Early Learning Fellows: Policy, Research and Innovation

Denver Airport Marriott at Gateway Park • 16455 E. 40th Circle, Aurora, CO 80011

Speaker Biographies

**Senator Thomas Alexander** (R) represents district 1, Oconee and Pickens counties, in South Carolina and is chairman of the Senate Labor, Commerce and Industry committee. Alexander also sits on the Banking and Insurance, Finance, Invitations and Medical Affairs committees. Before joining the legislature in 1994 Alexander served in the House of Representatives in South Carolina and was Mayor Pro Tempore of Walhalla City Council. Alexander received his bachelor’s degree from Clemson University.

**Charlotte M. Brantley** is president and CEO of Clayton Early Learning. Brantley’s career spans decades of leadership in early childhood education, with emphasis on teacher training, high-quality early learning environments, children's media, child and family policy, and state and federal program administration. Before joining Clayton Early Learning she served as senior director of the Public Broadcasting Service innovative Ready To Learn television program (2001-2006) and led the Child Care Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the Clinton administration (1999-2001). During the 1990's, Brantley was director of child care and development for the state of Texas helping guide its child care system through dramatic improvements in response to a 10-fold increase in the annual budget to $350 million. Throughout the 1980's, Brantley was a member of the child development teaching faculty at San Antonio College, Austin Community College and the University of Texas at Austin. She holds a bachelor's in anthropology and master's in child development from the University of Texas at Austin.

**Sarah Daily** is a senior research scientist with Child Trends focusing on early childhood research and the role state public policies and programs play in serving the needs of young children. Daily’s portfolio of projects focus on quality improvement initiatives and state school readiness practices. She is a part of the early childhood policy team that works to translate research-based best practices to policy audiences. Before joining Child Trends, Daily was program director of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices Early Childhood Policy project and led a portfolio of activities designed to support gubernatorial policy agendas for at-risk children ages birth to five. Daily obtained her doctorate in educational psychology from George Mason University.

**Courtney Harrison** is a consultant at and founder of CLH Strategies & Solutions, which she created to integrate research evidence into human services policy and practice. Harrison has authored a variety of materials and developed dissemination plans to share research, policy, and implementation strategies related to services for children and families. She currently serves as the dissemination strategist for the federal Permanency Innovations Initiative, as a dissemination consultant on Cross-Site Evaluation of Implementation and National Resource Centers, and she recently developed a dissemination toolkit for the federal Design Options for Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Evaluation. Prior to starting CLH
Strategies & Solutions, Harrison was the director of policy and program development for Public Strategies, a policy specialist for the National Conference of State Legislatures, and a senior consultant with Deloitte & Touche. She received a bachelor’s of science in public affairs and a master’s in public affairs, policy analysis and comparative & international affairs from Indiana University.

Lisa A. Hill has served as executive director of Invest in Kids (IIK) since 2009 after having capably served as the organization’s deputy director since 2000. IIK currently implements two research-based programs statewide: Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) and The Incredible Years (IY). Hill leads IIK by strategically supporting and directing the organization to advance the quality services they provide and expand the number of vulnerable families and children served by their selected programs. Hill holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Colorado at Boulder and has been publicly recognized locally by both receiving awards and participating in leadership programs.

Christine Johnson-Staub is currently the interim director of care and early education at the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP). Over her 20 years in the field, Johnson-Staub has developed expertise in many areas of child care and early education policy, including child care subsidy programs and policy, early childhood financing, system building and technical assistance. Before joining CLASP, she consulted with public and private agencies across the country on policy and system development related to child care and early education. She also spent time providing management and policy support to a large child care agency, and directing a regional family support coalition. Johnson-Staub has worked with state and federal legislative offices as well as a variety of public, private, and non-profit agencies. She earned a master's degree in public policy from The George Washington University, and a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Deborah Leong is director of Tools of the Mind, and Professor Emerita of Psychology from Metropolitan University of Denver. Leong’s interests include the application of the Vygotskian approach to early childhood education and authentic assessment. She has coauthored (with Elena Bodrova) Tools of the Mind: The Vygotskian Approach to Early Childhood Education and a series of educational videos on Vygotsky. She is co-director of the Tools of the Mind Project, which was chosen as an exemplary educational innovation by the International Bureau of Education, UNESCO, and United Nations. Leong’s writing includes Assessing and Guiding Young Children’s Growth and Development as well as several articles on dynamic assessment. She has also written about early childhood standards. Leong has a Ph.D. from Stanford University.

Karen Schulman is a senior policy analyst in the National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) family economic security division. Schulman researches and writes about child care and early education policies. Before joining NWLC, she worked at the Children's Defense Fund. Schulman received her bachelor's degree from Williams College and her master's degree in public policy from Duke University.

Sarah E. Watamura is the director of the Child Health & Development (CHaD) lab and an associate professor at the University of Denver. Watamura has long-standing interests in children's physiologic regulation, their development within care giving contexts, and relations between physiologic regulation and developing physical and psychological stress. She has recently expanded her work to include the unique stressors and buffers that may be important for physiologic stress among families experiencing poverty and among newcomer Mexican-origin families. She received her doctorate from the Department of Human Development at Cornell University.

Joe Waters is vice president of policy and communications at the Institute for Child Success (ICS). Waters was named vice president of ICS in May 2011. He has been actively engaged in South Carolina through various United Way initiatives in Greenville and through his service on the Board of Directors of the Felician Center, an outreach center and after-school program serving Williamsburg and lower Florence Counties. Waters oversees the Institute’s policy programs and communications.
Emily Workman is the manager of the Information Clearinghouse and a policy analyst at the Education Commission of the States (ECS) where she focuses primarily on issues related to early childhood education. Workman is the ECS staff liaison for the NCSL/ECS Legislative Education Staff Network (LESN), which serves to strengthen the capabilities of legislative education staff to support legislative institutions and individual legislators in developing state laws and policy that support student success. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and business from Duke University and a master's degree in international and comparative social policy from the University of York in England.