

# JUSTICE. QUALITY. IMPACT.

**Erikson Institute 2023 Impact Report**

**Erikson  
Institute**

FY2023



## DEAR ERIKSON COMMUNITY,

As we come to the end of the academic year at Erikson Institute, it is time to reflect on and celebrate the achievements we have made in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 in pursuit of our North Star—justice for young children, their families and communities. From introducing a new degree program to launching groundbreaking research, Erikson has continued to push the boundaries of knowledge and practice in the fields of early childhood education, child development and social work.

Thanks to the tremendous support and dedication from the Erikson community of educators, clinicians, researchers, advocates, early childhood partners, our faculty, staff and trustees, students and supporters like you, Erikson made significant advancements toward achieving our strategic goals—across academics, community services, policy and leadership, research and fundraising. On the following pages, you can read about specific successes we achieved together; those which impact the lives of children and their families such as our work to influence legislation that impacts the well-being and education of young children, and the ways we strengthened the Institute's ability to sustain our work for the future through record fundraising and enrollment.



But perhaps the most important achievement of the academic year was the success of our students. Erikson graduates are making a positive difference in the lives of young children and families every day as they apply their knowledge and training in classrooms, policy organizations, clinics, community-based programs and wherever their passion for early childhood takes them. We are proud of their accomplishments and look forward to seeing what they will achieve in the years to come.

We celebrate the achievements of Erikson Institute and recognize that there is still much work to be done to ensure that all young children have access to resources and high-quality programs that prepare them for a bright future. We remain committed to our mission of improving outcomes for young children, families and communities and we look forward to continuing to work towards our North Star with you.

**As always, in pursuit of justice,**

*Mariana Souto-Manning*

Mariana Souto-Manning  
President, Erikson Institute

## STRATEGIC PLAN

- i** Grow and diversify the early childhood workforce with an emphasis on whole child success.
- ii** Position Erikson for sustainable, long-term growth.
- iii** Expand access to parent and family supports for mental health, with a focus on under-resourced communities in Chicago and across Illinois.
- iv** Build leadership capacity and mobilize communities to dismantle systemic barriers for children and families to access equitable opportunities.
- v** Create a new generation of knowledge through cutting-edge research.





## Grow and diversify the early childhood workforce with an emphasis on whole child success.



*From the Desk of*  
**Pamela Epley**  
Vice President  
of Academic Affairs

### **During FY2023, we accomplished several “firsts.”**

We launched the Master’s of Science in Early Childhood with Triple Endorsement Program, which is the first program in Illinois that offers a triple endorsement. We hired our first Dean of Faculty, Maxine McKinney de Royston, Ph.D. and our first Associate Vice President for Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion, Ayanna F. Brown, Ph.D. Meghan Gowin, Ph.D., is our first postdoctoral fellow to get promoted to Assistant Professor. And in May, we welcomed the largest summer student cohort in Erikson’s history.

Additionally, Jennifer Park was hired as the Executive Director, Technology Enabled Learning to develop a strategic plan to increase revenue through creating pathways to professional development, endorsements and degrees; Erikson faculty published 26 articles, wrote nine book chapters and facilitated 81 presentations; and the Academic Programs Committee of the Board of Trustees approved the concept of Erikson offering an independent Ph.D. program.

## PRIORITIES

- Enroll at least 500 new students over the next three years and continue to diversify the student body.
- Recruit and retain a diverse, highly qualified faculty and staff who can continuously evolve to support Erikson’s goals and meet the promise of justice, quality, and impact for young children, families and communities.

### **Erikson Launches Illinois’ First Triple Endorsement Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Education**

In early 2023, Erikson launched an innovative Master of Science in Early Childhood Education (MSECE) licensure program with a triple endorsement in early education, special education, and bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL). The first-of-its-kind master’s program in Illinois aims to diversify the early childhood workforce while increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in divested communities.

This “triple endorsement” degree will uniquely prepare Erikson graduates to meet the diversity of today’s learners. The three content areas woven together in Erikson’s curriculum are typically learned separately. The innovative approach focuses on preparing teachers to understand children entering the classroom more holistically—including identifying their strengths and areas for growth and supporting early learners with multiple life experiences—and making sure that early childhood classrooms are ready to support every child rather than expecting children to have “kindergarten readiness.”

We exceeded our goal by enrolling 22 students in the first term of the program, which began in May, and are well on our way to meet our program enrollment goals for Fall 2023.



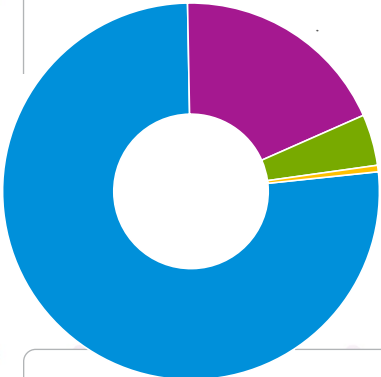
**Erikson awarded “Educator Impact Grants” covering full tuition and certain fees for 19 students, with around 80 percent awarded to students of color,** who committed to teaching in a divested community for four years post-graduation. Teachers need to be attuned to the cultural nature of child development, situated family dynamics, and the systemic forces that create barriers to accessing equitable opportunities for all young children to reach their full potential. These graduates will be prepared to lead inclusive early childhood classrooms with a focus on building on the strengths of every student.



**364**

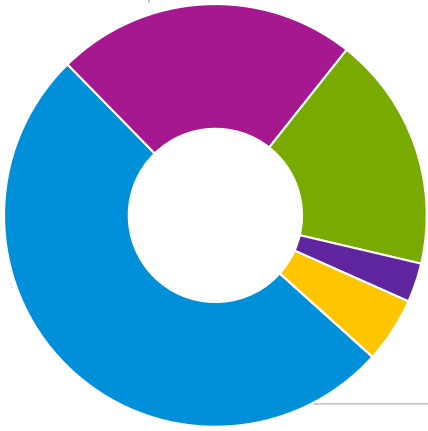
**2023 STUDENT ENROLLMENT**

**ENROLLMENT BY PROGRAM**



Program	# Students
<b>77%</b> Masters	280
<b>19%</b> Certificate	69
<b>4%</b> Doctoral	16
<b>1%</b> At Large	2

**TOTAL ENROLLMENT BY RACE**



- 51%** White/Non-Hispanic
- 23%** Latino/Latina
- 18%** African American/Black
- 5%** Unidentified
- 3%** Asian American/Asian/Pacific Islander
- 0%** American Indian/Alaskan Native

**SUMMER 2023 ENROLLMENT**

**47**

**In May, Erikson welcomed the largest class of summer students in our history**



## Position Erikson for sustainable, long-term growth.



*From the Desk of*

**Maura Daly**

Chief External Affairs Officer

**FY2023 was a transformational fundraising year with a record-breaking \$23 million raised.**

*The year kicked off with the annual luncheon honoring Cari Sacks and featuring Michelle Obama raising \$3.3 million, setting a new bar for the largest fundraiser in the history of Erikson. The next day, Erikson received a \$6 million gift from the John and Kathleen Schreiber Foundation to invest in scholarships for students, including providing Educator Impact Grants for the Master's in Early Childhood Education triple endorsement program. All of this tremendous success was topped off with an incredible \$8 million unrestricted gift from MacKenzie Scott, the largest investment Erikson has received.*

*These gifts demonstrate the growing awareness of the importance of equity and justice for young children and public confidence in our work. We are grateful to the Erikson Community for your support in growing Erikson's reputation as a leader in the early childhood space.*

## PRIORITIES

- Strengthen our finances to enable strategic investments in our faculty, staff, research and programs.
- Raise \$22M in philanthropic revenue over 3 years (FY2023-2025).



## AN UNEXPECTED INVESTMENT TO ADVANCE EQUITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

**Erikson Institute was honored to receive an \$8 million unrestricted gift from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott.** In keeping with Scott's charitable vision of advancing opportunities for people in underinvested and underserved communities, the funds associated with this transformational gift will fuel Erikson's mission of building equitable and just futures for young children, their families, and communities. The gift is a testament to the vision and work of Erikson Institute, under the leadership of President Mariana Souto-Manning, Ph.D.

"Erikson Institute is incredibly grateful to MacKenzie Scott for this transformational gift," said Souto-Manning. "With a keen focus on equity and a firm resolve to work in the pursuit of justice, this investment will catalyze Erikson's work to grow and diversify the early childhood workforce, create innovative academic programs that center equity and justice, expand access to early childhood mental health services, mobilize communities to dismantle systemic barriers to opportunities, and conduct cutting-edge research."





## Erikson's 2022 Annual Luncheon Featuring Michelle Obama Breaks Records

Former First Lady Michelle Obama joined Erikson Institute on November 2, 2022 to honor Cari Sacks, a long-time Erikson Trustee and alumna (M.Ed. '91) who has spearheaded major philanthropic efforts for the Institute, including student scholarship support and critical funding to establish Erikson's Center for Children and Families that provides infant and early childhood mental health services in Chicago's Little Village Community. Erikson co-founder Barbara Taylor Bowman, who has known Sacks for decades, presented her with the Spirit of Erikson award. Governor J.B. Pritzker congratulated Sacks via video message.

The annual luncheon raised more than \$3 million and drew more than 1,200 people to the Hilton Chicago for an inspiring and heartwarming program featuring a conversation between Mrs. Obama and Michelle Collins, a Chicago

business leader and Erikson Life Trustee who grew up in the South Shore community during the same time frame as Mrs. Obama. The two women discussed their own early educational experiences, current challenges facing the field, and promising approaches.

The 2022 luncheon was also attended by several VIP guests including Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, Highland Park Mayor Nancy Rotering, Illinois Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, and Michelle Obama's mother Marian Robinson.

**We look forward to our 2023 Luncheon on October 27, which will feature guest speaker Stacey Abrams, founder of Fair Fight Action.**



## SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT IN DIVERSIFYING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

**Erikson is deeply grateful to John and Kathy Schreiber for their \$6 million investment to enroll more graduate students with diverse backgrounds and experiences who are seeking degrees in early childhood education, child development and social work.**

The Schreiber gift provides investments in Social Justice Scholarships and endowed scholarships, as well as critical funding for Educator Impact Grants for Erikson's reimagined teacher education master's degree program with a triple endorsement. The Educator Impact Grant requires graduates to serve young children in divested communities for at least four years. The Schreiber gift will also support future cohorts in Lake County, Illinois, where John and Kathy focus much of their philanthropic investment.

John and Kathy Schreiber, local philanthropists with a deep interest in equity and education, are dedicated to investing in high-quality education and supportive services that help people reach their full potential. The Schreibers have supported Erikson Institute since 2019.

## Expand access to parent and family supports for mental health, with a focus on under-resourced communities, in Chicago and across Illinois.



*From the Desk of*

**Andria Goss**

Associate VP of Clinical and Community Services

*Clinical Services and Community Engagement was fortunate to receive critical funding this year that allowed us to expand our work to serve and identify children in need of additional support; provide support and information to early childhood parents and providers; and to increase access to mental health services for young children and their families.*

*In navigating this post pandemic world, we dedicated our efforts to strengthening relationships in the Little Village Community and in Illinois' Early Childhood field. In Little Village, we've met with more than a dozen community partners, advocates and organizations to help build bridges between Erikson and families in need of support. And with generous funding, we are able to expand our School-Based Mental Health Project, allowing us to provide support at the school/administrator level as well to families and their young children at two additional schools and three faith-based organizations over the next two years.*

*The expansion of these services will ensure that more infants and young children have equitable access to the resources they need to support their mental health and well-being.*

*Our DCFS Project continues to thrive and has seen its highest number of contacts since inception. In addition to conducting clinical assessments, our advocacy continues to have positive impacts across the state. In April, I testified before the Illinois General Assembly about the importance of infant and early childhood mental health services. This action helped to influence increased funding for mental health services in the state budget and greater awareness of the need for support services among our policy makers.*

## PRIORITIES

- Stabilize the Center for Children and Families' revenue model for sustainability.
- Increase clinical services to children and families by 100% while achieving 20% pro-bono, 80% insured client mix.





## ERIKSON'S DCFS PROJECT

The DCFS Early Childhood Project is a groundbreaking collaboration between Erikson's Graduate School in Child Development and Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) which works to increase access of child welfare involved children and families to early childhood services.

Through the partnership with the child welfare system, the Early Childhood Project provides expertise in child development, attachment, family centered assessment, impact of trauma on young children and knowledge of systems that serve children. DCFS invests resources in the project with the goal of identifying the individual needs of child welfare involved young children and their families, overcoming barriers to engagement, and connecting them to the best support to meet their needs.



The DCFS project will continue to receive notifications of cases throughout the remainder of FY23. **Our most recent complete data shows that in FY22, the Early Childhood Project received notification of 8,103 child welfare-involved young children. The Project provided individual outreach to case managers and caregivers in all of these 8,103 cases.** Though incomplete, our data already shows that we will exceed these numbers for FY2023.

### In FY2022, the Erikson DCFS Early Childhood Project served 5,993 children directly through:

- 1,303** relationship-based referrals to **Early Intervention**
- 202** relationship-based referrals to **Early Childhood Special Education**
- 776** relationship-based referrals to **Home Visiting**
- 61** **trainings** for child welfare and early childhood providers
- 230** **clinical staffings** for young children birth to five in care who are at risk of placement disruption or needed additional services, and completed case reviews and recommendations for an additional 158 young children whose CIPPs were unable to be attended
- 2,510** **consultations** about services for young children, providing information about child development, thinking about case planning around the needs of young children, connecting professionals around the needs of young children or initiating new referrals
- 2,350** **developmental screening** community resources for case managers for young children



## SMOOTH WAY HOME

Erikson Institute's Fussy Baby Network helps families struggling with their infants' (birth to 12 months) crying, sleeping, or feeding. Infant Specialists focus on supporting and empowering families with information and guidance around infant development and regulation, as well as the ups and downs of parenting.

The Smooth Way Home program is an offshoot of the Fussy Baby Network that focuses on infants who have experienced a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) stay.

**We use a developmental and relationship-based approach when supporting families through their experience in the medical setting, and the nuances that come with parenting a baby that has had a NICU experience.**

The NICU Smooth Way Home program at RUSH combines in-person (on-unit) and virtual support. Erikson/Smooth Way Home Infant Specialists go to the hospital and meet with families while there. When the families are discharged, support continues virtually for as long as the family feels like it is helpful.

This fiscal year, the Fussy Baby Network/Smooth Way Home Program expanded with grant funding from the BRIDGES West Side Initiative and RUSH Hospital NICU. This initiative ensures that we can reach all families living on the West side of Chicago with NICU experience at RUSH Hospital. To date, Erikson clinical services team has served over 50 families and connected with over 380 to provide better access to services and overcome barriers to follow up support.





## EXPANDING SERVICES THROUGH ERIKSON'S CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Erikson's Center for Children and Families (CCF) provides clinical support services for families and children using evidence-based behavioral and emotional treatments to ensure every child we work with can reach their full potential. However, we recognize that the existence of a clinic does not wholly equate to impactful outcomes. Families have myriad reasons to not seek out mental health services for their children, particularly in historically divested communities in Chicago. Cultural stigma around mental health, previous negative experiences with support services, misperceptions around cost, and the systemic racism that is baked into many institutions give families good reason to not seek care. And yet, the need for services has grown. Currently, CCF is serving 170 families. Thanks to a \$1 million gift from the Pritzker Family Foundation, CCF is expanding access to pediatric mental health care over the next two years through our community outreach initiatives that focus on meeting families where they are—in their communities, their places of worship, and their schools.

At Jose de Diego Community Academy, we were able to add a staff person in the school 3-days a week to provide classroom consultation, reflective consultation, professional development, family engagement, and parent-child therapy for students, families and staff serving preschool through second graders. We also expanded our hours and availability for in-person services in our River North, Little Village and Oak Park clinics. And we have a fully staffed Infant/Toddler Inclusion Project team which supports Early Head Start and Head Start programs in the inclusion of children with suspected or diagnosed disabilities and their families through staff training and technical assistance. Across the city of Chicago, these professionals are serving 25 agencies, 119 sites, and 2,467 children. They will be hosting two training weeks in summer 2023 to provide professional development to Early Head staff.



## Build leadership capacity and mobilize communities to dismantle systemic barriers for children and families to access equitable opportunities.



*From the Desk of*

**Penny Smith**

Director, Learning and Impact,  
Policy & Leadership

*Erikson's Policy and Leadership Department works to ensure equity for young children and their families by providing key leaders with the knowledge and tools to generate policy solutions that improve access to high-quality early childhood supports and services.*

***Our approach to advocacy intersects the science of child development and systems change, using a racial equity lens to safeguard every child's right to a full and happy life.***

*This year, Erikson expanded our reach and influence through programs that promote leadership, learning and advocacy, resulting in tools and policies that better support the needs of all young children and their communities.*

## PRIORITIES

- Equip people with the knowledge of anti-racism and with the data and science of childhood development.
- Expand capacity in community leaders to influence public policies and programs and expand reach through training, facilitation, coaching and consultation.



## RELAUNCHING THE EXECUTIVE FELLOWS PROGRAM

Last summer, we relaunched the Executive Fellows program in person after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic. The program engaged 18 Illinois leaders from the legislative, legal, educational, health, governmental, and faith-based sectors in a learning experience that blends expert presentations and activities to build their knowledge of child development and why the first five years are critical.

An eye-opener for fellows was Service Day, where they volunteered at local early childhood programs, cutting apples for snack time, reading to children, and learning, from teachers, the challenges of balancing various layers of responsibilities for little compensation. Highlighting the long-term benefits of quality early childhood experiences provided fellows with the information and tools they need to thoughtfully examine how policies and decisions they make at work affect young children and families. The program also fostered discussion on fellows' influence in addressing racial equity issues, increasing budget allocations toward child- and family-centered programs and engaging community voices in the decision-making process. Examples of program alumni applying their learnings from Erikson include co-sponsoring and passing early childhood legislation, establishing support services in the court system for youth affected by childhood trauma, and tackling environmental justice issues in Black communities that affect the health of children and residents, to name a few.



## TEACHING ANTI-RACISM THROUGH LANGUAGE AND UNPACKING DATA

Contributing to the burgeoning arena of anti-racism practice, the Policy and Leadership team’s Decolonizing Data and Language workshop series saw 255 participants from a wide variety of social service organizations across the United States. This two-part workshop series explored the dangers of using labels and dehumanizing language to describe people, and the harm data and data visualizations can cause when it solely focuses on individuals affected by greater societal issues. The workshops inspire participants to use humanizing language and unpack data to uncover the root causes of these issues and concentrate on long-term solutions that rectify fractures in the system and dismantle barriers to basic resources. The popular series even motivated organizations to book private trainings for their staff.

## LAUNCH OF THE RACIAL EQUITY TOOLKIT AND OTHER DATA-BASED CONSULTATION WORK

In the fall of 2022, Policy and Leadership completed a racial equity analysis for the statewide early childhood coalition, Raising Illinois, which resulted in the creation of a Racial Equity Toolkit. Resources and tools were curated and designed specifically for the needs of coalition members who wanted to strengthen their equity lens and amplify their advocacy work. The team also launched the Equity Analysis: Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health (I/ECMH) Consultation Project in the spring of 2023 for the Illinois Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development. I/ECMH consultation is a support service for the early childhood workforce, providing them with guidance and strategies to manage social-emotional issues that can surface in young children. The project aims to highlight the importance of consultation and understand whether services are sufficient and accessible across the state.

The department’s consultation work also includes customized equity trainings and program assessment for the New York Early Care & Learning Council.

Additionally, Policy and Leadership connected with The Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender to launch the Study of Impact on Young Children of Incarcerated Caregivers. The study will collect data on the number of parents and caregivers with children under age six being held in Cook County Jail. Children with parents/caregivers in the criminal legal system are often “invisible” in our systems and are not adequately identified, assessed, or supported with services. This study will help understand how to best connect resources to the emergency caregivers designated to care for these children.



## INFLUENCING POLICIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Each year, Policy and Leadership monitors Illinois legislation and budget recommendations that can boost funding and access to child and family-centered programs and support the early childhood workforce.

The team supported Erikson President, Mariana Souto-Manning, in her presentation to the Illinois Senate’s Early Childhood Education Committee, which highlighted that 90 percent of the brain is developed by age five and how every \$1 invested in quality early childhood programs yields a \$7 return. Policy and Leadership is also active in representing Erikson for the We, the Village, and Raising Illinois coalitions focused on advocating for children from parental prenatal support through preschool. The team joined the coalitions in Springfield on April 18 and 19 for Early Childhood Advocacy Day with more than 300 early childhood providers, parents, children and supporters filling the capitol rotunda.

## V Create a new generation of knowledge through cutting-edge research

### PRIORITIES

- Identify and pursue more right-fit government grant funding for research and responses to other RFPs.
- Expand Erikson's research production, reach, contributions, and reputation nationally and internationally via publications, presentations, and funded projects.



*From the Desk of*

**Leanne Beaudoin-Ryan**  
Director of Research, Registration & Records  
Chief Research Compliance Officer  
Assistant Research Professor

#### **The Office of Research at Erikson Institute is creating a new generation of knowledge through cutting-edge research.**

*A strong research infrastructure is at the heart of this initiative. It is essential to recruit and retain influential scholars who will produce high caliber academic scholarship that will increase Erikson's standing in both national and international research spaces.*

*Erikson is committed to building this infrastructure in three ways. First, there is a cooperative effort to revitalize the Herr Research Center. The shared vision is that the Center will provide a home to an active community of scholars focused on building both internal and external partnerships in service of knowledge creation.*

*Moreover, Erikson is committed to supporting faculty in their research pursuits by not only protecting time for original research, but also facilitating searches for more "right fit" funding opportunities, whether government or private foundation.*

*Meanwhile, as Erikson continues to invest in and build out this infrastructure, our scholars have continued to produce high quality scholarship that is rooted in equity, designed in partnership with early care and education practitioners and leaders, responsive to current issues in the field, and impacts policy and practice.*







## EXPANDING THE WORK OF RACIAL JUSTICE IN EARLY MATH PROJECT

The Racial Justice in Early Mathematics (RJEM) project, a collaboration between Erikson Institute and the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), was recently awarded a \$900,000 grant from the Heising-Simons Foundation. The grant will support a variety of RJEM efforts, including newsletters, webinars, a national conference to be held in Chicago in 2024, and the development and implementation of an RJEM Teaching Fellowship program. The fellowship program will serve early childhood teachers who are committed to racial justice in their math teaching practices, supporting both their learning and the dissemination of the knowledge their work will generate.

**Large-scale national studies have demonstrated that math skills at kindergarten entry are an important predictor of later math and school success overall. Early math is currently being explored as a possible lever to an assortment of advantages, and it is vital that the field engages in discussion and deep reflection about systemic racism in early math education and how it can be dismantled.**

The RJEM Teaching Fellowship is a one-year professional development, mentoring and research opportunity intended to support kindergarten teachers from across the United States. Through individual mentoring sessions and group seminars, fellows will develop a robust understanding of how racial bias can shape early math instruction and young children's learning. The fellows will learn how to implement racial justice centered teaching practices in their classrooms, working to become aware of how implicit bias can affect math teaching, and striving to dismantle systems that promulgate racist ideas. By participating in a network of mentorship and peer support and sharing their experiences with the RJEM team and its Advisory Council of national experts, the fellows will contribute to a growing understanding of how early math teaching can further the cause of racial justice, and in so doing, better prepare young students for a lifetime of math learning success. The project will culminate in a national conference at Erikson Institute in the summer of 2024.

## UNDERSTANDING HOME-BASED CHILDCARE THROUGH ITS COMMUNITY

Home Based Child Care (HBCC) is the most common form of childcare in the United States, particularly in racially, culturally, linguistically, and geographically marginalized communities. It has however long been neglected by both research and policy. Research studies and policy decisions have historically been designed and implemented without the input of HBCC providers and the families whose children receive care in these settings.

In the past year, Erikson's research team has launched five research projects that centers on the HBCC community: Supply, Quality, and Sustainability of Nontraditional Hour Childcare: An Equity-Focused Policy-Research Partnership for Illinois; The Home-Based Child Care Supply and Quality Project; The PreK in Family Child Care Project; How Family Child Care Networks Help Families Thrive: A Participatory Approach to Understand Equity and Access in Comprehensive Services; and Building Home-Based Child Care Networks: Research and Resources for the Field.

**Through these projects, Erikson researchers are collaborating with providers, families and communities and developing knowledge and practice in partnership with them. We believe that this approach will ultimately transform early care and education systems to be more equitable and just spaces for young children and their families.**



**Erikson Institute  
educates, inspires,  
and promotes  
leadership to  
serve the needs  
of children  
and families.**

We are a premier graduate school dedicated to child development.

We provide direct services to our community's children and families.

We are leaders in influencing early childhood policy.

We work tirelessly every day so that all children can achieve optimal educational, social, emotional, and physical well-being.

At Erikson Institute, we know that investing in the early years of children will last a lifetime.

**Learn more at [erikson.edu](https://erikson.edu)**



# Erikson Institute

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