



Bipartisan Policy Center

Using Mental Health Consultations to Support SEL in Early Childhood

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PANELISTS



Walter Gilliam, Ph.D.

Director, Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy, Yale University

[@WalterGilliam](https://twitter.com/WalterGilliam)

Walter S. Gilliam is the Elizabeth Mears and House Jameson Professor of Child Psychiatry and Psychology at the Yale University Child Study Center, as well as the Director of The Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy. He is President of the Board for Child Care Aware of America; a member of the board of directors for ZERO TO THREE, the Irving Harris Foundation, All Our Kin, and First Children's Finance; a research fellow of the National Institute for Early Education Research; and former Senior Advisor to the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Dr. Gilliam is co-

recipient of the prestigious 2008 Grawemeyer Award in Education for the coauthored book *A Vision for Universal Preschool Education*. Dr. Gilliam's research involves early childhood education and intervention policy analysis (specifically how policies translate into effective services), ways to improve the quality of prekindergarten and child care services, the impact of early childhood education programs on children's school readiness, and effective methods for reducing classroom behavior problems and preschool expulsion.

His scholarly writing addresses early childhood care and education programs, school readiness, and developmental assessment of young children. Dr. Gilliam has led national analyses of state-funded prekindergarten policies and mandates, how prekindergarten programs are being implemented across the range of policy contexts, and the effectiveness of these programs at improving school readiness and educational achievement, as well as experimental and quasi-experimental studies on methods to improve early education quality. Dr. Gilliam actively provides consultation to state and federal decision-makers in the U.S. and other countries and is frequently called to provide U.S. Congressional testimony and briefings on issues related to early care and education.



Chin Reyes, Ph.D.

Research Scientist, Child Study Center, Yale University

An applied developmental scientist by training, Dr. Reyes applies the latest innovations in human developmental science to improve practice, programming, and social policy both nationally and internationally. She possesses a broad repertoire of skills ranging from conducting rigorous research and program evaluations, developing program models impacting youth, developing assessment tools, and providing professional development opportunities for early childhood care and education staff. Dr. Reyes serves as expert panelist on several research study committees and advisory board councils around

issues of quality and equity in early education. Her primary area of interest is the promotion of social and emotional learning skills in young children. Together with Dr. Walter Gilliam, she is co-developer of the Climate of Healthy Interactions for Learning & Development (CHILD), a classroom observation tool that assesses the quality of social and emotional interactions in early childhood care and education settings. The CHILD is currently being implemented statewide in Colorado, Michigan, and Ohio, and in several cities across the US.



Tunette Powell, PhD

Director of Equity, Inclusion and Community, Mirman School; Parent

[@TunettePowell](#)

Dr. Tunette Powell is an activist mama and scholar who has been on the frontlines, locally and nationally, fighting with her village to address a host of different issues, including the school-to-prison pipeline, implicit bias, parent and village engagement in schools, equity, and school-induced collective trauma. She is the Director of Equity, Inclusion and Community at the Mirman School. She also serves as an instructor at the University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. Powell formerly served as the interim program director of the UCLA Parent Empowerment Project - a project focused on developing, nurturing and sustaining parent engagement and parent leadership in schools, especially at schools serving families of color. She lives by the phrase, “Nothing About Us Without Us.”



Tena Sloan

Vice President, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation and Training, Kidango Inc.

Tena H. Sloan LMFT, IFECMHS/RPF-II is a licensed marriage and family therapist with extensive experience with adults and young children as a consultant, therapist, supervisor, trainer and advocate. Tena is endorsed as an Infant-Family Early Childhood Specialist/Reflective



Practice Facilitator II and a fellow of the Napa-based Infant-Parent Mental Health Post-Graduate Fellowship Program through the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Tena holds an M.S. in Marriage and Family Therapy, and a holds a B.S. in Communication from DePaul University. Tena is an adjunct lecturer within the psychology graduate programs at Santa Clara University. Tena is trained in several clinical evidenced-based tools and practices: The Climate of Healthy Interactions for Learning & Development (CHILD), Neurodevelopmental Model of Therapeutics (NMT), Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP), Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), TOUCHPOINTS, Newborn Behavior Observations System (NBO), and the NCAST Parent-Child Feeding Scale. She speaks, trains and consults with professionals and organizations on topics related to early childhood mental health; mental health consultation; trauma, toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs); trauma-informed care; foster care/adoption; neuroscience and early (brain) development; social-emotional development; learning, behavior and regulation; family engagement; professional burnout and compassion fatigue, interpersonal organizational culture and staff wellness, as well as reflective practice in supervision and consultation.



Naleem Saini

Center Director, Kidango Inc.

My name is Neelam Saini. I was born and raised in India. My parents were Early Education Teachers. I came to the United States 25 years ago. I have M.A in Education, M.A in Political Science and M.A in Punjabi (Gold Medal) from Punjab University Chandigarh that is equivalent to B.A in Education, B.A in Political Science and B.A in Punjabi here in the USA. I had a very successful marriage life. My husband (soulmate) passed away in 2018. I have a wonderful, caring son who is studying at UC Davis. I have been working with Kidango for 20 years. I am an author of Punjabi Language. I wrote 7 Poetry books including one book for children by emphasizing ‘Seeds’ and ‘Relationships.’ My 2 books are about Punjabi Culture and now a story book is in process to publish. I host stages for my community. I am a human with positive thinking and I am learning to live in Present moments only.

MODERATOR



Linda Smith

Director, Early Childhood Initiative, Bipartisan Policy Center

[@lksmith1215](#)

Linda Smith is director of BPC’s Early Childhood Development Initiative. She most recently served as the deputy assistant secretary for early childhood development in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In this role she provided overall policy coordination for the Head Start and Early Head Start programs and the Child Care and Development Fund. She also served as the department’s liaison to the U.S. Department of Education and other federal agencies.

Previously, Smith served as the executive director for the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA), where she represented more than 650 community-based agencies



concerned with the care of children in their earliest years. Smith served as a legislative fellow and professional staffer on the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee under the chairmanship of the late Senator Edward M. Kennedy. Prior to this work, she was the director of the Office of Family Policy for the Secretary of Defense, where she was one of the primary architects of the military's child care program. Additionally, she has held positions with both the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force.

Smith began her career in early childhood education on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in her native state of Montana. She is a graduate of the University of Montana.

