PA's early childhood systems. The power of a family voice is integral to advancing cross-sector collaborations and partnerships to promote early developmental health, family well-being and positive outcomes for both the family and our youngest learners in PA! Shelley is also very happy to be Finnegan's Mom. Finn is a 15-year-old train expert, sunflower scientist, and windchime extraordinaire who also has a diagnosis of autism. Their life together is an adventure! She continues to learn from him as they navigate his support system within their family, educational teams, and community to ensure successful and positive growth in all areas of his development.

📍 PUERTO RICO



Giannina López-Pérez
Puerto Rico University Center on
Developmental Disabilities

Giannina López is a doctor in Psychology passionate about child development, early identification and intervention, family empowerment and autism. Giannina showed interest in autism and developmental disabilities since undergraduate school and eventually applied for her internship at the Puerto Rico University Center on Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (PR-UCEDD), she was selected as a trainee and did her internship in the Puerto Rico Autism Center-PR-UCEDD. Giannina was a LEND trainee at the Indiana University in 2013-2014 and a LEND trainee at the University of Iowa in 2016-2017. When she completed her doctoral degree in Psychology in 2014, she was hired to work as Projects Coordinator at the PR-UCEDD. Giannina is currently an Associate Director at the PR-UCEDD. Her roles are focused on promoting family engagement and coordinating the clinical services for children throughout the different projects of the PR-UCEDD.

She is also the Coordinator at the Puerto Rico Family to Family Center (PR-F2FC), a HRSA funded program that offers peer support for families of children with special health care needs. She is also the coordinator of a newly funded program with the Two-generation approach. This program is funded by the Puerto Rico Family Department which granted the PR-UCEDD to establish a two-generation center that focuses on promoting child development through a generational approach, educating, empowering and supporting parents and caregivers of children. Giannina is certified by Brookes Publishing as a trainer for Ages and Stages Questionnaires and in the use of the Assessment Evaluation and Programming System (AEPS).



📍 RHODE ISLAND



Jennifer Sanchez
Rhode Island College

Jennifer Sanchez has over 10 years of experience in the field of Early Intervention (EI). Mrs. Sanchez began her time in EI as a Service Coordinator and later in a supervisory position, she has had the opportunity to gain insight in this field from both perspectives. Currently, she works as a part of the EI Technical Assistance Team at the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities at RI College, RI's UCEDD. As a part of this team, Jenn is responsible for researching, creating, and implementing professional development trainings for Early Intervention staff throughout the state of RI.

Recently, she completed training in RI's state LEND program, incorporating her passion for supporting children with disabilities on another level. Her professional passions include early identification and intervention for young children with developmental delays and autism, as well as the deaf and hard of hearing community. Mrs. Sanchez participates in monthly Community of Practice meeting with the states EDHI program, focusing on working with community partners to best meet the needs of our deaf and hard of hearing population. Jenn enjoys traveling and hiking with her husband and four children.

📍 SOUTH CAROLINA



Tiffany Howard
South Carolina Infant Mental
Health Association/Help Me
Grow South Carolina

Tiffany Howard is the Pediatric Support Network Manager for Help Me Grow SC, an initiative of the SC Infant Mental Health Association. She has been with Help Me Grow SC for 10 years and in that time has established relationships with a broad range of early childhood and family support providers, including non-profit organizations, home visiting programs, child healthcare providers, and early care and education providers to promote the healthy development of children. In her current role, she leads statewide child health provider outreach that includes targeted in-service training to pediatric healthcare providers on the importance of developmental surveillance, screening, referral, and follow-up.

Tiffany has over 25 years of experience working with children and families and extensive experience in non-profit program development, management, and outreach. She attended the College of Charleston where she earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology. She is also a certified trainer in the Ages and Stages Questionnaires through Brookes Publishing. Tiffany is a lifelong resident of Charleston, SC and in her spare time, you'll find her out on her boat enjoying the waterways of the Lowcountry.



 **SOUTH DAKOTA**



Lisa Sanderson

South Dakota
Parent Connection

Lisa has served as the CDC's Act Early Ambassador to South Dakota since March 2018. She is the Project Director for the statewide Family to Family Health Information Center at SD Parent Connection, also home to the state's Parent Training Information Center. Lisa has worked with systems and families across South Dakota for over 20 years, served two terms on the state's Part C Interagency Coordinating Council, and serves as the LEND Family Discipline Head for the state's UCED.

Lisa has a Bachelor of Science degree, maintains licensure by the SD Board of Social Work Examiners, and was a certified educator for many years. Lisa is a parent and grandparent of children with exceptional needs, has been a proponent of the Act Early campaign since program launch, and looks forward to working with program partners across South Dakota as the state's Act Early Ambassador.

 **TENNESSEE**



Toni Whitaker

University of Tennessee
Health Sciences Center

Toni is a Professor of Pediatrics and Developmental Pediatrics, serving as the Developmental Pediatrics Division Chief in the University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC), College of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics and for Le Bonheur Children's Hospital. As Director of the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities (LEND) program at UTHSC, she is proud to work primarily in interdisciplinary settings and am involved in clinical, academic, research, and community service pursuits for a variety of neurodevelopmental disabilities. Toni has clinical expertise in working with children of all ages and their families, with special interests in infants and young children as well as autism spectrum disorders and early childhood developmental surveillance (monitoring) and screening.

She maintains an active role in educating physicians, interdisciplinary health professions students, early childhood providers, educators, and community members. Toni previously served as the Tennessee Act Early Ambassador and has served as co-chair for the statewide Act Early Autism Summit Team. As Medical Director of the Tennessee Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Screening Tools and Referral training (START) program, She leads efforts to provide training for healthcare and early childhood professionals across the state about developmental surveillance and screening. Toni directs the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disorders (LEND) program at UTHSC.



TEXAS



Andria Horton

Champions for Children

Andria Horton has been working in the area of community outreach since 2001, primarily serving in Tyler, TX. After graduating from Ouachita Baptist University with a BA in Biblical Studies and Sociology, she returned to East Texas and spent the next 17 years serving in Local Missions for Green Acres Baptist Church, completing a Master of Arts degree in Ministry-Based Evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. In September 2019, Andria joined Champions for Children as the Director of Development and completed a Certificate in Non-Profit Management in 2020.

In 2021, Andria began serving as Executive Director of Champions for Children, where she is passionate about preparing the next generation to be strong leaders and making Smith County a safe and nurturing community for children to grow and learn. As Executive Director, Andria has been involved in leadership for the Healthy Me Healthy Babies Coalition and Behavioral Health Leadership Team as well as leading the community Help Me Grow movement. In 2024, Andria received the Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE) credential.



TEXAS



Alison Queralt

MGA Homecare

Alison Queralt is a dedicated physical therapist serving the pediatric population in Austin, TX. She obtained her Master of Physical Therapy in 1998 and spent a decade working in various pediatric settings, including outpatient, home health, school, and the medically fragile population. After taking time to raise her two sons, Alison completed her clinical Doctorate in Physical Therapy in 2022 and reentered the workforce, focusing on children from birth to three years old. In her current role, Alison conducts developmental evaluations and provides direct therapy services for children under three. Her passion lies in educating and supporting families during these critical early years.

At the 2022 APTA Pediatric Physical Therapy Conference, she presented a poster on enhancing the family medical home through partnerships between pediatricians and physical therapists. Alison is an active member of the APTA, serving on the Pediatrics ACE SIG Typical Development Workgroup. This group is focused on updating educational resources and reference tools for pediatric physical therapy educators in line with the revised "Learn the Signs. Act Early" guidelines. Alison also contributes to her community through her role on the Travis County Medical Alliance Board, where she is now in her third year of service. Alison is driven by a commitment to advancing child development education and fostering collaboration among healthcare professionals to improve outcomes for young children and their families.



📍 UTAH



Janel Preston

Institute for Disability Research,
Policy, and Practice –
Utah State University

Janel Preston B.S. is a Program Coordinator at the Institute for Disability, Research, Policy, & Practice (IDRPP), Utah State University. Her area of expertise includes young children with ASD and their families, interdisciplinary diagnostic evaluation, direct treatment, clinical assessments, and evidence based therapeutic interventions. She is the lead person responsible for the scope and practice of the early intervention autism services (Up to 3). Her responsibilities include training families, staff and working with the community for early identification of ASD. Ms. Preston is also involved in many statewide committees and partnerships that support and improve early childhood policy and early identification and screening of young children. Ms. Preston is a certified P.L.A.Y home consultant.

Preston is currently and has been for the past 6 years, Utah's Act Early Ambassador and the Principal Investigator (PI) for the CDC Act Early Response to COVID-19 state initiative, Year 2. Ms. Preston was a lead project member on the child find campaign using the CDC LTSA materials. As part of this project, she established embedding ASD query questions and "Learn the Signs. Act Early" materials into the early interventions' intake procedure. This procedure has been adopted by the Part C Lead Agency resulting in the use of the ASD query questions statewide. She is dedicated to bringing the most current information on ASD to families.

📍 VERMONT



Janet Kilburn

Vermont Department
of Health

Janet is the Early Childhood Director for the Vermont Department of Health, Division of Maternal and Child Health. Janet has a Bachelor of Arts from Principia College and a Master of Social Work from the University of Vermont. Janet has worked with children and families in a clinical capacity in a wide variety of settings – including a community mental health center, a mood and anxiety disorder hospital outpatient clinic, and as a Title V Children with Special Health Needs Program medical social worker (working in the Health Department's Child Development Clinic and on Part C Early Intervention teams). Since 2013, Janet has been an Ambassador for the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." Program, a role which has led to partnership building across health, mental health, family support, and early education systems to improve early identification and timely diagnosis of developmental and behavioral concerns in young children.

Janet is currently part of a cross-system state effort working on universal developmental promotion, developmental screening across domains, including screening for social conditions of health, and service linkage via Vermont's Help Me Grow (HMG) system. She recently helped lead a Community of Practice initiated by the HMG National Center to diffuse an HMG Early Learning Integration innovation to other communities within the HMG and Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) networks, to expand the degree to which early care settings across the country have capacity to address the developmental needs of young children. Janet works to improve Vermont's cultural competence in early screening and assessment and is active on Vermont's Act Early State Team, Building Bright Futures Child Accountability Outcomes Council, and HMG Strategic Team. She is a sponsor for Vermont Northern Lights, a professional development and career center for early childhood professionals.



VIRGINIA



Deana Buck

Virginia Commonwealth
University

With a master's degree in special education, Ms. McGuire Buck has worked in the field of early childhood development for 37 years. Through her work in early childhood systems in Virginia, she has established and maintained a strong cross-sector network of colleagues who administer early childhood systems, including early care and education, early intervention, and home visiting. Ms. Buck is currently serving her fifth term as the CDC's Act Early Ambassador to Virginia and has been involved with Virginia's Act Early Team since 2010. Ms. Buck retired in June 2020 from her full-time faculty position at the Partnership for People with Disabilities, Virginia's UCEDD at Virginia Commonwealth University, where she had worked since 1992 as a PI of early intervention and early childhood projects and the Training Director/Assistant Director of the UCEDD.

She was a long-standing PI for statewide initiatives, including the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development for Virginia's Part C Early Intervention system and Virginia's Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative that were funded to improve services for young children with disabilities and their families. Ms. Buck has extensive experience in the design and provision of professional development, with a focus on use of distance technology including webinars, ECHO series, and online content development. For the past two years, she has served as an Early Childhood Consultant for the Partnership, continuing her work as the CDC's Act Early Ambassador, co-leading Virginia's COVID-19 Response project, and providing leadership for Virginia's Act Early Team. In addition, she represents the LTSAE serving on the project management team of Virginia's Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant. She has expanded her work to include collaborative relationships with the Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and, through a consultant role, has also supported the work of Virginia's Developmental Screening Initiative with the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation.



WASHINGTON



Azucena Salazar

WithinReach & Help Me
Grow Washington

Azucena Salazar is the Early Care and Education Partner Manager at WithinReach, a nonprofit organization that helps families gain access to health, child development and nutrition resources. WithinReach is the State Affiliate for Help Me Grow, a national model that connects families to essential resources and strives to bring together families, and community members. WithinReach works with community partners and policymakers to improve community health and social service systems for all Washington families. Azucena holds a bachelor's degree in early childhood studies from Heritage University. With over 20 years of experience in early learning, Azucena has dedicated her career to supporting families, children and childcare providers. Azucena is a state-approved trainer by the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), supporting early learning professionals in mastering the core competencies, foundational concepts in child and youth development and program administration.

She is passionate about fostering inclusive and resilient communities where every individual has the resources and support they need to thrive. In her current role, she is responsible for developing partnerships with Early Care and Education (ECE) professionals and the systems that support them and families seeking/accessing childcare and early learning programs. Azucena works cross functionally to create engaging Help Me Grow training and offer tailored technical assistance (TA) for new provider partners as well as current referring providers. She collaborates closely with the Pregnancy & Early Childhood Development team on development screening outreach and training activities, as well as other related initiatives. In her free time, Azucena loves to explore the trails with her husband on horseback, spending time with her three children and granddaughter, and creating delicious meals with her family.



WEST VIRGINIA



Jackie Newson

Office of Maternal Child
and Family Health

Ms. Newson has been with Office of Maternal Child and Family Health (OMCFH) for 25 years. She worked with the Family Planning Program for 14 years and transitioned to the Director of the West Virginia Home Visitation Program in 2010. The West Virginia Home Visitation Program supports Parents as Teachers, Healthy Families America, Early Head Start and Right from the Start models. She serves of several workgroups related to social emotional development and ACEs/Resiliency. She works closely with several substance use disorder workgroups striving to support families either seeking treatment or in recovery.

She serves on the State's Early Intervention Interagency Coordinating Council along with being Parents as Teachers State Office chair and on the West Virginia Infant/Toddler Mental Health Association advisory board. Ms. Newson serves on the Governor's appointed Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) and co-chairs the ECAC Health Committee. The Statewide Help Me Grow (HMG) program is under the umbrella of the home visitation program and WV has been an affiliate of HMG since 2011.

WISCONSIN



Morgan Conti

Children's Health
Alliance of WI

Morgan Conti is a program manager for the Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin (the Alliance) medical home initiative. Within the Alliance, Morgan works statewide to increase early identification of developmental delays. She trains clinicians and professionals in developmental and mental health screening tools, provides developmental screening national performance measure technical assistance for local public health departments and tribal health centers and works cross-sector to align statewide efforts to increase universal developmental monitoring and screening.

Previously, Morgan was a special educator and department chair within her district. Morgan focused her efforts on inclusive practices and advocating for universal access for children with disabilities and has seen the value early intervention plays on a child's educational experience. Morgan's passion for universal best practices for all children has transferred to her current role at the Alliance. She believes that cross-sector connection and alignment is the key to streamlining processes for families and increasing access to early intervention services across Wisconsin. Her experience both with direct service and statewide systems gives her a unique perspective on ways to adjust processes and practices to improve early identification throughout the state. Morgan graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a bachelor's degree in special education.



WYOMING



Cari Glantz

Wyoming Institute
for Disabilities

Cari Glantz is a Senior Project Coordinator at the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND), supporting education and family programs. Cari has served as the Act Early Ambassador since 2013. Cari coordinates and facilitates WIND's Project ECHO learning networks for Autism and Positive Behavior Supports, Early Childhood, and Families. She has also provided coordination for three Act Early ECHO learning series, a collaborative learning network with Act Early Ambassadors in Massachusetts, Ohio, Virginia, and Wyoming. Cari is a project lead for the Wyoming Family to Family Health Information Center (F2F-HIC). In this role she coordinates training opportunities for parents and providers, develops the Wyoming F2F-HIC newsletter and other family support materials, and collaborates with various family partners and agencies across the state to provide greater access to evidence-based and cost-effective health information and services.

Cari also assists families in getting devices and coverage for Telehealth appointments for children and youth with special healthcare needs. In 2023, Cari was appointed to the Wyoming Governor's Early Intervention Council where she advises coordinated community-based programs and services for families and their children ages birth through five who are identified as having developmental delays and/or disabilities. Cari has degrees in Marketing and Advertising from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.