

NBCDI Policy

Fellows

2021-2023

Biographies and

Headshots



NBCDI
National Black Child
Development Institute



Jammie Albert



Jammie Albert serves as a Program Manager for Early Childhood Success in the Institute for Youth Education and Families at the National League of Cities (NLC). In that role she provides technical assistance to develop and strengthen the local infrastructure of cities and communities through tools for programmatic action and promising best practices to invest in the development and healthy growth of children. Currently, Jammie's focus centers around cities supporting children and families during the prenatal-to-age 3 developmental period – working to build the capacity of city leaders to reach across their communities, align programs, design policies, and ultimately build systems that are responsive and supportive to young children and their families beginning in the early years of prenatal through age three. Prior to joining the NLC team, Jammie served as a Human Service Worker, Family Service for Fairfax County Department of Family Services, Head Start, and as a Family Centered Specialist for the Mentor Network Institute for Families Centered Services. She obtained a Master's of Education degree from Carlow University and a Bachelor of Arts in mass media communications from Wilberforce University.

Riana Elyse Anderson



Community:

Dr. Riana Elyse Anderson is a clinical and community psychologist and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education

at the University of Michigan's School of Public Health. Riana was born in, raised for, and returned to Detroit. She has been trained in Clinical and Community Psychology at the University of Virginia, Yale University's School of Medicine, and the University of Pennsylvania. Riana studies how racial discrimination impacts the mental health of Black adolescents and their families. She works with therapeutic programs and community partners and shares knowledge through media, writing, and talks.

Brief:

Dr. Riana Elyse Anderson is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education at the University of Michigan's School of Public Health. She earned her PhD in Clinical and Community Psychology at the University of Virginia and completed a Clinical and Community Psychology Residency at Yale University's School of Medicine and a Fellowship in Applied Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. On the whole, Dr. Anderson aims to facilitate healing in Black families with practical applications of her research and clinical services, as well as through public engagement, teaching, mentorship, and policy recommendations. Dr. Anderson uses mixed methods to study discrimination and racial socialization in Black families and apply her findings to help families reduce their racial stress. She is particularly interested in how family-based interventions help to improve Black youth's psychosocial well-being and health-related behaviors. Dr. Anderson is the developer and director of the EMBRace (Engaging, Managing, and Bonding through Race) intervention and loves to translate her work for a variety of audiences, particularly those whom she serves in the community, via blogs, video, and literary articles. Finally, Dr. Anderson was born in, raised for, and returned to Detroit and is becoming increasingly addicted to cake pops.

Katrina Chance



Katrina Chance is the Executive Director for Richmond County Partnership for Children (RCPC). RCPC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation whose mission is to give children the start they need to become educated, healthy, and self-reliant citizens, who strengthen the social and economic future of Richmond County. Katrina began her career with the United States Army in Texas in 1990, gaining unparalleled leadership experience. She also served our country in Alaska and Georgia. While also establishing herself as a respected early childcare

and education professional. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Social Sciences with a focus in Human Development, Master's Degree in Organizational Management with a

specialization in Leadership, currently, Katrina is awaiting to participate in the next Walden University Commencement to celebrate earning her Doctorate of Business Administration with a concentration in Leadership.

She is of utmost proud of her start in education from attending Head Start in Rural West Texas. As well as being an Army Brat, Veteran, and mother of an active duty Female-Soldier. Katrina is recognized for her ability to build effective teams, coordination, and supervision of multiple activities, and her expertise in child development and parent engagement.

In her spare time, Katrina enjoys reading, preparing for Rock-n-Roll Marathon Series, and participating in monthly virtual Gone for a Run with her daughter and friends in multiple states.

Anissa Eddie



Anissa Eddie is an early childhood researcher and consultant. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in child development at Michigan State University and contributing to early childhood systems building efforts as the founder and principal consultant at Liminality Consulting. Anissa is interested in leveraging research to inform public policy in order to increase equitable outcomes for young children and families – particularly within the contexts of birth justice, ethnic-racial socialization, and social determinants of health.

Nkechy Ezeh



Dr. Nkechy Ekere Ezeh is an award-winning, international scholar who is passionate about helping vulnerable children and parents who are often left out in the educational system. Her life embodies education, and she believes in using early childhood education and authentic parent engagement to ensure that our community's

children have access to quality, early learning opportunities.

Dr. Ezeh is professor of education at Aquinas College and the founder and pedagogical leader of the landmark Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative (ELNC) – a trusted, place-based, early learning collaborative that provides funding, innovative shared support services, and advocacy to partner organizations rooted in vulnerable communities. Through its successful dual-generational model, ELNC and its partners provide family support and high-quality, culturally competent, early childhood educational services to at-risk families. Her life purpose is to ensure that teachers are able to educate ALL children and that vulnerable children are ready for kindergarten.

Dr. Ezeh’s work has taken her across the globe to train teachers and empower parents and to the state government to testify and advocate for vulnerable children. She recently published her memoir – *Nwaenyi: Child of an Elephant; Lessons Learned from My Father, a Nigerian Chief, about Child Development and Affirmations*.

Gayle Headen



Gayle Headen is Executive Director of Wake County Smart Start (WCSS), a nonprofit organization that serves children, birth to five, and their families. It is the second largest partnership of the Smart Start network across North Carolina. WCSS works collaboratively with community partners to improve the quality, accessibility and affordability of child care, provide preventive health and early intervention services and offer family support services—all delivered as part of a strong, diverse integrated early childhood system. As Executive Director, Gayle serves as a catalyst for community partners, funders, and government entities to collaborate, agree upon, and work toward common goals.

Gayle brings a unique blend of corporate and nonprofit leadership experience with her. She honed her financial management and analytical skills as well as established and implemented visionary business strategies during her corporate career at Procter & Gamble. Then, after “finding her passion” in early childhood education, she entered her nonprofit career as only the third Executive Director in the 50+ year history of Union

Baptist-Harvey Johnson Head Start in Baltimore, Maryland. While there, she gained meaningful experience in family engagement, community health, health disparities research, and social determinants of health. At Union Baptist-Harvey Johnson Head Start, Gayle convened the organization’s community-wide, multi-disciplinary strategic planning symposium and guided the program, via the plan, to achieve a Level 5 certification—the only such designated Head Start program in the city of Baltimore. After 15 years with Head Start, she relocated to the Raleigh area and became Executive Director of Wake County Smart Start.

Under Gayle’s leadership at Wake County Smart Start, the organization has adopted a strategic plan that focuses on advancing racial and ethnic equity and enhancing family engagement and leadership.

She believes in the power of systems level approaches, the strength of families, and sees the community as a resource for these families. Gayle holds a BS in Chemical Engineering from Howard University, has earned her Maryland Child Day Care Certification, received a Weinberg Fellowship, and is a UCLA Head Start Management Fellow. Gayle lives in New Hill, NC with her husband, and they are the parents of one adult daughter.

LaShunda Hill



LaShunda Hill is a youth advocate committed to positively transforming the systems that impact the lives of youth navigating risk, so they are restorative and healing instead of retributive and harmful.

As the first Executive Director of the Office for Students in the Care of the District of Columbia (SCDC) within the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME), Ms. Hill currently leads work to strengthen the educational and workforce development services and supports for students who come into contact with the child welfare and justice systems in the District of Columbia.

Ms. Hill brings expertise in aligning policy, research, and practice to create youth-serving systems that are protective and promotive. Before leading the SCDC, Ms. Hill conceptualized and managed technical assistance juvenile justice technical assistance to states seeking to reduce their use of out-of-home placement and expand the

availability of community-based services. Her policy experience also includes leading advocacy to reform state juvenile sentencing laws. Informing her macro level policy work, Ms. Hill has worked directly with youth and families providing in-home therapeutic services and as co-founder of a college preparatory program for opportunity youth.

In service to her community, Ms. Hill was appointed by the Mayor of the District of Columbia to serve as a member of the District of Columbia's Child Fatality Review Committee, a multidisciplinary team of District residents, community-based providers, child advocates, physicians and government leaders who identify systemic strategies for reducing preventable child deaths. Appointed by the District of Columbia Council, she currently serves in her personal capacity as a Commissioner on the District of Columbia's Police Reform Commission (DCPRC) where she co-chaired committees focused on the policing of youth and violence prevention.

Ms. Hill is a Harry S. Truman Scholar who graduated with highest honors from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC), receiving a B.A. in International Studies, B.S. in Public Policy, and a B.S. in Sociology. She also holds a Ed.M. in Adolescent Prevention Science and Practice from the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) and a J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center (GULC).

In 2018, Ms. Hill received the Beth Arnovits Gutsy Advocate for Youth Award by the National Juvenile Justice Network, which is given annually to an individual who advocates for youth and racial justice and exemplifies ***“tenacity, vision, fearlessness and wisdom.”***

Patrick MacFarland



Patrick D. MacFarlane is Government Relations Manager at Child Care Resource Center, where he leads early education and child care advocacy in Los Angeles County. In 2019, Patrick was appointed by the California State Senate to the Early Childhood Policy Council Parent Advisory Committee, where he provided input on the California Master Plan for Early Learning and Care. He also serves on the Los Angeles County Child Care Planning Committee.

In his free time, Patrick is active and engaged in the community. He serves as VP of Administration for Los Angeles County Young Democrats, on the City of Los Angeles Golf Advisory Committee, and as VP of Chapters and Societies on the Loyola High School Alumni Association Board. He is a former Public Policy Associate at Crystal

Stairs, Inc. and previously served as Senior Field Representative with the California State Assembly. A University of Arizona graduate, MacFarlane was born and raised in Los Angeles, where he resides with his wife Raquel and 3-year-old daughter Leah.

Erica Phillips



Erica Phillips brings a diverse set of business and education experiences to All Our Kin, a leading social enterprise in early education. As the Chief Operating Officer, she is responsible for strong program implementation across multiple sites, ensuring fidelity to All Our Kin’s nationally-recognized model for improving availability and quality of home-based child care, and leading All Our Kin’s expansion into new markets. Prior to joining All Our Kin, Erica founded Second Home

Early Child Care Centers, which prepares children for in family child cares for life-long achievement. Previously, Erica was Senior Director at Achievement First Charter School Network, where she created and led the Human Capital team. Erica was also a fellow with the Education Pioneers 2008 NY cohort and 2014 NextGen Pahara Cohort. Erica began her career working as a strategy consultant at Monitor Group. Erica holds an M.B.A. and an M.Ed. from Stanford University, and a B.S. in industrial engineering from Northwestern University.

Kamren Rollins



Kamren Jamar Malik Rollins has dedicated his life to servant leadership and creating pathways to ensure the most underserved communities have opportunities to and access to high-quality education and holistic supports. Kamren attended Morehouse College, where he served as the President of the Student Government Association, a member of the Board of Trustees of the college, and co-founder and President of LYTEhouse, a mentoring and community engagement organization.

Since moving back to Washington DC, Kamren has hosted and planned workshops around financial literacy, career development, black masculinity, and academic success at local schools which featured hundreds of students. In July of 2019, Kamren began his role as the Interim CEO of Sunshine Early Learning Center and the Vice President of Southeast Children’s Fund. He is eager to continue to change and impact communities of color through his passion for writing, education, policy, mentorship, and story-telling. Kamren has a great love for education and believes that it is the key to Black liberation. In the future, he plans to open additional schools around the world, and write novels and short stories. He lives by a quote from Maya Angelou, “If one is lucky, a solitary fantasy can totally transform one million realities,” which reminds Kamren to accomplish his goals while simultaneously changing lives.

Tamara Shamburger



Tamara Shamburger served as an elected member of the Hillsborough County School Board 2016-2020 and served as Chair of the Board in 2019. Tamara represented District 5, the urban core of Hillsborough County, where she represented primarily Black, Hispanic, low-income, and high-needs communities.

Tamara focused on equity and ensuring all students had access to excellent educational opportunities. Under Tamara’s leadership, the Hillsborough School Board received many award including the Council of Urban Boards of

Education (CUBE) School Board Excellence award and the National School Board Association’s Recognizing Innovative Strategies in Equity (RISE) award, for the implementation of one of the nation’s first Racial Equity School Board policies. Tamara was instrumental in rooting out long-standing systemic and institutional racism in Hillsborough County Schools. Tamara proudly passed many policies that helped improve the plight of minority students, communities, and businesses.

Tamara has continued her advocacy for marginalized communities as the Executive Director for The Academy of Tampa, a chain of Urban Early Learning Centers and is also the President of BCDI Greater Tampa Bay.

Makia Thomas



Makia Thomas serves as the Associate Director of Early Childhood Education at Children at Risk in Houston, TX. She is a passionate advocate for increasing equitable health and educational opportunities, improving access to high quality early learning options, and strengthening the ECE workforce across the state of Texas. In her current position, Makia focuses on meaningfully disseminating equity-based research in a way that engages stakeholders in developing practical policy practices.

Prior to her position at Children at Risk, Makia developed her expertise as a public school educator for over ten years. She served as a Dual Language teacher, training and development specialist, and school administrator. Makia holds a B.S. in Applied Developmental Psychology and M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education from the University of Pittsburgh. She recently obtained a Graduate Certificate in Instructional Design and Technology from Georgia State University.

LaWanda Wesley



LaWanda Wesley serves as Oakland Unified School District's Director of Quality Enhancement and Professional Development of Early Education. She supports a cadre of 200-plus teachers and a dynamic early leadership team with professional development and quality improvement initiatives. Dr. Wesley also co-directed a statewide leadership fellowship titled the California Consortium for Equity in Early Childhood Education Fellowship and is the Co-Founder and Co-Director for the Center for Equity in Early Childhood Education.

Wesley is the co-author of the second and third book in the trauma series titled *Culturally Responsive Self-Care for Early Childhood Educators* and *Trauma-Responsive Practices for Early Childhood Leaders: Creating and Sustaining Healing Engaged Organizations*. She also trains on trauma responsive practices. As of

January 2021, Wesley was voted and appointed to the California-Hawaii NAACP State Executive Committee as the Community Coordinator Chair. She is dedicated to changing the lives of all children, especially those from communities of color, poverty, and furthest reach from opportunity yet most at-promise.

Ashley C. Williams



Ashley Williams is CSCCE's Director of California Policy and Educator Engagement Programs. In her role, she tracks, analyzes, and translates state ECE policy development with a particular focus on issues related to the early education workforce, connects with national policy, and develops educator engagement strategies. She is the former Associate Director of EDvance, an ECE teacher preparation program at San Francisco State University (SF State). For nearly two decades, Ashley has worked in several roles in ECE

including serving as a Jumpstart Corps Member where she started her ECE journey. She continued on to become a preschool teacher, Head Start center director, and early childhood teacher educator at the undergraduate and master's levels at SF State. She has experience with ECE policy and systems work, serving as the Senior Quality and Workforce Analyst for the San Francisco Office of ECE. Her professional work also extends internationally as she co-led a study abroad service-learning program in ECE settings in South Africa and New Zealand. Overall, Ashley's daily work and research are rooted in contributing to ECE systems in ways that explicitly reveal, dissolve, and resolve systemic inequities that cause harm to children, families, and the educators that work with them- especially when they are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. She earned her Ed.D. in Educational Leadership at SF State where she also earned her BA in Child and Adolescent Development and an M.A.Ed. with an emphasis on Early Childhood Education.



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