



## SAFER SCHOOLS AND CAMPUSES **BEST PRACTICES CLEARINGHOUSE**

# Lessons from the Field - Safe and Supportive Early Learning: Lessons Learned for the New School Year

---

*Thursday, September 9, 2021 | 3:00 - 4:15 PM ET*

## *SPEAKER BIOS*

---

### **Miriam Calderon**

Deputy Assistant Secretary, Early Learning, U.S. Department of Education

Ms. Miriam Calderon was appointed by Gov. Kate Brown in 2017 to serve as the early learning system director for the state of Oregon. She previously served in the Obama-Biden Administration advising on early learning policy at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Domestic Policy Council. Ms. Calderon has a diverse set of experience in the early childhood field in program, policy, and advocacy. She worked as the senior director for early childhood at the Bainum Family Foundation, as director of early childhood education at the District of Columbia Public Schools, and as associate director for education policy at the National Council of La Raza (now UnidosUS). She began her career in early childhood working in Head Start. She is a native of Washington D.C., and holds degrees from the University of Delaware and Portland State University.

### **Lara Robinson**

Behavioral Scientist, Child Development Studies Team, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities

Dr. Lara Robinson, PhD, MPH, is a behavioral scientist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Child Development Studies Team within the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities. She leads the Legacy for Children™ Early Head Start Feasibility Project. From 2006 to 2008, she completed postdoctoral integrative research training in child mental health at the Pennsylvania State University. Clinically, she has worked in early intervention and as a mental health consultant for child care centers.

## Ron Herndon

Director, Albina Head Start, Portland, OR

Mr. Ron Herndon is a long-time activist for minority rights and educational opportunities in Portland. Mr. Herndon helped lobby Reed College administrators to establish a Black Studies program in 1968. He founded a bookstore and the now-defunct Black Education Center, an independent school, in 1970. He later organized the Portland chapter of the Black United Front (BUF) to advocate the improvement of substandard Northeast Portland schools. Working with the BUF, Mr. Herndon led a protest in 1982 at a Portland School Board meeting demanding that predominantly African American Tubman Middle School remain open. Mr. Herndon felt the closure would adversely affect education by forcing students to commute long distances to other schools. He organized a one-day walkout by over 4,000 African American children and was successful in preventing the closure. In 1983 he worked with Nike to bring the brand's first outlet store to an economically depressed neighborhood in North Portland. In 1984, Mr. Herndon was arrested for trespassing on the consulate of South Africa as he led a protest against that country's policy of apartheid. After nearly three decades of activism and experience in the field of education, Mr. Herndon became the director of Albina Head Start School in Northeast Portland. He later became chairman of the board of the National Head Start Association, an early education advocacy group.

## Jenny Le

Director, Early Childhood Education Programs, Azusa Unified School District, Azusa, CA

Ms. Jenny T. Le is the Director of Early Childhood Education Programs for Azusa Unified School District in Azusa, California. In this role, Ms. Le manages programs for ages 3-5, which includes California State Preschool Program, Special Education Preschool, Dual Immersion Preschool, and Early Transitional Kindergarten. She began her career in education as a K-6 multiple subject teacher. After 13 years of teaching, she moved into a resource teacher position in which she supported student achievement by providing intervention and professional development. Before entering early learning care, Ms. Le was an elementary school principal. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature and Language, a K-12 Multiple Subject Teaching Credential, a Master of Arts degree in Educational Leadership, and an Administrative Services Credential from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. Her background in elementary education has been beneficial in her work with agencies and other district administrators to align instructional practices and professional development from preschool through third grade.

## Christina Weiland

Associate Professor, School of Education, University of Michigan; Co-Director, Education Policy Initiative

Dr. Christina Weiland, Ed.D., is an associate professor at the School of Education at the University of Michigan and the Ford School of Public Policy (by courtesy), where she co-directs the Education Policy Initiative and directs the University of Michigan's [Predoctoral Training](#) Program. Her research focuses on the effects of early childhood interventions and public policies on children's development, especially on children from families with low incomes. Her work is characterized by strong, long-standing research collaborations with practitioners, particularly the Boston Public Schools Department of Early Childhood.

## Sarah Walzer

Chief Executive Officer, ParentChild+

Ms. Sarah Walzer grew up in Massachusetts and is a product of Cambridge and Brookline public schools. Before becoming CEO of ParentChild+, Ms. Walzer was Counsel to the Assistant Secretary for Legislation at HHS, working on early childhood and family support issues. Prior to that, she was legislative assistant/counsel to Senator Joseph Lieberman, working on early childhood, education, housing, and anti-poverty initiatives. She was also responsible for children and family issues for the Clinton-Gore Domestic Policy Transition Team. She has presented on ParentChild+, school readiness, and home visiting to many audiences, including the Campaign for Grade Level Reading, the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, the Philanthropy Roundtable, and the National Home Visiting Summit. She serves on the Board of Directors of The Petey Greene Program.