



Speaker Biographies

Ellen Frede is a developmental psychologist specializing in early childhood education (ECE), and currently serves as senior co-director at the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). In this role, she applies what she has learned throughout her long and varied career in ECE, starting as a teacher in inclusive classrooms in all levels of ECE, a curriculum and professional development specialist at the HighScope Foundation, a teacher educator at a state college, researcher, pre-k administrator for the New Jersey Department of Education, education lead in a large Head Start grantee and early learning lead at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

As Assistant to the Commissioner for ECE at the N.J. Department of Education, she oversaw the implementation of high-quality preschool in more than 150 school districts partnering with over 450 private providers, serving 50,000 children with a budget of over half a billion dollars annually. She applied her extensive and deep experience as a teacher, teacher educator and researcher to develop a comprehensive continuous improvement system for accountability and program improvement. Under her leadership, a broad coalition of educators, advocates and researchers developed program standards which were the basis of data-based decision making at the child, classroom, program and state level. This effort led to a preschool program that has shown benefits for participants into the fifth grade and is regularly referred to as a model for the nation.

Kathleen (Kate) Gallagher joined the Buffett Institute in 2018. Her work focuses on developing applied research and evaluation studies involving children from birth to Grade 3, their families, and the early childhood professionals who care for and teach young children. Gallagher began her affiliation with the Buffett Institute in 2016 as the Cille and Ron Williams Community Chair for Early Childhood Education at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. The Williams Chair was the first of four endowed community chairs that the Buffett Institute is working to establish across the University of Nebraska system. Gallagher has more than 30 years' experience as an early childhood professional and educational psychologist, including teaching, home visiting, and leading early childhood programs in early intervention and inclusive preschools.

Before coming to Nebraska in 2016, Gallagher spent 13 years at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she taught in the School of Education and served as a research scientist at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. Gallagher holds a doctorate in educational psychology and human development from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She earned a master's degree in educational foundations from Marquette University and a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and special education from Cardinal Stritch University.

Rob Grunewald is an economist with the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. Grunewald conducts research on community development and regional economic issues. He co-authored "Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return" in 2003 and has written several subsequent articles on the economic and social impact of early learning. He frequently speaks to community and business leaders, policymakers, and media throughout the United States.

Grunewald has served on boards and advisory committees for organizations involved with early childhood development, including Think Small: Leaders in Early Learning, First Children's Finance, and the Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency. He is also a past president of the Minnesota Economic Association. He holds a

bachelor's degree in economics and religion from St. Olaf College and a master's degree in applied economics from the University of Minnesota.

Sarah Lytle is the director of outreach and education at the Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences (I-LABS) at the University of Washington. Lytle's team communicates the latest science of child development to those who can act on it. In recent years, the team has reached hundreds of thousands of parents, educators, policymakers, and opinion leaders, both locally and nationally. Under Lytle's leadership, the Outreach and Education team launched an online library of free training modules designed to make science accessible to a broad audience.

Lytle has a B.A. in Psychology and Spanish from the University of Notre Dame and a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from Temple University, where she studied the role of social cues in infants' and toddlers' language learning from screen media. Sarah is a member of the ZERO TO THREE Academy of Fellows.

Jessie Rasmussen is president at the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, where she manages early childhood investments. Her career has focused on improving outcomes for children and families, first as an early childhood practitioner and administrator and later as a Nebraska state senator and state human services director in both Nebraska and Iowa. At the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, she played an instrumental role in the development and passage of legislation that established a \$60 million early childhood endowment funded through a public and private partnership.

Karen Schulman is the child care and early learning research director at the National Women's Law Center (NWLC), which she joined in January 2004. At NWLC, she conducts research, provides budgetary and policy analysis, and writes on child care and early education issues. She is the author of an annual report on state child care assistance policies, including the latest update, *Overdue for Investment: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2018*. She has also co-authored several other NWLC reports, including *Set Up To Fail: When Low-Wage Work Jeopardizes Parents' and Children's Success*; *A Center Piece of the Child Care Puzzle: Providing State Prekindergarten in Child Care Centers*; and *A Count for Quality: Child Care Center Directors on Rating and Improvement Systems*. She also co-authored a joint NWLC and CLASP report, *Implementing the Child Care and Development Block Grant Reauthorization: A Guide for States*. Prior to joining NWLC, she worked at the Children's Defense Fund for six years, where she researched and wrote several studies on early care and education, including *Seeds of Success*, a major prekindergarten study, and *A Fragile Foundation*, a comprehensive study of state child care subsidy systems. She has a master's degree in public policy from Duke University and a bachelor's degree from Williams College.