



***Building on State Leadership in Early Childhood  
Final Meeting***  
**December 6-7, 2013**  
**Washington Marriott Wardman Park • Washington, D.C.**

**Speaker Biographies**

**Representative Robert Behning** has served in the Indiana State Legislature since 1992 and represents House District 91. As Chairman of the House Education Committee, he led efforts to pass the most comprehensive education reform package in the United States. He was born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana and has been a proud Hoosier his entire life. In 1976, he received a Bachelor of Science degree from Indiana University. He was a small business owner for 30 years and is an active member of his church and community.

Representative Behning, through his civic service, has received many prestigious awards. In 1999, he received the Indiana Chamber of Commerce Government Leader of the year award. In 2011, he received a Golden Apple Award for his outstanding work in educational reform legislation in addition to the 2011 Indiana Non-Public Education Association Legislative Leadership Award. Through years of experience, knowledge and passion, Behning fundamentally strengthened Indiana's K-12 education system and put tools in place that will equip Indiana students with a high quality education to prepare them for success.

**Leanne Barrett** is senior policy analyst for Rhode Island KIDS COUNT and is responsible for early learning and early childhood development policy for Rhode Island. She is the coordinator of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council and co-wrote the state's winning Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant application. She is a state leader in the early learning field, having spearheaded the development of BrightStars, the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System, staffed the state's Pre-K Exploration and Design Committees, and played a central role in bringing the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood workforce development program to Rhode Island. She is the Project Director for the Rhode Island's Evidence-Based Home Visiting grant and serves on the state's Child Care Commission and Successful Start Steering Committee. Prior to joining Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, Leanne was Vice President and Director of Community Initiatives at United Way of Rhode Island and a national program manager for the American Business Collaboration for Quality Dependent Care at Work/Family Directions, Inc. She has a bachelor's degree in developmental psychology from Brown University and a master's degree in child and family policy from Tufts University.

**Senator Suzanne Crouch** serves as Vice Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee and is a member of the public health committee. She was elected to the Indiana State Senate in 2005. She has a B.S. from Purdue University and a Continuing Education in Accounting from University of Southern Indiana.

**Janis Dubno** is an Early Childhood and Education Senior Policy Analyst and joined the Voices for Utah Children in 2008. She received a Master in Business Administration in Finance from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and a Bachelor's in Economics and Political Science from Yale College. Janis is a Board Member of the Utah Association for the Education of Young Children. She is also an adjunct professor in the finance department of the Gore School of Business at Westminster College.

**Senator Hanna Gallo** serves as Chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Education, member of the Senate Committee on Corporations and Co-Chair of the Establish a Permanent Education Foundation Aid Formula Rhode Island. Senator Gallo is a lifelong Rhode Islander and has been a member of the State Senate since 1998.

**Barbara Gebhard** is the Assistant Director of Public Policy at ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families. As part of the organization's Policy Center since 2006, she leads ZERO TO THREE's efforts to advance state policy priorities and support states in the development of policies and systems to meet the needs of infants and toddlers. She oversees the development of effective materials, tools, and technical assistance for state policymakers. Ms. Gebhard has authored or co-authored numerous publications. For over a decade, she was employed by the West Virginia Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families, part of the Governor's Office in West Virginia. During Ms. Gebhard's tenure, the Cabinet provided leadership in developing and implementing numerous early childhood initiatives. Among Barbara's previous positions are State Early Intervention Director and State Day Care Specialist in the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources and Writer/Editor for Appalachia Educational Laboratory. She holds a Master's degree in Child Development and Family Relationships from Marshall University and a B.A. in Elementary Education from Georgetown College.

**Kathryn Hirsh-Pasek** is the Stanley and Debra Lefkowitz Professor in the Department of Psychology at Temple University where she serves as Director of the Infant Language Laboratory. She is the recipient of the American Psychological Association's Bronfenbrenner Award for Lifetime Contribution to Developmental Psychology in the Service of Science and Society as well as the American Psychological Association Award for Distinguished Service to Psychological Science, and the Great Teacher and Eberman Research Awards. Kathy received her bachelor's degree from the University of Pittsburgh and her Ph.D. at University of Pennsylvania. Her research in the areas of early language development and infant cognition has been funded by the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health and Human Development resulting in 11 books and over 150 publications. She is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and the American Psychological Society, served as the Associate Editor of *Child Development* and as treasurer of the International Association for Infant Studies.

**Mark Innocenti** is Director of the Research and Evaluation Division at the Center for Persons with Disabilities, a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. He holds an appointment as an Associate Professor in Psychology at Utah State University. Dr. Innocenti has over 30 years of experience working with infants and young children at-risk and with disabilities and their families through multiple research and model demonstration projects. He is currently the Co-Principal Investigator for the Cache County site of the National Children's Study; a national, multi-year research project studying children's health and development that will form the basis of child health guidance, interventions, and policy for generations to come. Dr. Innocenti also has extensive experience in model demonstration and training projects that have examined areas such as social interaction, child transition, naturalistic intervention, parent-child interaction, and service systems. Current projects focus on development of assessment measures and curriculum, home visiting, preschool as a means to prevent later special education needs, and evaluation. Dr. Innocenti serves on a number of editorial boards for professional journals. He is currently on the Board of Directors for the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). He is the Past-President for the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of CEC. He was a midcareer fellow with Zero to Three from 1999-2000.

**Carlise King** is Executive Director of the Early Childhood Data Collaborative, which supports state policymakers' development and use of coordinated state early care and education data systems to improve the quality of programs and the workforce serving young children. She had been serving as interim director since April 2013 and joined Child Trends in 2012 as Data and Technical Assistant Director. Prior to working at Child Trends, King served as the research director for the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network. She has over 13 years of experience conducting research on early childhood issues and examining the impact of state and federal policies on parents' access to child care services, costs, and a quality workforce. She has a B.A. in psychology from the University of California at Berkeley and a M.A. in social psychology from San Francisco State University.

**Geoff Nagle**, Ph.D., M.P.H., L.C.S.W., is currently Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health at Tulane University; Director at Tulane University Institute of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health; State Director of BrightStart – Louisiana's Early Childhood Advisory Council; and a Policy Fellow at the Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs – Manship School of Mass Communication at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Nagel works closely with state government leaders to enhance Louisiana's early childhood system and to increase the opportunities to provide high quality early care and education. Nagle received a B.A. from Duke University, M.S.W. from Tulane University School of Social Work, M.P.H. from Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and his Ph.D. from Tulane University in the field of Mental Health Policy Research.

**Philip A. Peterson** is a partner for Aon Hewitt, specializing in global retirement strategies, stock option valuation and human capital metrics development. Phil joined Aon in 1987 and has more than 30 years of employee benefit consulting experience. He formerly managed Aon's Retirement Practice in Philadelphia, managed the Philadelphia office and chaired the National Defined Benefit Practice Council. He now leads Aon's national State and Local Government consulting practice. Mr. Peterson helped co-create with Child Care Matters, the Aon/United Way of Southeastern PA *Hand-in-Hand Award* for quality child care in the business community. He has also testified before the House Education Committee of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives on the importance of child care to the business community. Phil has served on the board of the Economy League of Greater Philadelphia, and on the state board of the Pennsylvania Economy League. Phil is the co-chair of the Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission, and the co-chair of the Advisory Board of ReadyNation. Phil earned a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics at Dickinson College. He is a fellow of the Society of Actuaries and an Enrolled Actuary.

**Robert C. Pianta**, Ph.D., is Dean of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia and also holds positions as the Novartis Professor of Education, Founding Director of the Curry School's Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL), Professor of Psychology at the UVa College of Arts & Sciences, and Director of the National Center for Research in Early Childhood Education. A former special education teacher, Pianta's research and policy interests focus on teacher-student interactions and relationships and on the improvement of teachers' contributions to students' learning and development. Pianta received his B.S. and M.A from the University of Connecticut, and Ph.D from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. He is the author of more than 250 articles, 50 book chapters, and 10 books, and has been a principal investigator on research and training grants totaling over \$55 million. He served as the editor of the Journal of School Psychology from 1999 to 2007.

**Helene Stebbins** is Senior Policy Director for the Alliance for Early Success. She provides strategic oversight for the knowledge development grants, with a focus on making the research more accessible to policymakers. In 2003 she launched her own consulting firm, specializing in the coordination of the health, education, and care of children from birth through age five. Her clients include dozens of state and national organizations working to improve state policies for vulnerable young children. From 1996-2002 Helene worked in the Center for Best Practices at the National Governors Association. As the program director for children and youth policy, she served as a resource to governors and their senior advisors on child and family policy issues. By tracking state initiatives and best practices, Helene worked to promote the exchange of good ideas among policymakers to improve state policies. In 1994, Helene was a Presidential Management Intern for the Food Stamp Program in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. She earned a Masters of Public Policy from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and graduated cum laude from Carleton College in Minnesota.

**Amanda Szekely** is Senior Policy Analyst at the National Governors Association and supports state policymakers in developing coordinated systems of high quality early childhood care and education and linking and aligning these systems to K-3 education. Her work focuses on state early childhood governance and financing strategies, as well as early learning standards, assessments and data systems. Her previous position was as a senior program associate with The Finance Project. Ms. Szekely has a Bachelor of Arts in Politics from Brandeis University and a Master of Public Policy from Georgetown University.

**Senator Jill Tokuda** currently serves as Majority Whip and chairs the Education committee. She also sits as a member on the Higher Education, Technology and the Arts, and Ways and Means committees. Senator Tokuda represents Hawaii's 24th Senatorial District and has served in the Hawaii State Senate since 2007. Senator Tokuda and her husband, Kyle Michibata, have two sons, Matt and Aden. Senator Tokuda is a Magna Cum Laude graduate from James B. Castle High School and received a B.A. in International Relations with a Minor in Japanese Studies from George Washington University.

**Sara Watson** is Project Director for ReadyNation, and an Executive Vice President for America's Promise Alliance. Most recently Sara was a senior officer at the Pew Charitable Trusts, where she founded the Partnership for America's Economic Success and advised three other children's advocacy campaigns. From 2001-2008 she directed Pew's national campaign for quality pre-kindergarten for all. She has worked at The Finance Project in Washington, D.C., the Family Policy Council in Olympia, Washington, and the Center for the Study of Social Policy in Washington, D.C. Sara has a bachelor's degree from Carleton College and master of public policy and Ph.D. degrees from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

**Senator Brice Wiggins** represents District 52 covering south Jackson County, Mississippi, including the cities of Pascagoula, Gautier and Ocean Springs. Appointed by Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves, Brice serves as Chairman of the Senate Ports and Marine Resources Committee, a rare occurrence for a freshman legislator. He also serves on the Appropriations, Judiciary B (Secretary), Education (Secretary), Corrections, Public Health and Welfare, Environment and Water Resources and Legislative Redistricting Committees. In his two years in the Senate, Brice has introduced and passed legislation strengthening Mississippi's child abuse laws, increased GPS monitoring of sex offenders, increasing funding for prosecution of child abuse cases, establishing Mississippi's first ever early education program, and securing \$10 million for the expansion of the Port of Pascagoula. Brice received the 2012 Rep. Bud Cramer Award from The National Children's Alliance in Washington, D.C., for his work in the Senate and the Jackson County District Attorney's Office protecting and fighting for abused children. In 2013, the Children's Justice Centers of Mississippi recognized Brice with one of its Champion of Children awards for his work in the Senate. Also in 2013, Brice received Legislator of the Year for the Senate from the Mississippi Law Enforcement Association. In 2012, appointed by Governor Phil Bryant, Brice chaired the Eco-Restore Committee of the GoCoast 2020 Commission which developed the plan for the future of the Gulf Coast through the RESTORE Act using funds from the BP Oil Spill. Brice received his B.A. degree from Tulane University in 1993 and his law degree from Mississippi College School of Law in 1998.