

# GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinar

## Beyond Kindergarten: Transition, Continuity and Alignment

July 9, 2024

Moderator and Presenter Bios

### MODERATOR

**Christina Lopez**

**Director**

**Maryland Early Childhood Leadership Program**



Christina Lopez has over 25 years of diverse experience in the field of early childhood education and nonprofit leadership. With a rich background that spans various roles, Christina has made a significant impact in the education sector. She has served as a dedicated classroom teacher, instructional coach, and trainer, bringing her expertise to enhance the learning experience for students and support the professional growth of educators. Additionally, Christina has served as an administrator in public schools, where she demonstrated strong leadership skills and successfully managed educational and community programs as a Judy Center Coordinator. In addition to her extensive experience in the public school system, Christina has also been involved in public policy and advocacy efforts. Her deep understanding of the education landscape, coupled with her passion for improving educational opportunities, has enabled her to contribute to shaping policies that positively impact children's access to quality education. Currently serving as the President of the Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children (MDAEYC), Christina has showcased exceptional leadership and organizational skills. She has successfully guided the organization towards its mission of promoting high-quality early childhood education in Maryland.

### PRESENTERS

**Cynthia D. Jackson**

**Executive Director, Educare Learning Network**

**Senior Vice President, Start Early**



Cynthia D. Jackson is dedicated to producing high quality early learning that achieves positive outcomes for all children and parents. As Executive Director of the Educare Learning Network, she leads a generative, coast-to-coast network of 25 high quality birth-to-five schools that function as innovative learning hubs for the field of early childhood education. In collaboration with the Educare Learning Network school leaders, early childhood stakeholders and philanthropists, Cynthia advances practice, research and policy solutions to create greater system-wide impact. Prior to joining the Educare Learning Network and Start Early, Cynthia was national director of training and technical assistance for Healthy

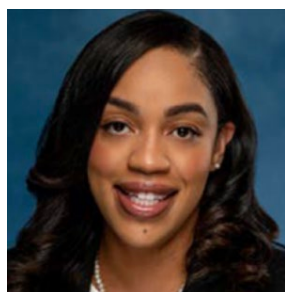
Families America at Prevent Child Abuse America and Director, Midwest Learning Center for Family Support at Family Focus. She received her Master of Science in health education and counseling from the University of North Texas and Bachelor of Science in community and school health education from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana.

**David Jacobson**  
**Director, First 10**  
**Education Development Center**



David Jacobson is the director of EDC's [First 10](#) initiative, which supports a national network of school-early childhood-community partnerships. These partnerships work to improve outcomes for children ages birth through 10 and their families. Jacobson brings deep experience in early childhood education, school improvement, applied research, strategic planning, and a commitment to addressing inequality to his work leading First 10. Jacobson is the author of [All Children Learn and Thrive: Building First 10 Schools and Communities](#), a 2019 report funded by the Heising-Simons Foundation, which presents findings on coordinated efforts to improve teaching, learning, and care during the first decade of children's lives. He is also a nationally recognized expert in education reform and serves as a consultant and adviser on the First 10 model. A widely published author, Jacobson has advanced the knowledge of [community-school partnerships](#), [bipartisan education priorities](#), [building state P-3 systems](#), and [professional learning communities](#). Jacobson holds a BA in History and an MA in Philosophy from Brown University and a PhD in Sociology from the University of Chicago.

**Ryan Lee-James, Ph.D., CCC-SLP**  
**Chief Academic Officer**  
**Director of Rollins Center for Language & Literacy**  
**Atlanta Speech School**



Ryan Lee-James is an ASHA certified speech-language pathologist and published author with expertise in language development, language disorders, and literacy in the context of linguistic differences and socioeconomic disadvantage. In her current role as Chief Academic Officer and Director of the Rollins Center for Language and Literacy at the Atlanta Speech School, she develops and curates academic programming for our schools and clinics that serve children who have hearing

loss, speech-language delays, and dyslexia. She leads the development and advancement for free, equity-based, online professional learning community, Cox Campus. Dr. Lee-James is also responsible for overseeing and designing the implementation and evaluation of large-scale, community-based projects aimed at

improving language and literacy outcome for children from birth through 3rd grade. She continues to publish, present, mentor and consult on research projects geared towards advancing equity and dismantling inequitable systems. Her professional pursuits reflect her belief that all children will be liberated through language and literacy. Before joining the team at the Atlanta Speech School, Dr. Lee-James had the privilege of training and mentoring graduate level speech-language pathologists as a member of the Communication Sciences and Disorders faculty at Adelphi University in New York.

**Bonnie Short**  
**Director**  
**Alabama Reading Initiative**  
**Alabama State Department of Education**



Bonnie Short began serving as the Director of the Alabama Reading Initiative in July of 2021. Her previous work as primary grade teacher, reading coach, school principal, and a regional literacy leadership specialist greatly guides her state work. Bonnie received her post graduate degrees from Auburn University, University of Alabama of Birmingham, and Troy University in addition to becoming a Nationally Certified teacher. As she navigates each role, she clings to two ultimate goals: (1) hang out with people who make you better and (2) leave things better than the way you found them.

## **COMMENTATOR**

**Paula Grubbs, Ph.D.**  
**Technical Assistance Specialist**  
**Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute**  
**UNC Chapel Hill**



Paula Grubbs, Ph.D., is a Technical Assistance Specialist at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG) at the University of North Carolina. Her current projects include the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA), Kindergarten Sturdy Bridge, and the North Carolina Data Governance Project. Paula has more than thirty years of experience serving young children with and without disabilities and their families, administering publicly funded Pre-K programs, and preparing personnel to serve children with disabilities and their families. Her current work is aimed to support states' and communities' efforts to strengthen existing infrastructure and implement evidence-based, effective kindergarten instructional and assessment practices; state early Intervention/Part C and preschool special education/ Section 619 B program coordinators as they work to build high-quality systems and implement the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) early childhood requirements; and state agencies as they create and strengthen existing data governance systems and processes.