

WINTER 2018

## A Year of Making Waves

The Policy & Leadership Department at Erikson Institute is focused on ensuring all children have equitable opportunities to realize their full potential. We embark on this work by equipping leaders with a comprehensive understanding on child development, illuminating opportunities to engage in systems building and informing policies that increase access, improve quality and ensure equity within early care and education.

The breadth of the department's work falls under **Community Data Initiatives** that translate data for community planning, policy development, and early childhood resource allocation, as well as the **Early Childhood Leadership Academy**, which builds the capacity of leaders to influence early childhood policy and systems building. Additionally, we convene various early childhood stakeholders through our **Policy in Action** efforts to increase awareness and foster collaboration around current issues that affect children and families.



Row 1: Cristina Pacione-Zayas, Penny Smith and Jaclyn Vasquez. Row 2: Luke Bandyk, Dulce Dominguez and Rebecca Halperin. Row 3: Hannah Kaare and Veronica Vidal

## Policy in Action

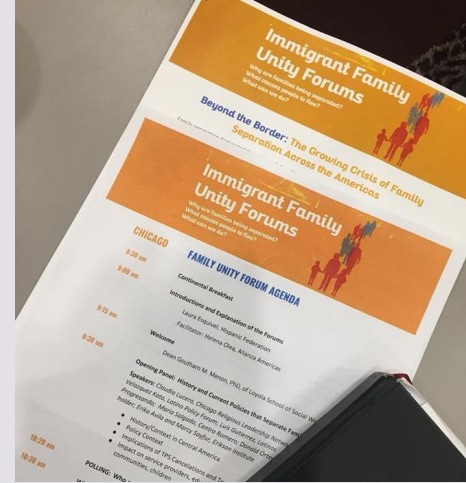
### Immigration Policies Affecting Families

“I’m not doing any harm to anyone. I’m working hard just like everyone,” says Donald Ortega, a Salvadoran with temporary protected status fighting to stay in the US with his US-born wife and two daughters.

Erikson partnered with Enlace Chicago, Gads Hill Center, North Shore School District 112, Loyola University, Alianza Americas, and The Sargent

Shriver National Center on Poverty Law to co-host three different symposiums this year on how individuals and families are facing uncertain futures as changes to immigration policy increase the threat of deportation and family separation.

A cross-sector of experts provided audiences with information and action steps regarding the Public Charge Rule, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and Temporary Protected Status. Experts also discussed the significant distress parents and children of immigrant families experience, which includes depression, anxiety, social isolation, self-stigma, aggression and academic issues.



## Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education

"There is a significant gap between the funding for high-quality early care and education and the need," explains Jennifer Alexander of Metropolitan Family Services (pictured far left).

More than 60 early childhood professionals and stakeholders attended a briefing on the recent report issued by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine: *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education*. Hosted by Erikson Institute and the Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, the event featured two of the report's committee members: Elizabeth E. Davis, Ph.D., professor of applied economics at the University of Minnesota and Harriet Dichter, J.D., fellow at ICF International. Local panelists provided an Illinois and Chicago context explaining the financial constraints experienced by families that severely limit access to high-quality early care and education in addition to implications for providers and the workforce.

[Read highlights of the report.](#)

### Erikson Provides Early Childhood Expertise to Pritzker Administration

Barbara Bowman, Erikson's co-founder, Cristina Pacione-Zayas, director of policy, and Aisha Ray, professor emeritus, are the Erikson faculty and staff named to Governor-elect JB Pritzker and Lt. Governor-elect Juliana Stratton's Educational Success transition committee. State Senate Majority Leader Kimberly Lightford, a fellow of Erikson's McCormick Foundation Executive Fellows program, also serves on the committee. Stratton, also an Erikson fellow, and Bowman co-chair the team together.



Additionally, other Erikson fellows from the program were selected to serve on the

Budget and Government Innovation transition committee: State Senator Omar Aquino, Ralph Martire, Executive Director for the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability and City of Chicago Treasurer Kurt Summers, Jr.

This specialized group of more than 30 leaders is charged with advising the administration on policies for all levels of education and provides a great opportunity to highlight the critical importance of early childhood investment.

For information on Policy in Action initiatives, email [policy@erikson.edu](mailto:policy@erikson.edu)

## Community Data Initiatives

### Early Development Instrument Pilot Project (EDI)

#### Rockford and Skokie/Morton Grove to Implement EDI in 2018-19

The EDI pilot project launched its third year this fall in [the City of Rockford and the Village of Skokie/Morton Grove](#), bringing the total to five Illinois communities who will have participated in the project.

The EDI assesses the ability of kindergarten children to meet expectations in five developmental areas. The results often challenge assumptions about correlations between development and socio-economic status by overlaying data onto [community maps](#), providing a neighborhood level snapshot of child strengths and vulnerabilities in relation to the distribution of early childhood and neighborhood resources. The data inform stakeholders on specific opportunities for early childhood investments to prepare young children for the classroom and beyond.



“We really think the EDI is going to be the missing piece for us. We have lots of services and dedicated people who want to do the work. Now we can actually target it based on the vulnerabilities and the strengths of our community,” said Megan Aseltine, assistant superintendent of academics for School District 69 in Skokie.

Plans to offer this data service to additional Illinois communities are underway and Erikson anticipates partnering with new communities in the spring for the 2019-2020 school year.

#### Oak Park Releases EDI Data, Begins Community Roundtables

In late November, the Early Development



Instrument team presented the [EDI data for the Village of Oak Park](#).

At a joint meeting of the boards for Oak Park's school districts 97 and 200 and the Village's Collaboration for Early Childhood, local residents and community leaders were briefed on children's development in five areas: physical health and well-being; language and cognitive development; social competence; emotional maturity; and communication skills and general knowledge.

While results showed a great percentage of children were on track in these developmental areas, there are still those who are not on track. Children who are not on track may face academic challenges without intervention, which can ultimately affect their life trajectories.

This initial data release is the beginning of the many community conversations to make meaning of the data for informing action strategies. One immediate example of the how the data informed Village officials occurred when they noted how EDI data maps highlighted a potential challenge with the location of a proposed housing development that could isolate children and families from early childhood programs and services, prompting the exploration of other sites.

The power of the data rests on authentic community engagement that includes teachers, school administrators, parents, residents, community leaders, and local government officials who can provide context for the results and lead efforts to determine how to turn it into an actionable strategy to improve outcomes for children and families.



### **EDI Community Partners in Practice Summit**

In mid-May, Erikson held an inaugural EDI Summit where partner communities shared how they use EDI data to inform community planning, align resources, and coordinate systems.

Communities are using the data in proposals to strengthen their cases for resources and funding. East St. Louis School District 189 secured a \$1 million increase in Early Childhood Block Grant funding, and The Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley will receive \$2.1 million over six years to address childhood trauma and resources for families in Kankakee County. Read more on how communities are driving change with the EDI.

[Read more on EDI Outcomes.](#)

For information on the EDI, email [edi@erikson.edu](mailto:edi@erikson.edu)

## Risk and Reach Report in Early 2019

Erikson Institute is working in collaboration with the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) and The Fiscal Policy Center at Voices for Illinois Children to create the inaugural Illinois Risk and Reach Report.

The report presents a curated set of data indicators in health, family and economic stability, and early care and education that present “risk,” factors for early childhood well-being, and the “reach” of available, publicly-funded early childhood programs and services by geography (i.e. county, legislative district, etc.).



The report will serve as a tool a part of the Risk and Reach Project that seeks to provide timely, accessible and actionable information for policy and funding decisions made by governmental and nongovernmental early childhood stakeholders.

The report will be available in early 2019.

## Early Childhood Leadership Academy (ECLA)

### Barbara Bowman Leadership Fellows (BBLF)

The **2018 BBLF cohort** launched in October with 16 early childhood leaders from across Illinois. The 10-month leadership program takes fellows through the public policy cycle, encouraging them to apply their expertise towards system and policy change by developing a policy memo. They will pitch their policy recommendations to stakeholders at Erikson’s Policy Talk in July 2019.



The 2017 cohort completed their program last spring with 14 fellows having published their **policy memos**. As a result, some fellows were invited to serve as expert panelists for conference sessions that address engagement, race and equity, and funding of early childhood initiatives.

**Watch our video** to learn more about ideal candidates for the program. Nominations for the 2019 cohort will begin this spring.

### BBLF Curriculum Adopted into Online Course

ECLA’s collaboration with other departments at



Erikson have resulted in the creation of an online Leadership & Advocacy concentration track for Erikson’s MS in Early Childhood Education program. This track will lead to a Director's Credential in Illinois and help students strengthen their skills in management, policy influence and advocacy, and position themselves as effective and visionary early childhood leaders.

The BBLF’s focus on meeting the real-world needs of early childhood professionals and its emphasis on racial equity has also garnered interest from other universities and organizations who want to adopt the model for their own leadership programs. ECLA is in the process of licensing the curriculum and plans to make it available by the end of 2019.

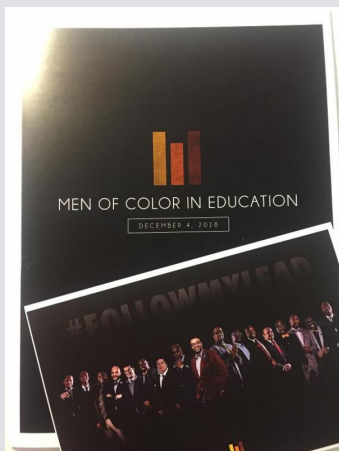
## McCormick Foundation Executive Fellows (MFEF)

The MFEF program, now in its second year, is designed for elected officials including judges, superintendents, heads of state agencies, and other civic leaders, providing them with a comprehensive understanding of the long-term benefits of investing in early child development.

"The fellowship program gave me a better understanding of the educational needs of children from birth through the ages of five that I wasn't aware of before," John Burkey, executive director of the Large Unit District Association.



2018 McCormick Foundation Executive Fellows cohort.



The program has already yielded outcomes as fellows from this and last year apply their early childhood knowledge to their work. For example, Dr. Shawn Jackson, president of Truman College, recently announced the Men of Color in Education initiative, which encourages men to enter the field of education, including early childhood, and provides support to these future educators.

Additionally, the MFEF program helped to inform Alderman Ameya Pawar’s plans for forming the Chicago Resilient Families Task Force to reduce the number of Chicago families experiencing poverty. Superintendent Jim Stelter of the Bensenville School District 2 orchestrated the convening of educators and business and community leaders to discuss the importance of early childhood investment and its connection to the future workforce. Erikson’s president and CEO, Geoff Nagle, will present *The First 1,100 Days Last a Lifetime* to the group at Elmhurst College in January.

Other fellows from the previous year applied their learning to inform plans for a family engagement center in East St. Louis, one fellow was inspired to run for local office,

another said the knowledge deepened her early childhood platform, and an elected official launched an education advisory committee within his district.

Watch our [Service Day video](#) to see the impact of the program's visceral experience.

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## ECLA Fellows Summit



Dr. Camara Jones, senior fellow and adjunct associate professor at Morehouse School of Medicine, was the ECLA Fellows Summit keynote speaker. Her presentation for current and past fellows of the BBLF and MFEF programs provided an insightful look at analyzing and addressing structural and systemic racism within the intersections of public health and early childhood.

More than 40 fellows attended the inaugural summit, which took place over the summer and provided a legislative briefing on Illinois early childhood policy as well as sessions on early childhood expulsion and suspension, the Black maternal mortality and morbidity rate, the opioid epidemic and workforce development.

*"When I talk about racism. I'm talking about a system, not an individual character flaw or a personal moral failing. It is a system of power that structures opportunity and assigns value based on so-called "race," the social interpretation of how we look."*

— Dr. Camara Jones

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## Making Moves

Congratulations to ECLA alumni who have taken their early childhood knowledge into new job positions this year.

### **Bessie Alcantara**

Executive Director, Alternatives, Inc.

### **Jennifer Alexander**

Program Director, Metropolitan Family Services

### **Christine Brambila**

Family Case Manager, Safe Babies Court Project

### **Missy Carpenter**

Director of Volunteer Engagement, Chicago Cares

**Rosalinda Espinosa-Nava**

Child Development Center Site Director, Gads Hill Center

**Lucy Gomez Feliciano**

Program Manager, Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children

**Carisa Hurley**

Director of Early Childhood, Illinois State Board of Education

**Safiyah Jackson**

Early Childhood Systems Director, North Carolina Partnership for Children

**Dawnielle Jeffrey**

Vice President of Early Childhood Services, Children’s Home & Aid

**Natalie Vesga**

Director of Programs and Workforce, PODER

For more information on ECLA programs, email [ecla@erikson.edu](mailto:ecla@erikson.edu)

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