

Public Voices Fellowship cohort — 2023–2024

The National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) Announces its 2023-2024 cohort of The Public Voices Fellowship on Racial Justice in Early Childhood in partnership with The OpEd Project

(Silver Spring, MD, May 8, 2023) - The National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) today announced its 2023-2024 cohort of Public Voices Fellows. The Public Voices Fellowship is designed to bring new and diverse voices into racial justice in early childhood conversations and increase thought leadership among women and people of color so that our experiences and voices are included in these important conversations and find just and equitable solutions to these challenges.

The Public Voices Fellowship on Racial Justice in Early Childhood is part of a prestigious national initiative from The OpEd Project to change who writes history. The curriculum explores leadership, knowledge exchange, and empowerment in an unjust world. Fellows will explore building consensus, how ideas spread, when and why minds change, and how ideas can shape the future.



Camille Bennett, Executive Director, Project Say Something



Maia Blankenship, Co-CEO, Black Wildflowers Fund



Shanita Etwaria Bowen, Director of Operations, ECE On The Move and Co-Chair of Empire State Campaign For Child Care Steering Committee



Honorable Deitra Burney-Butler, Chief Judge Clayton County Juvenile Court



**Faith Crittenden, Physician Resident, Yale Pediatrics Residency Program,
Yale New Haven Hospital**



**Nicole Y. Cilliver, PhD., Early Childhood Instructor, East Cleveland City
Schools**



Roxann Dixon, Manager of Early Childhood Education Initiatives, Village of Wisdom



Mariah Scarver, T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Coordinator, Alabama Partnership for Children



Tomeka Hart Wigginton, Founder & Principal, The HarWigg Group



Sharron Hunter-Rainey, Managing Director, Equity Research Action Coalition, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



Alvin Irby, Founder and Executive Director, Barbershop Books



Priya Iyer, Founder & CEO, Our Roots
epidemiology from Columbia University.



Macquiline King, Senior Director of Education Policy P-16, Office of the Mayor, Chicago



Rotimi Kukoyi, B.S.P.H. Student, Health Policy and Management, Gillings School of Global Public Health, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



Angelica Ramos, Deputy Director, Operations and Strategy, Build the Future: Investing in Childcare for a Stronger Economy



Hiewet Senghor, Founder & CEO, Black Teacher Collaborative



**Nancy Sung Shelton, Director, Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion,
Lutheran Services Florida (LSF)**



**Sonya Soni, Advocacy Program Director, Boston University Center for
Antiracist Research**



Shauna Taradash, Director, Google Children's Center



Dr. LaWanda Wesley, Director of Government Relations, Child Care Resource Center

MORE ABOUT NBCDI AND ITS PARTNERS

The Public Voices Fellowship on Racial Justice in Early Childhood is a partnership with the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI), Dr. Iheoma Iruka, The OpEd Project, and Sandra Conway.

- NBCDI is a national nonprofit organization with a mission “to improve and advance the quality of life for Black children and families through education and advocacy.” We approach advocacy and thought leadership around racial justice in early childhood as a movement where we develop narrative and communication strategies to more effectively engage key publics in creating equitable and just solutions for Black children. We work with elected officials, community partners, educators, companies, and advocacy organizations to advocate for NBCDI through their communication channels and networks.
- The OpEd Project is a think tank and leadership organization that expands history by amplifying the ideas and public impact of new and necessary voices, including women of all backgrounds. We are a community of thought leaders, journalists, commentary writers, and activists who proactively share our skills, knowledge, and connections across color, creed, class, age, ability, gender, orientation, and beyond. Through our programs, we elevate the ideas and knowledge of underrepresented expert voices, including women, and accelerate solutions to the world’s biggest problems – problems that cannot be solved justly or sustainably without a diversity of voices, expertise, experience, and identity. We believe the best ideas, regardless of where they come from, should have a chance to be heard and to change the world.

- Dr. Iheoma U. Iruka is a research professor in public policy and founding director of the Equity Research Action Coalition at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As an award-winning developmental psychologist, Dr. Iruka's work is centered on the social, economic, health, and psychological well-being of Black children and other children of color through an anti-racist and cultural wealth lens focused on research, practice, and policy. She serves as a senior advisor to the Public Voices Fellowship on Racial Justice in Early Childhood.
- Sandra Wilcox Conway, M.ED; MBA, is a social impact consultant, philanthropist, and activist. Sandra specializes in public education, civic engagement, and women's leadership and combines these skills with a deep knowledge of education in the American South and a passion for history and justice. Her work has been recognized by the Clinton and Obama White House's for vision and impact. She has worked with The OpEd Project in partnership with The New Generation of African-American Philanthropists (NGAAP), non-profit leaders, and education activists in North Carolina in the past and is honored to support NBCDI and Dr. Iruka in launching The Public Voices Fellowship on Racial Justice in Early Childhood.