

News

The National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) Today Announced its 2019 Class of NBCDI Policy Fellows, the First in the Organization's 49-Year History.



NBCDI
National Black Child
Development Institute

Policy Fellowship



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The NBCDI Policy Fellowship will elevate and accelerate Black leaders to ensure leadership at the national level more closely reflects the young children that are being served. Throughout this two-year program, NBCDI Policy Fellows will incubate new approaches to policies and work to reform systems to help Black children realize their full potential.



The NBCDI Policy Fellowship is made possible by generous support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

**NATIONAL BLACK CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES
INAUGURAL CLASS OF POLICY FELLOWS**

*Groundbreaking Program Will Elevate and Accelerate Black Leadership in
Systems Impacting Black Children and Families*

(Silver Spring, MD June 25, 2019) - The National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) today announced its 2019 class of NBCDI Policy Fellows, the first in the organization's 49-year history. The National Black Child Development Institute Policy Fellowship will elevate and accelerate Black leaders to ensure leadership at the national level more closely reflects young children that are being served in education and other systems. Throughout this two-year program, NBCDI Policy Fellows will incubate new approaches to policies and reform systems to help Black children realize their full potential and brilliance.

“We know that America’s systems of education and advancement were designed for white children to succeed,” says Tobeka G. Green, President and CEO of the National Black Child Development Institute. “Institutional racism and inequities within systems have to be dismantled and those systems reformed. We can do so when Black leaders have a seat at the decision-making table. NBCDI’s Policy Fellowship will support and strengthen the nation’s best leaders to fill these much needed roles,” says Ms. Green.

The National Black Child Development Institute’s commitment to ensure equity in early learning environments and in the health and well-being of Black children and families is the impetus for the NBCDI Policy Fellowship. A study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education under the Obama Administration found that Black preschool children are nearly four times as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions as white preschool children. Inequities in opportunity lead to disparities in achievement. For example, scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reveal that 81% of Black children were not reading proficiently by 4th grade.

NBCDI Policy Fellows will join NBCDI’s national network and call to action to advance equity for Black children and families through education and advocacy. NBCDI Policy Fellows are already on the front lines of addressing institutional racism within systems that impact, educate and support Black children and families. Among their career accomplishments:

- leading national initiatives addressing early childhood development;
- researching social, cognitive and language development of Black children within various ecological contexts;
- examining the impact of early childhood adversity on the physical and mental health outcomes of Black men;
- championing advocacy initiatives for vulnerable children of color and their families;
- implementing a national policy agenda designed to support states and communities as they prepare infants, toddlers and preschoolers for school; and
- addressing implicit bias in educational and therapeutic spaces, and ways in which teachers and therapists can recognize and overcome biases in their work with children and families.

NBCDI's Policy Fellows reflect a diversity of talent across the country, from five states and the District of Columbia. (Massachusetts, Alabama, Illinois, Florida and Georgia). They represent the best in public service, policy, early childhood education and research. For bios and photos of the six inaugural NBCDI Policy Fellows, please visit: <https://www.nbcdi.org/policyfellows>.

2019 National Black Child Development Institute Policy Fellows

Rashida Brown is the Associate Director of Human Services in the County Solutions and Innovation Department at the National Association of Counties (NACo) where she leads the Association's human services portfolio and activities in a national initiative addressing early childhood development. (Washington, DC)

Dr. Stephanie Curenton is a tenured Associate Professor at the Wheelock College of Education and Human Development at Boston University. There she leads studies on Black children within various ecological contexts, such as parent-child interactions, early childhood education programs, early childhood workforce issues and related local, state and federal early childhood policy initiatives. (Boston, MA)

Lee Johnson, III is the Director of State and National Cross-Agency Collaboration at the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education and was recently appointed State Director of First 5 Alabama®, an initiative to enhance healthy attachment relationships between children birth to age five and the adults who care for them through promotion, prevention and intervention supports throughout Alabama's early childhood systems. (Tuscaloosa, AL)

Ngozi Lawal is the Project Director of the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP)'s Prenatal to 3 Initiative, which works to increase the number of children ready for Kindergarten in the Early Childhood Learning and Innovation Network for Communities (EC-LINC). (Chicago, IL)

Dr. Jessica Pryce is the Executive Director of the Florida Institute for Child Welfare and a faculty member at Florida State University. In 2018 Dr. Pryce delivered a TED Talk entitled, "Implicit Racial Bias in Child Welfare Decisions," which garnered more than one million views. (Tallahassee, FL)

Dr. Dina Walker-DeVose is an Associate Professor of Child and Family Development at Georgia Southern University. With more than 25 years of interdisciplinary collaborations, Dr. Walker-

DeVose has previously partnered with faculty in sociology, education, criminal justice, writing and linguistics, and counselor education in both her research and practice. (Atlanta, GA)

NBCDI will provide Policy Fellows with an intensive two-year program of support and study to advance their areas of expertise and innovation. Mentors and leaders in executive coaching, personal development, policy, research, education and equity will provide ongoing counsel and collaborative opportunities.

The NBCDI Policy Fellowship is made possible by generous support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (DDCF). In April 2019, NBCDI was one of five inaugural recipients of Child Well-being Leadership Development grants from the DDCF, which support programs that help racially and ethnically diverse mid- and senior-level researchers, policymakers and practitioners become transformative leaders who can make sustained improvements in the well-being of vulnerable children and families in the U.S.

“Effective and diverse social sector leadership is critical for ending intergenerational cycles of poverty and persistently inequitable outcomes for families and children,” said Lola Adedokun, program director for child well-being at DDCF. “We are excited to support a new set of leaders as they innovate and implement approaches to tackling the complex, systemic issues that unduly burden U.S. communities contending with vast health and economic disparities.”

Additional funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation supported the program development and launch of this fellowship.

Policy Fellowship Facilitators, Mentors and Partners

Tai Beauchamp, Media Personality, Entrepreneur and Brand Developer (Mentor)
Lynette M. Fraga, Ph.D., Executive Director of Child Care Aware® of America (CCAoA)
Sangree Froelicher, Senior Technical Assistant Specialist at ICF International
Lee Ann Huang, Doris Duke Fellowships, Chapin Hall at University of Chicago
Jacqueline Jones, Ph.D., President of the Foundation for Child Development (FCD)
Monisha Kapila, Founder of ProInspire
Sherri Killins, Ph.D., BUILD Initiative (Nominating Committee)
Joan Lombardi, Ph.D., Senior Advisor to the Buffett Early Childhood Fund & Bernard van Leer Foundation on Global Child Development Strategies (Mentor)
Matthew Melmed, JD, Executive Director of ZERO TO THREE
Diana Mendley Rauner, President of the Ounce of Prevention Fund
David Mensah, Principal Partner DKBWAVE Training and Consulting (Facilitator)

Aisha Ray, Ph.D., Senior Advisor to NBCDI President and CEO (Mentor)
Carla Thompson Payton, Vice President for Program Strategy at W.K. Kellogg Foundation & Member, NBCDI Board of Directors (Mentor)
Penny Smith, Erikson Institute (Nominating Committee)
Cynthia Stringfellow (Nominating Committee)
Kerrien Suarez, NBCDI Senior Director of Leadership Development (Facilitator)
Susan L. Taylor, Founder & CEO, National CARES Mentoring Movement and Editor-in-Chief Emerita of Essence Magazine (Mentor)
Martha Zaslow, Director of the Office for Policy and Communications of the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) and a Senior Scholar at Child Trends

About NBCDI

NBCDI delivers high-quality resources that respond to the unique strengths and needs of Black children around issues including early childhood education, health and wellness, child welfare, literacy and family engagement. NBCDI's volunteer-driven National Affiliate Network operates in communities across the country, partnering with children, families and organizations to implement evidence-based, strengths-based, culturally-relevant, culturally responsive and trauma-informed programs.

For more information on the National Black Child Development Institute, visit us online at www.nbcdi.org.