

Advocacy Efforts: What Tools Are Needed to Drive Equitable Policy and Systems Change?

Presenter Bios and Contact Information



Alia Stevenson | astevenson@kidsforward
Deputy Director, Kids Forward

Alia Stevenson serves as Deputy Director at Kids Forward, leading our policy and research team. Alia has dedicated her career to deep listening, bridging, coalition building, and collective action to build equitable communities. She has over 15 years of experience advancing health, social, and racial justice in non-profit, government, and higher education. She brings a systems approach that centers the needs of, and builds power of those most impacted by inequities; and has shaped notable health and racial equity efforts in her previous roles at Public Health Madison-Dane County and the Foundation for Black Women's Wellness. Alia is also a racial justice consultant with the nINA Collective and Instructor in the UW School of Medicine and Public Health. She leads with the values of joy, growth and love as an antidote to injustice.

- **Resources**

- ["Standing up for Racial Justice: A Starter Guide on Policy & Advocacy in Wisconsin"](#)



Daithi Wolfe | dwolfe@kidsforward.org
Senior Policy Analyst, Kids Forward

David "Daithi (DAH-hee)" works to improve nutrition and increase physical activity in child care settings (kind of like Farm to Table for preschoolers) and also to elevate the voices of impacted communities to better inform child care policies and spending. Daithi co-chairs Healthy Early, an award-winning state-wide coalition that promotes healthy eating, gardening, active play, and outdoor learning. One of our mottos is "Growing Happy, Healthy Kids!." He was also recently chair of the WI Agriculture Secretary's Farm to School Advisory Council. Before becoming an ECE advocate, Daithi was a public elementary school teacher for 16 years in Madison. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan in his native Ann Arbor, with a B.A. in American Culture. He enjoys fighting for social justice, playing music, and running as avocations.

- **Resources**

- ["Dads Across Wisconsin Care for Child Care"](#)

- [Explore Census Data](#)
- [KIDS COUNT Data Center](#)
- [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#)
- [“Restoring Driver Licenses to all Wisconsinites”](#)



Ruth Schmidt | ruschmidt@wisconsinearlychildhood.org

Executive Director, Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

Ruth Schmidt is a respected early care and education leader on the local, state, and national levels and a champion for advancing policy that recognizes child care as a public good worthy of long-term public financing. She joined Wisconsin Early Childhood Association in 2002, bringing with her extensive executive leadership experiences and connections across a variety of sectors. Ruth works to maintain and grow WECA's relationships with the early childhood community, economic and workforce development, local governments, philanthropy, community partners, and policymakers. This continues to advance the vision of a transformed system of care in Wisconsin that supports the early childhood workforce, young children, families, and livable communities.

• **Resources**

- [“A Wake-up Call to Employers and Parents: Child Care is About to be More Expensive and Impossible to Find”](#)
- [“Survey Says: Support for Child Care Investment Strong Including amongst Wisconsinites without Children”](#)
- [“Underfunding at the Most Critical Time: The Impact of Wisconsin’s Lack of Investment into Early Care and Education”](#)
- [“Wisconsin’s Child Care Landscape: Significant Loss of Programs over a Decade”](#)



Toshiba Adams, Ph.D. | sankofaconsultingmke@gmail.com

Professor of Child Development, Milwaukee Area Technical College

Dr. Toshiba Adams serves as a professor of Child Development at Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) and an adjunct professor of Education Policy at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. In these positions, she develops curriculum; offers instruction in multiple modalities; and creates engaging and inclusive learning spaces under the guidance of culturally responsive pedagogy. Dr. Adams is also the founder/director of a non-profit organization, Sankofa Consulting & Training, that aims to transform student and workforce experiences for the early education sector through research and professional development.

• **Resources**

- ["Study Overview and Findings: Advancing Equity in Wisconsin’s Early Education Workforce: A Narrative Inquiry That Centers the Lived Experiences of Black and Brown Professionals in the Field"](#)

- ["Executive Summary: Advancing Equity in Wisconsin's Early Education Workforce: A Narrative Inquiry That Centers the Lived Experiences of Black and Brown Professionals in the Field"](#)
- ["Research Study Snapshot: Honoring the Voices of Hmong Early Educators and Cultural Caregivers in Wisconsin"](#)
- ["Executive Summary: Honoring the Voices of Hmong Early Educators & Cultural Caregivers in Wisconsin"](#)
- [Sankofa Consulting and Training: Our Work](#)



Bianca Hill | bhill@tendercarechristian.org
 Executive Director, TenderCare Christian Child Care

Bianca Hill is the executive director at TenderCare Christian Child Care Centers, Inc. She has served children, families, and the community at TenderCare in different capacities since 2008. She recently served as an ECE workforce engagement specialist for Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA). She has been an active member of the Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association (WCCAA) since 2015 serving as regional director and board president. She served on the Registry Inc.

Board from 2023-2025 as board president. She is currently co-chair of the Milwaukee Child Care Alliance (MCCA). She is also a member of the Association of Early Learning Leaders (AELL) and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Bianca has received her Associate of Applied Science Degree in Early Childhood Education from Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Community Engagement and Education from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. She is currently enrolled at the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater in the Early Childhood Education Policy Master of Science Degree program. Bianca has been passionate and dedicated to working with children and families in the early care and education profession for more than twenty-five years.