THE CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION OF MISSISSIPPI

AND THE PHIL HARDIN FOUNDATION

PRESENT



2024 SUMMIT PROGRAM GUIDE









The Children's Foundation of Mississippi (CFM) is a 501(c)3 focused on improving the policies and systems that affect the well-being of children in our state. We were founded in 2019 to serve as a convener, facilitator, advocate, and catalyst for positive change.

When we make sure that children and youth get off to a strong start, we're setting the stage for Mississippi to realize new possibilities. Today's young people are tomorrow's neighbors, leaders, and workforce. By supporting their wellbeing, we are building a better future for our state.

The foundation of lifelong wellbeing is built in childhood, when the brain and body are developing rapidly. But right now, Mississippi's children and youth are often missing the essentials of a strong start in life. It is better to create a sturdy foundation than it is to repair it later. We need to ensure that our systems, programs, and policies support strong development, right from the start, and throughout childhood and adolescence.

We aim to develop more effective and more intentional systems by advocating for better policies, and by convening policymakers, agencies, organizations, and communities to work on systems-level problems. Our goal in creating a Blueprint for child well-being in Mississippi is to articulate what our state can do to address important children's issues, bring stakeholders together to implement the plan, and provide updates on the progress. We take on Signature Initiatives- multi-year strategic projects that have the potential for major impact. We deliver data through a variety of resources — such as Mississippi KIDS COUNT — and we monitor and report the critical indicators of our state's child well-being that advocates and decision makers need to be informed.

For Mississippi to reach its potential, our children must meet theirs.

Visit <u>childrensfoundationms.org</u> for more. Find us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and Linkedin at echildrensfdnms

CFM is also the home of **Mississippi KIDS COUNT**. KIDS COUNT is the leading resource for comprehensive information on Mississippi's children and serves as a catalyst for improving outcomes for children, families, and communities. Mississippi KIDS COUNT is housed within the Children's Foundation of Mississippi. KIDS COUNT provides data, statistics, and original research about the health, education, safety and well-being of children to policymakers, educators, program administrators, parents, caregivers, advocates and the general public.



The Mississippi KIDS COUNT program is made possible, in part, through grants from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Mississippi KIDS COUNT releases an annual Factbook containing information in the areas of children's education, health, and economic well-being within the state. Visit the Annie E. Casey Foundation's national KIDS COUNT Data Center at aecf.org for the latest national data book and to create custom reports from Mississippi's data.







2024 SUMMIT AGENDA

- 8:15 REGISTRATION
- 9:00 ENTERTAINMENT Jim Hill High School Concert Choir
- 9:15 WELCOME Dr. Linda Southward
- 9:30 PANELS ON EARLY CHILDHOOD

Senator Nicole Boyd, Dr. Susan Buttross, Dr. Heather Hanna, and Tamara Smith

Moderated by Dr. Julie Parker

9:55 PANEL ON ADOLESCENCE

Dr. Carla Evers, Judge Trent Favre, Dr. Craig Flowers, and Tonya Ware Moderated by Sanford Johnson

10:15 BREAK

10:30 FRAMEWORKS INSTITUTE WORKSHOP

Dr. Criscillia Benford and Dr. Anna Marie Trester

11:30 NETWORKING LUNCH

12:35 2024 FACTBOOK DEDICATION

Judge John Hudson and Patti Marshall, J.D.

12:40 2024 FACTBOOK HIGHLIGHTS Audrey Reid

12:50 BREAK

1:00 KEYNOTE ADDRESS Ellen Galinsky

Introduced by Heather Martin

1:45 Q&A PANEL Wendy Bailey, Ellen Collins, Commissioner Andrea Sanders, and Scott Waller

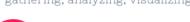
Moderated by Dr. Connie Baird-Thomas

SPECIAL THANKS.

CFM Community Partners























2022 and 2023 CFM Early Childhood **Council Planning Grant Awardees**

2022

Chickasaw - United Way of Northeast

Forrest County - Hattiesburg Excel By 5 Jefferson - Jefferson County School

District

Jones - Nurture Our Future

Lowndes - Mayor's Council on Early Childhood Policy &

Education

Pearl River - Right Choice Learning

Simpson - Central Mississippi Regional

Library System

Washington - Level-Up Learning Center Yalobusha - Oakland Area Chamber of Commerce

2023

Hinds - Midtown Partners, Inc.

Hinds - New Vineyard Community

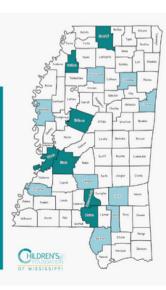
Holmes - City of Durant Excel by 5

Jefferson Davis - Project H.O.P.E

Marion - Columbia-Marion County

Marshall - Institute for Community

Quitman - Quitman County Arts Warren - Vicksburg/Warren Excel



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Phil Hardin FOUNDATION

Phil Hardin was an innovative and visionary businessman whose success never caused him to lose sight of his own humble beginnings.

Mr. Hardin valued education as the most important ingredient for success in his life and knew that better educational opportunities for all would not only benefit individuals but would also make Mississippi's communities stronger and more prosperous. Acting on this belief, he decided in 1964 to use the wealth he had created as the owner of the

Meridian-based Hardin's Bakeries to "improve the education of Mississippians," and the Phil Hardin Foundation was born. More than half a century later, Mr. Hardin's vision of an excellent education as the norm for all Mississippians continues to find expression in the work of the foundation he established.



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Keynote Speaker

Ellen Galinsky

Ellen Galinsky is the President of Families and Work Institute (FWI), an organization she co-founded in 1989. She is the elected President of the Work and Family Researchers Network, a network of several thousand researchers globally and additionally serves as a senior advisor to the Immediate Office of the Assistant Secretary of Youth Mental Health at the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Between March 2016 and September 2022, she served as Chief Science Officer of the Bezos Family Foundation. Before co-founding FWI, she spent more than two decades at the Bank Street College of Education.

Her life's work revolves identifying important societal questions as they emerge, conducting research to seek answers, and turning the findings into action. She strives to be ahead of the curve, to address compelling issues, and to provide rigorous data that can affect our lives. Over her career, her research has focused on work-life, children's development, youth voice, child-care, parent-professional relationship, and parental development.

Galinsky is the author of *Mind in the Making*, a best-selling book on early learning that the New York Times called "an iconic parenting manual," and Judy Woodruff of the PBS NewsHour named "must reading for everyone who cares about America's fate in the 21st Century."

Her book on adolescent development, *The Breakthrough Years*, will be published in early 2024 and involved nine-years of research, including three original studies. She is

also the author of 90 books/reports and 360 articles for books, academic journals, magazines, and the Web.

Other career highlights include serving as the elected President of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (the largest group of early childhood professionals), being elected as a fellow of the National Academy of Human Resources (the highest honor in human resources), serving as parent expert in the Mister Rogers Talks with Parents series, and receiving a Distinguished Achievement Award from Vassar College and the 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Work and Family Researchers Network.





Wendy Bailey Executive Director, Mississippi Department of Mental Health

Wendy Bailey currently serves as the Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH). A role she assumed in January of 2021. She has been with the agency for 18 years beginning her career at Mississippi State Hospital in 2005. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees and is also a graduate of the John C. Stennis Institute of Government. She is a Licensed Mental Health Administrator and Certified Public Manager. She serves on numerous boards and task forces including the National Research Institute Board of Directors, Southeast Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Advisory Board, Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services Board, State Early Childhood Advisory Council, Certified Public Manager Advisory Board, and the Mississippi's Suicide Prevention Task Force. She serves as a liaison with national organizations such as Mental Health America, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors. She lives in Rankin County with her husband, Charles, and their son, Brandon.



Dr. Connie Baird-ThomasAssociate Director, MSU Social Science Research
Center for Policy Studies & Director of the MS Health
Policy Research Center

Dr. Connie Baird-Thomas is the Associate Director of the Social Science Center for Policy Studies and Director of the Mississippi Health Policy Research Center (MHPRC), Mississippi's only research center devoted to health policy issues. Through the MHPRC, health and health services data are provided to a number of stakeholders, including state agencies, advocacy groups and political officials.

In the area of program evaluation, Dr. Baird-Thomas led the evaluation of a statewide effort to reduce health disparities among minorities. She also has served as the lead Investigator for the assessment of other statewide programs including the school nurse component of the Mississippi Tobacco Pilot Program and Mississippi's Drug-Free Schools and Community Program. Other activities in which she served as lead investigator include a feasibility assessment of implementing the Nurse-Family Partnership Program in Mississippi and the Evaluation of the Mississippi Disaster Case Management Pilot Program. Dr. Baird-Thomas's research has been funded by the Mississippi Department of Public Safety Planning, the Mississippi State Department of Health and the Office of Rural Health Policy. Her work has been published in the Journal of Adolescent Health, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, International Journal of Crime, Criminal Justice and the Law, and Criminal Justice and Behavior.



Dr. Criscillia Benford FrameWorks Institute

Dr. Criscillia Benford has been a Senior Fellow with the FrameWorks Institute since 2021. During her time at FrameWorks, she has contributed to projects in a variety of issue areas, including Child and Adolescent Development, Families, Education, Equity, Climate Change and Environment, Economic Justice, and Racial Justice. A post-classical narratologist and media theorist by training, Criscillia has published peer reviewed work in the fields of Victorian Poetry, Narratology, and Theoretical Neuroscience. Her dissertation explored connections among media affordances, commercialism, and the perception of social identities as they played out in the Victorian literary field. Prior to joining FrameWorks, she taught literature and humanities courses at the University of Chicago, Duke, and Stanford. Criscillia earned her BA from the Plan II Honors Program at the University of Texas at Austin. She completed her MA and PhD in English at Stanford University.



Senator Nicole Boyd Mississippi, District Nine

Senator Nicole Akins Boyd has been representing the 9th district in the Mississippi State Senate since 2019. Nicole grew up in Oxford and Lafayette County and is a graduate of Oxford High School. She earned a B.S. from Mississippi State University and graduated from the University of Mississippi Law School.

In the Senate, Boyd sits on the following committees: Universities and Colleges (Vice-Chair), Education, Finance, Housing, Insurance, Judiciary, Division A, Legislative Budget Committee, Technology, and Tourism. She previously served in roles such as Special Assistant Attorney General, Division Director of the Youth Services Division, and director of a non-profit healthcare organization. She also served for six years on the Tourism Board and a year as Chair. She is currently a member of the Panola Partnership and Oxford Chamber of Commerce. Senator Boyd is a Mississippi native. She is married to Daniel Boyd. They have two children, Izzy and Speight.



Dr. Susan ButrossDivision Head, Child Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics & Professor of Pediatrics at UMMC

Dr. Susan Buttross is a Professor Emeritus at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC). She is former Chief of the Division of Child Development and Behavioral Pediatrics at UMMC in Jackson, Mississippi. She currently serves as the Medical Director for the Center for Advancement of Youth (CAY). She has served as the Director of the Child Development Clinic at UMMC for 26 years. She earned her medical degree from the University Of Mississippi School Of Medicine and completed her pediatric residency at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and The University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas. Additional post residency study was completed at the University of Tennessee Boling Center for Developmental Disabilities. She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics (FAAP) and is board certified in Pediatrics and Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics. She has been the host of MPB's Tuesday edition of Southern Remedy, "Relatively Speaking" for the last 5 years.



Ellen CollinsExecutive Director,
Mississippi Alliance of Nonprofits and Philanthropy

Ellen Collins serves as the executive director for the Alliance. In this role, Ellen provides leadership and support to nonprofit and philanthropic organizations in their efforts to strengthen Mississippi's children, families, and communities. Ellen previously served as associate director for the Alliance, as well as various roles in nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, including the director of the Prosperity Center for Midtown Partners, Inc. She also served as a senior program officer for the Chicago-based McCormick Foundation and director of programs for the Community Foundation of Greater Jackson (now the Community Foundation for Mississippi) where she was instrumental in helping launch the Women's Fund of Mississippi (now the Women's Foundation of Mississippi), the only nonprofit foundation in the state that focuses primarily on women and girls' issues. A native of Starkville, MS, Ellen holds a Bachelor of Arts in sociology from Mississippi Valley State University; a Master of Science in education from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale; and additional studies and certifications in family services and leadership development. She was a member of the Leadership Greater Jackson class of 2008-09 and has served on various boards for nonprofit organizations in the Metro Jackson area. Ellen is also a member of Delta Sigma Theta, Sorority, Inc. and the Junior League of Jackson. She loves photography, traveling, and conducting genealogical research.



Dr. Carla Evers Superintendent of Schools, Pass Christian Public School District

Dr. Carla J. Evers proudly serves as the Superintendent of Schools for Pass Christian Public School District. She previously served as Director of Instructional Programs for the Gulfport School District. Dr. Evers served as an elementary principal while in Gulfport as well as during her nine-year tenure with the Natchez-Adams School District. Her greatest joy was seeing both schools improve two performance levels during her tenure (Morgantown: 1 to 3 and West Elementary: 3 to 5). The district has demonstrated its enormous potential by earning the distinction of being one of the top-rated school districts in the state as well as national recognition for its work with students of poverty and achievements in Advanced Placement.

During her 28 years as an educator, she has earned several awards and honors, such as Teacher of the Year and Administrator of the Year. She has also served on several community boards and belonged to community service organizations such as The Lynn Meadows Discovery Center Board of Trustees, Head Start Policy Board, Executive Committee of the MA Gulf Coast Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and Rotary Education Committee, to name a few.

She is married to her husband of 28 years, retired Sergeant First Class Carlos M. Evers; together they have six adult children and two grandchildren. Her family attends First Missionary Baptist Church of Handsboro.



Judge Trent Favre Hancock County Youth Court

Judge Trent Favre graduated cum laude from Millsaps College in Jackson in 1996, earning a bachelor of arts in philosophy, with a minor in French. He received his Juris Doctorate from University of Mississippi School of Law in 1999. As a law student, he served on the staff of the Mississippi Law Journal, was chosen law school student body secretary and was appellate director of the Moot Court Board.

Judge Favre has been a member of the Mississippi Bar Association's Commission on Character and Fitness since 2012. He is involved in numerous charities and nonprofits on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.



Dr. Craig Flowers Rankin County Children's Group

Dr. Craig Flowers grew up in Jackson, MS, one of 7 children. He attended Mississippi State University and graduated with a BS in Biology in 1978. He then attended the University of MS Medical School and graduated with a MD in 1983. He did his internship and residency at Arkansas Children's Hospital. Then he practiced in Little Rock for seven years. He then completed a Fellowship in Adolescent Medicine at the University of MS in Jackson and started private practice here in 1994. He currently practices at Rankin Children's Group in Flowood, MS with 8 partners. He also ran the Adolescent Program for approximately 8 years at the Children's Hospital in Jackson, and has trained medical students, pediatric and med/ped residents, DO medical students, and NP students for the last approximately 30 years.



Heather Hanna, PhD.

Associate Research Professor and Research Fellow for the Mississippi State University Social Science Research Center (SSRC)

Dr. Hanna is an Associate Research Professor and Research Fellow for the Social Science Research Center (SSRC), where she directs the Systems Change Lab (SCL). Currently, she serves as Principal Investigator of a Mississippi Department of Human Services-funded project to collect and analyze child care market rates to inform Child Care Payment Program subsidies. Dr. Hanna also serves as Principal Investigator for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation-funded Mississippi Child Care Quality Support System project. She continues to facilitate meetings on this topic among early childhood stakeholders as a part of the Mississippi LIFT. Recently, Dr. Hanna served as Co-Principal Investigator on a Health Resources & Services Administration-funded project that was a joint project of the University of Mississippi Medical Center and the SŚRC at Mississippi State University (MSU). The 5-year, \$17.5M Mississippi Thrive project was designed to examine and strengthen the developmental health system for young children in Mississippi, ranging from developmental health promotion, to screening, referral, and treatment. Previously, Dr. Hanna served as Co-Director for Mississippi KIDS COUNT. In this role, she partnered with the Center for Population Studies at the University of Mississippi to conduct education, outreach, and research on census participation in the state and served on the governor's 2020 Census Complete Count Committee as the Education Subcommittee Chairperson. Dr. Hanna also worked with the Family and Children's Research Unit (FCRU) at the SSRC, focusing on policy and systems change related to education and health services for Mississippi's children and families. FCRU project were funded by the National Institutes of Health, Center for Mississippi Health Policy, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, among others. Dr. Hanna earned a PhD in public policy and administration and a MS in sociology from MSU. She received her undergraduate training in psychology at the University of Mississippi. Her work is supported in part by MAFES.

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Elucidata is a data consulting and analytics firm tailored to the needs of nonprofits, advocates, service providers, and change makers. We know your work (and your funding) relies on having dependable findings and shareable data. While you're busy doing the work you do, tag us in for evaluation, analysis, and design.

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Hon. Judge John Hudson Jurist in Residence (Youth Courts), Mississippi Supreme Court

John N. Hudson was a judge for the Adams County Court in Adams County, Mississippi. He served as a judge for the court from August 1983 until his retirement from the bench on December 31, 2014. He now serves as Jurist in Residence (Youth Courts) at Mississippi Supreme Court, where he is charged to work with youth courts around the state to improve outcomes. He also works with executive departments touching youth and children's issues as a liaison with the courts and works with the court and legislature on youth and children's issues promoting best practices. Hudson earned both his undergraduate and J.D. degrees from the University of Mississippi.



Sanford Johnson Executive Director, Teach Plus Mississippi

Sanford Johnson (he/him/his) has been the Executive Director of Teach Plus Mississippi since 2020 and leads the work of the Mississippi Policy Fellowship and the Mississippi Teacher Network. Mississippi Policy Fellows have been involved in increasing teacher pay, strengthening the state's teacher pipeline, and increasing access to mental health resources. Sanford also led the launch of Teach Plus Arkansas, which has recently recruited its second cohort of Policy Fellows. Prior to joining Teach Plus, Sanford was the Deputy Director of Mississippi First (MSF), an education policy research and advocacy organization. He serves on the board for Teen Health Mississippi, the Mississippi Alliance of Nonprofits and Philanthropy, and chairs the Clarksdale Municipal Elections Commission.

Sanford holds a B.A. from Auburn University and an M.P.S from the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service. He lives in Clarksdale with his wife, Amanda, and their two daughters, Lorelei and Ava



Patti Marshall. JD Assistant Attorney General, MS Attorney General's Office (Retired)

Patti Marshall retired from the MS Attorney General's Office in 2017, as an Assistant Attorney General, and the Bureau Chief of the Bureau of Victim Assistance which encompassed the Children's Division, Victim Compensation, Victim Services, Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking & Human Trafficking. From August of 2018 until June 30, 2020, she was on a part time contract as a Special Assistant Attorney General in the Children's Division. Over her thirty plus year tenure with the State, Patti has been appointed to numerous boards, commissions & task forces by the Attorney General, the Governor, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court & others. Those include: the Mississippi Commission on the Status of Women, the State Drug Court Advisory Committee, the MS Commission on Children's Justice, the Parent Representation Task Force, the Parent Representation Strategic Planning Leadership Team, CASA Board of MS, a founding member of the MS Children's Justice Center (Children's Safe Center), Advisory Board for the MC School of Law Child Advocacy Program, MS Kids Count Program, the Jim Casey Initiative Advisory Board, the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Task Force, the Governor's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Task Force, the Child Advocacy Studies Training Facility Planning Committee, the Supreme Court Family First Initiative Committee & the Programs of HOPE subcommittees.

Patti has been honored throughout her career with many awards, including: the Lifetime Achievement Award from the MS Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, the MS Commission on the Status of Women Nominee in the Political/State & Local Government Finalist for 2015, the Amicus Award from the MS School of Law, the 2012 Children's Star Award from Southern Christian Services for Children & Youth (SCSCY), the 2014 Looking to the Future Award also from the SCSCY, the Most Distinguished Juvenile Professional Award from the Department of Public Safety for her work on the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative in MS through a grant from the Annie E Casey Foundation, & the 2015 Bud Cramer Award from the National Children's Alliance for outstanding commitment to the Children's Advocacy Center Industry.



Heather Martin Statewide Vroom and Mind in the Making Coordinator and Excel by 5 Community Coach

Heather Martinis a Project Manager at the Social Science Research Center of Mississippi State University (MSU), serving as the statewide Vroom and Mind in the Making coordinator. She has held this position since the Spring of 2019 and will continue for several more years. Heather also serves as an Excel by 5 Community Coach. Heather has sixteen years of experience teaching young children in public schools and private preschools in Houston, Mississippi. She also helped establish her school district's first preschool program. Heather's degrees include a B.A. in psychology from Mississippi State University and a B.A. in elementary education from Blue Mountain College. She is currently pursuing a graduate degree in Early Intervention from MSU.
Heather has been married to Chris Martin for twenty-two years and has two daughters who she adores. In her spare time, she works to support early childhood work in her community and teaches and mentors teenagers at her home church in Houston.



Under the direction of Ms. Pamela Moody, Jim Hill High School Concert **Choir** is a select group of singers in grades the 9th through 12th. Students come from all over the city of Jackson to attend this school for the International Baccalaureate Academic program. The choir has a rich tradition

of high standards of performance and vibrant, energetic singing that has given them notoriety throughout the state, regionally, nationally, and internationally. It is the vision of the choir to serve as the best possible musical representatives of Jim Hill High School wherever their performances take them. Their music unites the choir and drives their passion to bring joy to those around them. We are Jim Hill High School Concert Choir, "Living the Vision.... Fulfilling the Legacy"!





Dr. Julie Parker Associate Professor, Mississippi State University

Dr. Parker is an associate professor in Human Development and Family Science at Mississippi State University. She serves as the graduate coordinator for the Master of Science in Early Intervention program and the undergraduate team leader. She also serves as a member of the State Early Childhood Advisory Council and the State Interagency Coordinating Council. She has over 25 years of experience working with young children and families in diverse environments and under stressful conditions. Her background in Child Life and Early Intervention has informed her research, service, and the pre-service training programs she directs.



Audrey Reid Co-Founder, Elucidata

Audrey Reid has over ten years of academic research experience in topics related to children and families and holds an MS in Sociology and a BS in Human Development and Family Science with a concentration in Child Development from Mississippi State University. In 2021, Audrey co-founded Elucidata to design and carry out data collection efforts for non-profits and state agencies. In this role, she has aided in the production of dozens of documents that distill complex research findings into digestible and actionable information. Audrey's passion is making research accessible and usable for the general public.



Andrea Sanders, LMSW, JD Commissioner, Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services

Andrea Sanders is the Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services, where she was appointed in October 2020. Sanders grew up in Brandon as one of four kids in her family. She was adopted at birth into her tamily through Canopy Children's Services along with her older brother. She attended Ole Miss and Millsaps before continuing her education at Tulane completing a master's degree in social work. She worked for about ten years in mental health services for children and adolescents, as well as hospital administration in psychiatric hospitals.

In 2005, she got her law degree and worked for ten years in McComb for two circuit judges before moving into private practice. She then moved to Jackson, becoming a lawyer at the Department of Human Services, working primarily with the early subsidized child care program. There, she was part of a group of employees that noticed irregularities and ended up turning in evidence to the governor. The governor then asked her to take this position as commissioner in November 2020.



Tamara Smith
Director of Early Learning, Midtown Partners, Inc.

Tamara Smith is the Director of Early Childhood for Midtown Partners, Inc. She provides services to Children and families aged 0 to 5 years. She earned her bachelor's degree in Child Care & Family Education from Jackson State University in her hometown of Jackson, MS, and later received a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Jackson State University.

Tamara has been the Chair for Excel by 5 for the Midtown Community since 2018. She is also a member of the State Early Childhood Advisory Council. She is a state-approved trainer and provides training across the state of Mississippi with Educare Mississippi on Foundation of High-Quality Teaching Practices and Intensive Family Engagement and a Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST). Tamara is also leading one of the Early Childhood Councils with CFM. Tamara enjoys advocating for children, families, and Early Childcare providers.



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Dr. Anna Marie Trester FrameWorks Institute

Anna Marie Trester serves as a Senior Associate in the Research Interpretation and Application unit at the FrameWorks Institute. Prior to joining FrameWorks, she served as the director of the MA in Language and Communication (MLC) program in the Department of Linguistics at Georgetown University (GU), where she worked with students to apply their sociolinguistic training to professional contexts. She has taught courses at GU, Howard University, and the University of Maryland, University College. Her courses have covered cross-cultural communication, language and social media, and the ethnography of communication. An applied sociolinguist, Anna has research interests in improvisation, performance, narrative, intertextuality, professional self-presentation, language and identity, language in social media, and the language of business. She is the co-editor (with renowned linguistics professor Deborah Tannen) of Discourse 2.0, published in 2013 by Georgetown University Press. Anna was profiled by the Linguistics Society of America in its December, 2014 member spotlight. She received her MA from New York University and her PhD in linguistics from GU.



Scott WallerPresident and CEO, MS Economic Council

Scott Waller became CEO of MEC, the state's largest broad-based business organization, in May of 2017. MEC plays a pivotal role in providing background and support for major legislative initiatives. Since joining MEC in 2006, he has worked to build coalitions and strengthen alliances between MEC members, legislators and other organizations to make the Chamber a policy leader on key issues. In 2014, the prestigious State Tax Notes publication recognized Waller as one of its persons of the year for his work with the Mississippi legislature on the Taxpayer Fairness Act. Prior to joining MEC, he spent over 20 years as a newspaper journalist, including four years as Business Editor of The Clarion-Ledger. A Mississippi State graduate, he is the former owner/editor of the Madison County Journal and was co-owner of a residential construction company. Waller serves on the State Workforce Investment Board. Nationally, he serves as Chair of the Board of the Council of State Chambers' Center for State Chamber Action and is on the Council's board of directors. He currently serves on the U.S. Chamber's The Chamber of Commerce Committee of 100, the Institute of Organizational Management's National Board of Trustees, and the Transportation Investment Advocacy Council. Waller has continued his dedication to scouting since his days as an Eagle Scout and serves on the executive board of the Andrew Jackson Council of the Boy Scouts of America. He is a member of the Jackson Rotary Club and has served on the board of directors of the Mississippi State University (MSU) Alumni Association's Central Mississippi Chapter. In 2019, the Mississippi Business Journal awarded him one of Mississippi's top CEOs, the same year he was also named one of Mississippi's 50 Most Influential leaders by Y'all Politics. He and his wife Kim live in Madison. Their son, Shane, and daughter-in-law, Whitney, are both MSU graduates.



Tonya Ware State Project Director, ReadyNation Mississippi

Tonya H. Ware is the State Project Director for ReadyNation Mississippi, where she builds and leads a coalition of Mississippi's top-level senior business executives in support of high-quality early childhood education for workforce success. Tonya has been featured on ABC, FOX, BET, TBN, and GMA and is an author, singer/songwriter, and recording artist. In addition, Tonya is the Executive Director of The Church Triumphant Global's Health Innovative Strategies, where she partners with families to combat youth crime, suicide, and obesity. Recently, she was invited to speak at Stanford University, and this year, Tonya Ware accepted an invitation to participate in the C.R.E.A.T.E. Innovation Cohort of the Princeton Theological Seminary.

More from CFM

An Overview of Child Welfare in Mississippi

The overall goal of this project is to provide information that can be used to improve both programming and policies throughout Mississippi's child welfare system while also spotlighting areas that are working well. This report highlights findings from the major areas of study: 1) research engaging foster youth, biological parents, foster parents, and judges); 2) a special advisory committee on child welfare; 3) public health outreach with Mississippi Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (HSPH); and 4) a scholar-in-residence on child welfare. It concludes with policy/program considerations that can inform ways to elevate and strengthen child welfare programming and services in Mississippi. Access the research at bit.ly/OCWMS or scan the QR code to your right!

Blueprint Phases I and II

While it's common to hear discussions among decision-makers, advocates, parents, and researchers about the challenges Mississippi's children face, there has been no statewide plan to address these. The Children's Foundation team has prioritized addressing this need by creating a data-driven roadmap that can guide the state toward the best possible future for all of our children. Because different approaches are needed for different age groups, the Blueprint for Improving the Future of Mississippi's Children has been be rolled out in two phases, birth to age 8 and ages 9 to 18.



You can access both Blueprints at https://bit.ly/47fCvbJ or scan the QR code to your left!



With the Kids to College Child Sayings Account (CSA) program, families can open a my529 CSA for FREE! CSAs are dedicated to saving funds for postsecondary education. This means that when your child turns 18, the money in the CSA can go toward any educational need/opportunity after high school. While ANYONE

can open the account and start saving for free today, those who meet the criteria below are eligible to receive a free \$50 contribution to the CSA from Entergy! And starting in 2024, Entergy will match any funds you put into the account, up to \$365.

To receive the \$50 contribution and be eligible to earn up to \$365 in matching funds, the following criteria must be met:

Child is 16 years of age or younger.

Family lives in a household powered by Entergy.
Family has an annual income at or below \$60,000 for single-earner households and \$80,000 for dual-earner households.

Family opens one account per child (households with multiple children may open an account for each child in the home).

Learn more and sign up at entropy.com/kids today or scan the QR code to your right! Contact KidstoCollegeechildrensfoundationms.org tor turther questions or assistance.



PLANS, PROJECTS, PARTNERS, & OTHER INFO

The PDG B-5 Grant (Mississippi LIFT) is based at the Mississippi Department of Human Services Division of Early Childhood Care and Development and includes the following partners: Mississippi Department of Education, the Mississippi Early Childhood Inclusion Center, The Children's Foundation of Mississippi, and Mississippi State University Social Science Research Center.

Mississippi LIFT plans to invest in families, communities, and childcare providers with sound educational resources for our youngest Mississippians. By offering training, employment incentives, and support for early childcare teachers, Mississippi LIFT sustains families with free at-home learning and childcare services by providing safe, evidence-based educational and lifestyle resources from birth to age five.

Early investment holds the power to profoundly impact the lives of children residing in underserved communities, impoverished communities, rural areas, and those with disabilities. Mississippi's future depends on sustained funding of these early childhood education and development programs. The future of Mississippi is dependent on the success of our children! Mississippi LIFT grant-funded activities benefit all children and families in Mississippi!

LIFT helps children "find their wings" by:

- Helping families connect to early intervention services.
- Unifying the state's early childhood education professional development system.
- Cultivating careers and professional development for early childhood education professionals.
- Advancing information to underserved populations.
- Securing accountability and quality.
- Providing a voice to parents and families.





Funded by the Mississippi Department of Human Services, MECIC meets the needs of early childhood educators, families, and young children with disabilities by providing high quality early childhood inclusion.

- MECIC offers professional development on best practices for teaching young children with disabilities in the early childhood environment.
- Through MECIC, you can earn Contact Hours for FREE! Professional development is offered for directors, infant and toddler teachers, and preschool teachers.
- MECIC: Resource and Referral Center offers early childhood inclusion trainings.

Technical assistance topics:

- Supporting Engagement of Children with Special Needs
- Documenting and Communicating Concerns with Families
- Addressing Positive Behavior Supports
- · Meeting Sensory Needs of Students with Autism
- Increasing Language and Communication for Children with Special Needs
- Responsive Caregiving and Nurturing Relationships (Infant/Toddler CLASS TA)
- Classroom Organization and Instructional Support (Preschool CLASS TA)

Call 601.266.4745 to request on-site assistance as needed to ensure success for all children.

MECIC/Resource and Referral Center is located at 108 Sheffield Loop,

Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39402

Partner and Community Resources

Early Intervention Task Force Findings

This report details "recommendations to the Legislature on reforming the current early intervention system and laws in Mississippi, with the goal of increasing access to services for children from birth to age three through a robust First Steps Early Intervention Program."

(Source: https://bit.ly/3R7nAOI) Access the report at the link above or

(Source: https://bit.ly/3RZnAOL) Access the report at the link above or scan the QR code to the right.

Report on Childcare Wages and Summary from SSRC

Mississippi State University's Social Science Research Center via its Systems Change Lab (directed by Dr. Heather Hanna) has a number of reports on child care wages,



quality support system and resource maps. To learn more, visit scl.ssrc.msstate.edu/. To access the brief discussed in the early childcare panel, please visit bit.ly/mcctws23kf or scan the QR code to your left.

Research shows there is no better time to create a strong foundation for lifelong learning than the first 5 years of life. It's during this period that the brain develops most rapidly. The things that matter most for healthy brain development, like talking and playing, don't require more time, money, or stuff. That's why **Vroom** is here.

Vroom believes all parents want what's best for their children. So we joined with scientists, researchers, and parents to take the science out of the lab and put it in the hands of caregivers. Vroom provides science-based tips and tools to inspire families to turn shared, everyday moments into Brain Building Moments®.

The Bezos Family Foundation provided funds for Vroom, and a lot of passion, because we believe that all parents have the potential to create a bright future for their children. Our goal is to share the science of early brain development in creative ways so all children have the chance to become thriving adults. Visit <u>vroom.org</u> for more.

MIND in the Making In 2000, MITM founder Ellen Galinsky began a research journey fueled by a

question: how to keep the fire for learning — which every child is born with — lighting up the eyes of children? To answer the question, she reviewed more than 2,000 studies and conducted in-depth interviews and filmed more than 130 leading researchers who study children's development and learning.

From what she learned, Galinsky developed a framework of the 7 Essential Life Skills. The work grew into MITM, a national movement to share scientifically based research and strategies for promoting Life Skills, reaching millions of people in communities across the country, and counting.

MITM combines deep research focused on executive function skills, with signature science-fueled training and resources, for professionals across sectors who work with children and families. By taking cutting-edge research and applying the principles of engaged learning to adult learning, the Mind in the Making program helps adults peer deeper to better understand how children learn, what they need to learn and how adults can take simple, effective steps to promote this learning.



KIDS COUNT Survey



We want to hear from you! Please scan the QR code to your left or visit bit.ly/KCSUMSURV to let us know how you have used KIDS COUNT data in your line of work this past year.



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