



Early School Success Bolstering the Vital Early Learning Workforce

A CGLR Funder-to-Funder Conversation

November 21, 2023 | 12:30–2 pm ET/9:30–11 am PT

Panelist Bios

MODERATOR



Jacqueline Jones, Ph.D.
**Former CEO & President
Foundation for Child Development**

From September 2014 to August 2022, Jacqueline Jones served as President and CEO of Foundation for Child Development where she was responsible for developing and implementing the Foundation’s strategic vision and goals.

Prior to her tenure at the Foundation for Child Development, Dr. Jones served as a Senior Advisor on Early Learning to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and as the country’s first Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Early Learning in the U.S. Department of Education. Prior to her position in the Obama Administration, Dr. Jones served as the Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Early Childhood Education in the New Jersey State Department of Education and as a Senior Research Scientist at the Educational Testing Service in Princeton for over 15 years. Dr. Jones has been a visiting faculty member at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a full-time faculty member at the City University of New York. She received both her master’s and Ph.D. degrees from Northwestern University.

PRESENTERS



Leslie Dozono
**Portfolio Manager, Washington Team
Ballmer Group**

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Leslie Dozono is a Portfolio Manager for Ballmer Group’s Washington team, developing and managing local and regional investments focused on early childhood. Leslie has dedicated her career to improving outcomes for young children and eliminating racial disparities in early childhood systems. Leslie served as a co-founder and Interim Executive Director of [Pathwaves WA](#), which coincided with over 8 years as a policy and advocacy consultant for a range of clients. Previously, she was the Early Childhood Policy Director at Children’s Alliance, where she was instrumental in the creation and growth of Washington’s statewide early learning advocacy coalition.



Cathrine Aasen Floyd, Ph.D.

Director of Ideal Learning Initiatives

Trust for Learning

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As an educator with over 30 years of experience in the field of early care and education, Cathrine (pronounced “Katrina”- it’s Norwegian) brings her experience in quality improvement, programming, policy studies and education finance to Trust for Learning and our partners. Cathrine holds a Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Education and Special Education from the University of Colorado at Denver and a doctorate from the University of Denver in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. Her passion for social justice and equity building guides her work to create systems change and positive outcomes for children and families, particularly those from historically underserved populations.

Cathrine is a coalition builder with experience in state and federal systems, public and charter school districts, non- and for-profit community organizations and family child care. Her joy in learning and hearing different perspectives enables her to authentically partner and support all voices in collaboration. When not engaging in her work in early childhood, Cathrine enjoys spending time with her family and travelling.



Rebecca E. Gomez, Ed.D.

Program Officer, Education

Heising-Simons Foundation

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Rebecca Gomez is a program officer for the Education program at the Heising-Simons Foundation. Prior to joining the Foundation in 2016, Rebecca was an assistant research professor at Rutgers University’s National Institute for Early Education Research, where she led the State of Preschool Yearbook data collection and analysis team, and provided technical assistance to states via the Center for Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes. Rebecca also served as a graduate and postdoctoral research fellow at the National Center for Children and Families at Teachers College, Columbia University, where she conducted domestic and international research on early childhood systems, with a particular focus on governance and professional development. Rebecca is a former board member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. She earned an Ed.D. in curriculum and teaching with a concentration in early childhood policy from Columbia University, a master’s in early childhood policy from the University of New Hampshire, and a bachelor’s degree in American studies at Rutgers University. She began her career in early education as a pre-school teacher.



Marica Cox Mitchell

Vice President, Early Childhood

Bainum Family Foundation

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Marica Cox Mitchell is Vice President, Early Childhood for the Bainum Family Foundation. She leads the foundation's efforts to support the healthy growth and development of young children and the well-being of their families through work in two primary areas: practice/direct service and policy/advocacy. The foundation's work prioritizes five aspects of Early Childhood: early learning, mental health and well-being, health (including prenatal and perinatal), family economic security and housing stability.

Before joining the foundation in 2019, Cox Mitchell worked for the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), where she most recently served as Deputy Executive Director, Early Learning Systems. In this role, she led a portfolio encompassing public policy and advocacy, accreditations of early learning programs, higher education accreditation and the Power to the Profession initiative. Previously, she was Senior Director, NAEYC Accreditation for Higher Education Programs. She also worked for the District's Office of the State Superintendent of Education from 2009 to 2012 — serving as Director, School Preparedness Division and Supervisor, Professional Development Unit. She began her career as an early childhood educator — working in various early learning settings as well as with young children birth through age 8.