

JUSTICE. QUALITY. IMPACT.

Erikson Institute 2024 Impact Report

Erikson
Institute



DEAR ERIKSON COMMUNITY,

As we conclude another academic year—my third as your President—let us recognize our achievements and the impact we have made. We are a community of educators, clinicians, researchers, advocates, and partners dedicated to an immensely powerful and critical vision: to ensure every child, family, and community can and does reach their full potential.

As a graduate school, Erikson offers graduate degrees, clinical services, capacity building for educators and elected officials and more. Our work is robust and it happens because of each of us. We—faculty, staff, trustees, students, supporters and community members—are Erikson. Within and across areas, we know that there is more expertise distributed than in any one of its departments. With this knowledge, we work together to cultivate a future of equity and justice for all young children, families and communities.

I am extremely proud to share with you this 2024 Erikson Institute Impact Report — from launching a brand new Master’s degree program focusing on Early Intervention, to celebrating our first Triple Endorsement graduates in May 2024 — a nationally-accredited, integrated with endorsements in early childhood, special and bilingual/multilingual education — to leveraging a transformational research partnership that will impact children’s health and well-being across the nation and more.

We have made considerable progress toward achieving our strategic goals; all thanks to our collective resolve, care, time and dedication. On the following pages, you will learn about the highlights of the past year at Erikson and read from Erikson leaders about our work to transform the fields of early childhood education, child development and social work and achieve our goals across academic programs, community building, clinical services, policy, leadership and research.

The work every member of the Erikson community does is essential for ensuring that our Institute remains at the forefront of groundbreaking research, innovative practices and transformative outcomes for the youngest members of society. This report offers highlights, as it would be impossible to share all the amazing work being done; it illustrates the wonderful work across the Institute.

As you read the strategic priorities we set in 2022, you will see that we have come a long way diversifying Erikson and the communities reached, working toward sustainability, expanding the reach of clinical services in Chicago and throughout Illinois, removing barriers to access to equitable opportunities for young children and families, and revolutionizing the research contributions Erikson is making to the field. Yet, we have a long way to go if we are to fulfill the vision of our founders—Maria Piers, Lorraine Wallach, Barbara Taylor Bowman, and Irving B. Harris—which fueled Erikson’s work across the decades and remains our compass. Fifty-eight years later, we continue working to fulfill the promise the first years of life hold for a person’s long-term well-being, for society and for a better future.

I offer my deepest gratitude to you for your continued support, commitment and contributions. Your continued trust and partnership have made the achievements highlighted in this report—and many more—possible. I look forward to continuing our mission with you well into the future. Together, we continue to make an indelible imprint on what is known about the early years, changing young children’s futures and ours.

As always, in pursuit of justice,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mariana Souto-Manning". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

Chief Academic Officer &
Vice President of Academic Affairs

Erikson's academic programs and professional learning offerings continue to diversify and support the development of the early childhood workforce to promote positive outcomes for children, families, and communities.

The 2023-24 academic year included the transition from Erikson's prior teacher licensure program, which graduated its final cohort of early childhood teachers, to the first graduating class of the integrated "triple endorsement" teacher licensure program, in which all graduates earn endorsements in early childhood education, bilingual or English as a Second Language, and special education. In

May 2024, the triple endorsement teacher licensure program also earned national accreditation from the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation.

This was also a big year for online learning at Erikson. The Master of Child Development program was offered fully online for the first time, and the first cohort of Erikson's online Master of Social Work (MSW) program, which launched in the Fall of 2021, graduated in May 2024.

PRIORITIES

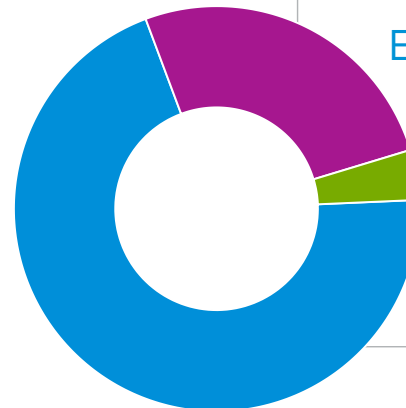
- Enroll at least 500 new students over the next three years and continue to diversify the student body.
- Recruit and retain a diverse, highly qualified faculty and staff who can continuously evolve to support Erikson's goals and meet the promise of justice, quality, and impact for young children, families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

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2024 STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Looking toward the future, Erikson is preparing to launch the online Master of Science in Early Childhood Education: Early Intervention program in Spring 2025, which will focus on preparing Early Interventionists to serve children with development differences and delays and their families from an infant and early childhood mental health perspective. Also, the Technology Enabled Learning (TEL) Team will offer its first online professional learning micro-credential in Early Mathematics beginning Fall 2024.

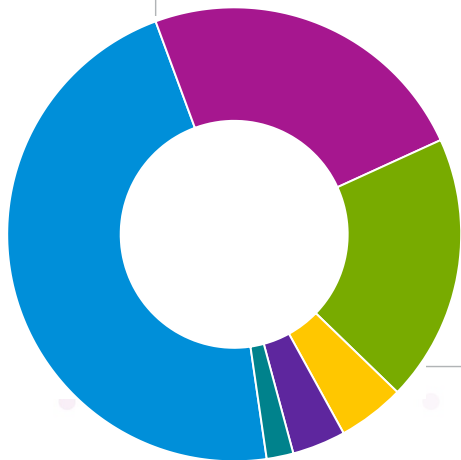
ENROLLMENT BY PROGRAM



Program	# Students
70% Masters	260
26% Certificate	97
4% Doctoral	17



TOTAL ENROLLMENT BY RACE



- 49%** White/Non-Hispanic
- 25%** Latino/Latina
- 20%** African American/Black
- 5%** Other/Missing
- 4%** Asian American/Asian/Pacific Islander
- 2%** Two or More Races
- 0%** American Indian/Alaskan Native
- 0%** Unknown Race and Ethnicity*

**excluded from % calculation*

**using 361 students w/ race info as denominator*

SUMMER 2024
ENROLLMENT

21

**Erikson
Institute**

NEW GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAM TO FOCUS ON EARLY INTERVENTION

The field of childhood mental health is challenged by inadequate numbers of early intervention specialists available at the state level to conduct assessments and provide the various therapies an infant or toddler may require for their developmental needs.

To help fill the gap, Erikson is excited to launch a new online degree program, the Master of Science in Early Childhood Education (MSECE) Early Intervention, which will create more professionals and specialists who can provide critically needed services.

Our new master's degree, focused on supporting students to become early intervention professionals, is uniquely designed with an infant and early childhood mental health focus. That means students will learn to be practitioners who provide relationally focused services to infants, young children and families to support the child's development in the context of their family, community and culture.

Instead of student teaching, graduates will complete internship experiences to qualify for credentialing as Developmental Therapists in Illinois and will be eligible for other credentials/endorsements related to infancy and infant and early childhood mental health.

We are excited about the impact that graduates from this new program will have on the healthy development of young children in Illinois and across the nation.





ENGAGING THE PreK COMMUNITY

Erikson faculty members Lilly Padia, PhD, Luisiana Melendez, PhD, and Sandra Osorio, PhD, presented “A Qualitative Examination of a Public Preschool in the Midwest”, an update on their research (including focus groups and interviews with families, teachers and administrators) at a dual language “Reggio Emilia inspired” early learning center over the past year.

The presentation was attended by more than 80 teachers, local families and Chicago Public Schools administrators. After the presentation, Lilly, Luisiana and Sandra also facilitated conversations with the teachers and staff around their findings and what it means for their practice with children and families moving forward.

From the Desk of
Ashley Curry, PhD, LCSW
Dean of Students



Since its launch in 2022, The Dean of Students Office has taken a holistic approach to student wellness and well-being and has worked to create a student-centered culture and community where students feel seen, heard, valued and included. This team includes multiple student-facing departments committed to enhancing the student experience and supporting every student – academically, socially, and emotionally – from admission to graduation.

This year, we team expanded our reach beyond the student experience to include the alumni experience. With the creation of the Career Services and Alumni Engagement department, led by Erikson alumna, Alyssa Maestre MSW '17, this team is now actively engaging alumni in community-building activities and networking events. The goal is to strengthen relationships among alumni and offer ample opportunities for them to connect with one another. The Spring kick-off event held by this new department was lively and bustling, attracting alums from as far back as 1980 and as recent as 2022.

The Student Experience and Accessibility department, led by Whitney Mittons, MOL, launched Registered Student Organizations and the Student Advisory Board this academic year. These groups enhanced the student experience by providing additional engagement and peer-leadership opportunities.

The Academic Advising department led by Erikson alumna, Natalie Dowdell, MS, MJ '19, provided an increased level of individualized academic guidance and support to students this academic year, making it possible for them to continue in their programs despite experiencing unexpected personal or professional shifts.

The Academic Success Center created a flexible model for providing individualized academic support and study skill development to students, while also supporting students with the completion of their culminating requirements.

This team is excited to continue supporting students in the upcoming year and to launch even more student-centered initiatives.

Position Erikson for sustainable, long-term growth.



From the Desk of

Maura Daly

Chief External Affairs Officer

The highlight of our year was Erikson's 2024 Annual Luncheon featuring Stacey Abrams which was attended by more than 450 existing and new supporters of our mission and raised \$1.2M toward a more sustainable future for Erikson and a more just future for young children.

We continued to expand our community through Inspire Circle, our new speaker series that brings together donors and partners from across Illinois to hear from leaders who are transforming their communities and the early childhood landscape.

And we honor philanthropist, business leader, and one of Erikson's founders and earliest contributors to our work, Irving B. Harris, whose vision and life's work have impacted the lives of children and families for 58 years.

PRIORITIES

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



ERIKSON LAUNCHES “INSPIRE CIRCLE”

Beginning last summer with a discussion between Governor JB Pritzker and former IL Senator Cristina Pacione-Zayas, Inspire Circle events bring together Erikson community partners and donors of gifts of \$1,000 or more annually. Attendees learn about the innovative ways Erikson impacts the early childhood field through collaboration, education, and advocacy.

This winter, 50 attendees enjoyed a panel discussion featuring Early Childhood Leadership Academy (ECLA) Alumna Dr. Stacy Grundy, DrPH, MPH, MCHES, and her colleague, Dr. Gina Lathan PhD, MPH from Route History located in Springfield, Illinois. Moderator Penny Smith, director of Learning and Impact for Erikson's Policy and Leadership program facilitated a lively conversation between Gina and Stacy about how the museum prioritizes young children and enriches their exploration of Black history.

Enhanced by virtual reality technology, museum programming immerses visitors in the lives of Black people, businesses and events along Route 66 in the cities of Chicago, Joliet, Bloomington, Springfield, Brooklyn and East St Louis during the Jim Crow and Civil Rights eras. A major goal of the museum's work is to instill a sense of pride and potential in the young children and youth who visit.



**Erikson's 2023 Annual Luncheon
Guest Speaker & Honoree
Stacey Abrams**

Erikson Institute honored two dynamic and accomplished women at its annual luncheon on October 27. The event theme was “resilience” and both honorees, Stacey Abrams and Bela Moté, exhibit that trait in their work that benefits children, families and communities.

Chaired by Erikson Trustee Jenni Sorensen and her husband, John Holmes, chief executive officer of AAR Corp, this year’s luncheon raised critical funding, which will support the institute’s academic programming, clinical services, policy and research initiatives.

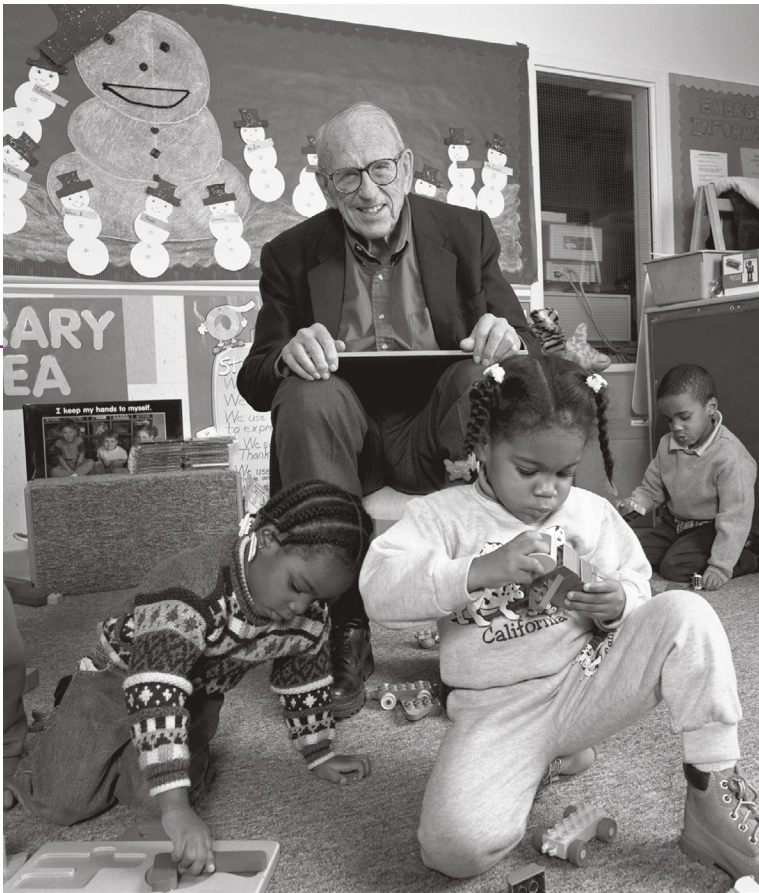
Abrams, a nationally known advocacy leader, business owner and best-selling author of books for both children and adults, received the 2023 Erikson Institute Equity Award for her work in advancing justice, exemplifying visionary leadership and elevating the field of early care and education. She spoke about what made her resilient as a young child by sharing stories about her parents who confronted systemic racism but never gave up instilling their values and drive in their children.

Bela Moté, President and CEO of the Carole Robertson Center for Learning, received the 2023 Erikson Institute Advocacy Award for her long and impactful career as a leader of high-quality programs for children and families in Chicago communities that have seen systemic disinvestment. Moté described the ongoing need for advocacy to advance family and child wellbeing.

A surprise 95th birthday celebration for Erikson co-founder Barbara T. Bowman made the event even more special.



2023 Honoree Bela Moté



Irving Harris with children at an Educare childcare center in 2000

ERIKSON AND IRVING HARRIS'S LEGACY

Cofounding Erikson Institute in 1966 with Barbara T. Bowman, Maria Piers, and Loraine Wallach was the first step in Irving Harris' campaign to give children the best possible start in life.

That pursuit engaged the philanthropist and business leader until his death in September 2004 at age 94. Today, Erikson is a thriving leader in child development due in large measure to Harris' vision, enthusiasm, and immeasurable support; without him, the Institute as we know it would not exist.

Harris' belief and investment in Erikson has continued through the work of the Irving Harris Foundation which has granted the Institute over \$18 million in philanthropic support over the past 32 years.

This year, the Irving Harris Foundation announced it will be sunsetting operations in 2032. The foundation which has dedicated itself to ensuring a just world for every baby, family and community for 80 years will spend down its remaining assets. This sunset allows the foundation to lean into its commitment to racial equity and to quickly shift power and resources directly into the communities it serves. Erikson Institute applauds the Irving Harris Foundation's ambitious efforts and is deeply grateful to be a part of the Harris legacy.



From the Desk of

Ayanna F. Brown, PhD
Associate Vice President for
Justice, Equity, Diversity,
and Inclusion

The Office for Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) catalyzes equity-in-action through our collaboration with national scholars and community-centered transformation leaders that offer professional development, learning programs and resources designed to support our faculty, students, and staff.

The Office for JEDI focuses on ways in which equity initiatives disrupt forms of racial, social, cultural and systemic oppression that impacts our everyday lives and the work that we do. As an equity office, Erikson attends to how workplace culture and practices require cultivation as well.

During 2023-2024, The Office for JEDI was established as the only office in Erikson to work directly with the entire institute (faculty, students

and staff), providing programming, resources, professional development and workplace support to elevate equity into actionable practices.

Erikson is elevating the value for evaluating our internal work and its implications for our external collaborations, which includes understanding who and how we serve.

The JEDI Series, offered during Spring, is our post-luncheon event that hosts two transformative leaders who demonstrate how their national and/or community-based efforts have sustainable influence in areas that are key to the Erikson mission and are in direct correlation to our Fall Luncheon theme.



JEDI JUSTICE, EQUITY,
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Erikson Institute

The JEDI Series offers insights to support One Erikson in thinking about how we build capacity to influence long-term initiatives through awareness raising and supports that apply to the projects we create and the research of our faculty.

This office also leads curriculum transformation with our JEDI audit and professional development for instructional growth and learning. The curriculum audit seeks to update all Erikson courses offering programmatic updates that align directly to our mission with a clear focus on equity, inclusion, belonging and anti-racism both in theory and praxis.

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

Today, people face more emotional distress than ever, making mental health support necessary to our ability to function in this world.

Across Clinical and Community Services (CCS), our program staff have worked with families within their communities, in schools, hospitals, social service organizations and in our mental health clinics.

CCS clinicians see the struggles faced by families first-hand and offer support and solutions to help families build strong relationships and foundations for well-being.

Fussy Baby Network (FBN) and **Smooth Way Home (SWH)** are prevention and support programs offered to families with babies one year and under. Our Infant Mental Health Specialists provide relational and developmental support, virtually (phone and zoom), to families with worries/wonders about crying, sleeping, feeding, infant regulation, infant development, and the ups and downs of parenting a new baby.

The Program goal is to empower parents and caregivers, in the moment, while supporting a positive attachment and connection to their babies.

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.

INFANT AND TODDLER PROJECT SERVING 4,000 CHILDREN

Our fully staffed Infant/Toddler Inclusion Project team 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 24 agencies, 119 sites and 2,395 children. The reach includes approximately

3,600 parents/caregivers, 600 early childhood teachers, around 250 EHS program staff (site directors, disability service coordinators, family support workers and infant toddler specialists).

The team provides over 50 trainings with over 1,500 participants each program year. They will be hosting two training opportunities this summer to provide professional development for Early Head staff.



173

Total Families Served

FBN New Warmline Calls/Families served: 108

SWH New Referrals/Families served: 65

Preliminary year-end numbers. Data from July, 2023 to May, 2024.

25
YEARS

ERIKSON'S DCFS PROJECT MILESTONE

In October 2023, the DCFS Project team gathered to celebrate 25 years of service to child welfare-involved young children. This was the first time Erikson's DCFS state-wide team gathered in-person since the COVID pandemic and the first time many staff met each other face-to-face. Two and a half days of events culminated with a celebration that included the Erikson community, the DCFS Project's treasured partners and former DCFS Project staff. The formal program told the story of the DCFS Project's history with its many changes, challenges and successes, and recognized the two Erikson graduates who began the DCFS Project. Inaugural director Molly McGrath Tierney was honored for her visionary work in creating the DCFS partnership, and longtime DCFS Project Director Andria Goss was honored for 25 of service for the DCFS Project, which has served over 40,000 young children in the past 25 years and grown from 8 to 36 staff statewide.



SERVING FAMILIES THROUGH RELATIONSHIP-BASED REFERRALS

The Erikson Institute DCFS Early Childhood Project brings Erikson's relationship-based approach to engaging child welfare case managers, families and early childhood service providers to assure equitable access to needed early childhood services for this underserved population of children.

According to the latest data, the Erikson Institute DCFS Early Childhood Project had contact on behalf of 5181 child welfare-involved young children and served these children through:

- 908** relationship-based referrals to **Early Intervention**
- 297** relationship-based referrals to **Early Childhood Special Education**
- 838** relationship-based referrals to **Home Visiting** for families, resulting in 229 referrals for service with 50% engagement long term
- 69** **trainings** for child welfare and early childhood providers
- 1,688** **consultations** about services for young children, providing information about child development, thinking about case planning around the needs of a young children, connecting professionals around the needs of young children or initiating new referral
- 244** **clinical staffings** for young children in care who are at risk of placement disruption or in need of additional services
- 716** **developmental assessments** looking at the child's development in the context of their primary caregiving relationships
- 535** families provided with **screening resources**



SUPPORTING THE WELLBEING OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOLS

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 positive 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. CCF has served over 200 families this fiscal year.

CCF is expanding access to pediatric mental health care 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-dAt Jose de Diego Community Academy, we were able to add a staff person in the school three-days a week to provide classroom support and coaching, reflective consultation, professional development, family engagement and parent-child therapy for students, families and staff serving preschool through second graders.

At Maria Saucedo Scholastic Academy, two bilingual clinicians have spent time in the school weekly to build strong relationships with leadership, staff, students and families. We have built a strong relational foundation to expand our school-based services for the next two school years.

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

We are excited to share that many of the alumni from the Early Childhood Leadership Academy (ECLA), which is housed under our department, are actively applying their Erikson learnings as they work toward Quality, Access and Equity or, as we lovingly refer to it, QAE (pronounced: kway) for young children and their families.

We anchor our work on the Erikson philosophy of connection and reflection, providing ECLA alumni who participated in the Executive Fellows, Barbara Bowman Leadership Fellows and other programs with post-program coaching and engagement opportunities. This added support helps alumni reflect on their strategy and initiatives to protect and increase investments in early childhood, and lead with a racial equity framework.

And they are doing great things.

One of our executive fellows invited Erikson to present to the Cook County Child Protection judiciary to help provide insight on the topic of child-parent psychotherapy and available services.

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.

Another was so moved by his learnings through the fellowship program, that he also invited Erikson to present on early childhood trauma to all Cook County Child Protection and Juvenile

Justice staff with the goal of building empathy for youth in the juvenile legal system and providing better support to them. Another fellow, who is focused on birthing parents who are incarcerated, launched a partnership with the Illinois Department of Corrections to improve healthcare delivery in state facilities. Another fellow is ensuring the Black history in Springfield, Ill., is maintained and elevated for future generations to learn from and developed a virtual reality experience to take to classrooms.

Watching how alumni have been taking child development into account and making strides to change our often-complex systems has been rewarding and we look forward to more advancements from our alumni network.



TAKING AN EQUITY LENS TO DATA

The Policy & Leadership team completed its Equity Analysis: Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Consultation Project in the fall of 2023 for the Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development.

The project highlighted an immense shortage of IECMH providers (n= 152) compared to the number of early childhood professionals (n= 60,231) and the need for more diversity in mental health consultants. While early childhood professionals who utilized mental health consultation lauded the benefits that included reducing implicit bias and developing strategies to support socialemotional issues that can surface in young children, many expressed a concern that mental health consultation was an unknown resource, resulting in underutilization.

Erikson Institute's Policy & Leadership Department leads with a racial equity approach to help leaders and communities uncover the root causes of inequities in early childhood and create solutions that lead to policy and systems change, resulting in equitable access to high-quality programs and services.

BEYOND THE NUMBERS



PROVIDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

In September 2023, staff held the Early Childhood Leadership Academy Fellows (ECLA) Summit featuring keynote Stacy Grundy, Co-CEO of Route History Museum on her efforts to expand the museum and engage children in learning about the Black Experience with Route 66. Grundy is an alumna of the 2022 Executive Fellows program. The Summit included a legislative update and action-oriented roundtables where participants took measures during the session to advocate for issues that affect young children that included Environment, Health, Public Safety, Food Security and Housing.

Staff also dropped a two-part episode for the department's Get on the Early Childhood Bus podcast, which raised the need to cultivate children's connection to healthy foods early in their lives. Chef Greg Christian of Beyond Green Partners, an organization making fresh food for preschool students in the Chicagoland area was the featured guest on the episode. Staff continued to deliver its popular Decolonizing Data and Language workshops to the public and at the request of philanthropic organizations seeking private training. Finally, while still under a pilot phase, staff launched its first public workshop of Beyond the Numbers, which is an introductory workshop exploring how perspectives, power dynamics, and motivations influence data narratives. Staff was excited to see that 97% of survey respondents felt they gained an understanding of the concepts presented.



Help
create
positive
change
for
Illinois'
infants
and
toddlers!



EMPOWERING EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERS TO DEVELOP POLICY SOLUTIONS

In October 2023, Policy & Leadership re-launched the Barbara Bowman Leadership Fellows (BBLF) program after a three-year hiatus due to the pandemic. The program leverages the expertise of senior-level early childhood professionals and fortifies their advocacy skills to make policy recommendations to address current workforce issues. Eighteen early childhood professionals working in direct services, coalitions, state agencies and school districts were selected for the 10-month program. Staff and guest speakers presented at the monthly sessions on subjects that included the public policy cycle, tone policing, mindful data and language use, debunking the 30 Million Word Gap study and more. Fellows in this program will conclude their experience in July 2024 with a published policy memo and delivering a two-minute policy pitch to early childhood stakeholders, decision-makers and policy-makers.

ADVOCATING FOR EQUITY ACROSS ILLINOIS

Policy & Leadership staff continue to represent Erikson at different policy forums, including serving as a lead organization facilitating workforce meetings for the Raising Illinois coalition and serving as a core member of the We, the Village coalition. Movement in policy takes place over time and one specific success that stood out this year was the team's advocacy, alongside coalition members, for a coordination of state-funded early childhood programs and services under one state agency as opposed to several. That recommendation made to the Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding in 2021 came to fruition with the passing of Illinois Senate Bill 1 to create the state's Department of Early Childhood.



From the Desk of

Jennifer Park, PhD
Executive Director,
Technology Enabled Learning



The Technology Enabled Learning team has been stretching beyond traditional structures both in how professional learning is conceptualized (how) and what quality content (what) is most impactful in supporting early childhood professionals (who) as catalysts, driving toward justice.

We are catalyzing system change by identifying, examining, and repairing behaviors, structures, and systems that perpetuate inequitable access to opportunity and knowledge. In service to early childhood professionals, we do this by:

- *Continuous inquiry to drive advancements in research, teaching practices and service delivery models that are accessible and support community empowerment in infrastructure building.*
- *Leveraging family and community expertise to support optimal learning and development of children.*

- *Partnering in the development of a robust and supported early childhood workforce that honors and leverages the expertise of families and communities and needs of children.*

Fundamentally, everyone brings their own expertise and can continue to learn and sharpen their skills; however, higher education has historically created barriers to entry. This perpetuation across generations and concentrated in divested communities has created the perception that higher education is out of reach for some, and in the early learning workforce, for most.

We are leaning into our privilege in higher education and leveraging our power to authentically build learner confidence through micro learning opportunities, where costs are shouldered by public funds, not the learner.

Through small, meaningful and cumulative successes, learner confidence will increase and drive a community shift in mindset towards a positive view of higher education.

We firmly believe in the pursuit of justice through providing widely accessible and appropriate education opportunities. As an inquiry-centered institute of higher education, we explore how to effectively prepare professionals for child and family-serving professions through formal education offerings. We provide professional learning opportunities with and without prerequisites that have often acknowledged completion through certificates or endorsements.

These new courses are intended to extend the benefit of Erikson-based education by increasing the rigor of the learning experiences to standardize the award of Continuing Education Units that map to bachelor's degree requirements.

V

Create a new generation of knowledge through cutting-edge research



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 has been working steadfastly to create a strong infrastructure to support the creation of a new generation of cutting-edge knowledge.

The office has made significant strides in this regard. First and foremost, we have partnered intentionally with stakeholders across the institute. Notable examples include our new Dean of Faculty, Maxine McKinney de Royston, and our Executive Director of Professional Development and Continuing Education, Jennifer Park. Both Dean Maxine and Jennifer have been instrumental in conceptualizing an infrastructure around pre-award support that includes forecasting potential funding opportunities, protecting faculty time for scholarship, and aiding in proposal conceptualizing and creation. Additionally, our team has grown to include a dedicated grants administrator, Tina Chronis Aslanidis, to provide more intentional post-award support around budgets and award compliance.

Erikson has also had the privilege of welcoming researchers engaged in high-quality, equity- and social justice-focused scholarship. Dr. Ana Gediel

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.

is a full Professor in the Language Department at Federal University of Viçosa Campus UFV in Minas Gerais, Brazil. Her areas of expertise include applied linguistics, linguistic anthropology, and sign language. She joined Erikson for her sabbatical year to teach and to collaborate with the Teacher Licensure faculty. Dr. Jordan Bell earned his PhD in Urban Education from the City University of New York. His areas of expertise include racial literacy, racial equity in education, and urban education. He has partnered with the Teacher Licensure faculty, teaching courses and working with students, and is supporting the development of Erikson's MEd in Educational Leadership. Lena Aumann, a visiting Fulbright Scholar, joined Erikson in January for spring semester to work with the Early Math Collaborative. She is a fifth year, ABD doctoral student in mathematics education at the Osnabrück University in Germany. She is returning to Germany this summer to defend her dissertation and then begin a post-doctoral position studying teachers' math-related competences at the Paderborn University in Germany in August 2024.





FACILITATING ATTUNED INTERACTIONS WITH THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

Parents eagerly look forward to that first visit with “their” pediatrician—a trusted person who will be there for them as well as their child. While pediatricians embrace this dual role, close to 50% of pediatricians experience burnout. The short visits and press of the traditional medical model can make it hard for pediatricians to pause and listen, understand family needs and then meet the family where they are to address their concerns. Physicians typically have not been trained to prioritize relationships, even though the new focus in pediatrics is on early relational health for children and families.

Erikson’s Facilitating Attuned Interactions (FAN) team, headed by Dr. Linda Gilkerson, recently received a \$1M grant to partner with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to transform pediatrics by strengthening parent/physician relationships and promoting early relational health. The three-year, collaborative project, *Equipping Pediatricians for Attuned Interactions and Self-Compassion*, will bring the FAN to pediatrics. FAN is an approach to family engagement and reflective practice developed in Erikson’s Fussy Baby Network. Research shows that pediatric residents trained on the FAN are more empathic, more collaborative, and more satisfied with their work. They identify the real problems more quickly by careful listening and partner with parents to address them. One resident put it this way: “I used to go into the room and think diagnosis. Now I go in and think connection.” AAP and Erikson will work with pediatric academic centers across the country to incorporate the FAN into residency training, offer an online FAN course for practicing pediatricians, and embed the FAN into HealthySteps, a national program that partners pediatricians with child development/infant mental health specialists. Our goal is for pediatricians to have the skills and support they need to provide parents and children with sensitive, respectful, collaborative care.

Facilitating Attuned Interactions (FAN) A Tool for Family Engagement



Erikson Institute

Fussy Baby Network
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HOME-BASED CHILD CARE RESEARCH: ACTION-ORIENTED AND EQUITY-FOCUSED RESEARCH FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

Home-based childcare (HBCC) includes a continuum of practitioners from grandparents to licensed family childcare (FCC) educators who care for children in their own homes. It is the most common form of childcare in the United States, particularly in racially, culturally, linguistically and geographically marginalized communities. Erikson's HBCC Research team seeks to promote transformative systems and policy change by addressing gaps between knowledge and practice alongside HBCC practitioners and families.

Erikson HBCC Research Referenced In 2024 CCDF Final Rule

Erikson's foundational research about HBCC networks and many evidence-based policies that Erikson advocates for (changes to subsidy rates and payment policies to promote economic well-being for providers, expansion of access to care for families who work nontraditional hours across all HBCC settings, and improved governance that includes provider and family voices) were referenced in the federal 2024 Child Care and Development Fund Final Rule that provides subsidies for almost 1 million working families with low incomes.

The PreK in Family Child Care project produced four research-to-policy briefs focused on strategies and approaches to equitable design and implementation of PreK in FCC; additional briefs focused on FCC educators' perspectives on delivering public PreK and model development and implementation are coming soon. The team has presented to policy makers and implementers around the country, including the Council of Chief State School Officers Early Childhood Education Collaborative, the California State Preschool Program Working Group, and the Center for Law and Social Policy's Child Care Policy Workforce Cohort. The HBCC Network Benchmarks developed as part of Building HBCC Networks: Research & Resources for the Field have been cited by philanthropic organizations in North Carolina and Michigan who seek to fund the development of HBCC Networks. These Benchmarks are available in English, Spanish and Arabic.



From the Desk of

Maxine McKinney de Royston, PhD
Dean of Faculty

This year the Dean of Faculty and Erikson Faculty's research efforts have focused on two areas: 1) building our research capacities; and 2) developing our research infrastructure and related processes.

To build research capacities, faculty is participating in a series of faculty workshops led by Hanover Research in the areas of proposal development, letters of intent/concept papers and developing logic models. Research capacities were also built through monthly Dean of Faculty-led meetings with junior faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and with research faculty that provided grant and research mentorship, proposal feedback and research and grant opportunity identification.

Relative to infrastructure, Hanover led a workshop about sponsored projects offices (SPO) in higher education institutions for the research infrastructure cross-functional team of administrators and staff. This team has cultivated Erikson's pre and post-award support processes; created an opportunity tracker for federal, foundation, and private grants/awards; crafted faculty profiles, and mapped out the roles and responsibilities necessary to submit, monitor and report on research at Erikson. We also brought on a grants administrator to support faculty on research grants and other funding opportunities.

In July 2024, Hanover will share a report on SPO models that will guide the development of such processes at Erikson.


This year, more than 20 faculty have conducted over 25 presentations at renowned conferences including American Educational Research Association, Association of Child Life Professionals, Chicago Association of Child Life Professionals, Child Life Academic Society, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, & Emotional Learning Exchange, Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children, Literacy Research Association (LRA), National Association for the Education of Young Children, National Council of Teachers of English, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, National Research Conference on Early Childhood, and Zero to Three. Faculty have submitted more than 10 grants, including three federal grants, five fellowship applications and several foundation grants (e.g the National Science Foundation, National Council for Teachers of English, the Spencer Foundation, the Foundation for Child Development, and Robin Hood). Finally, faculty have been productive knowledge producers, publishing four books and more than a dozen articles this year.



ERIKSON FACULTY REPRESENTED AT AERA

An unprecedented turn out of Erikson faculty members represented the institute at the 2024 American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference, the most prestigious educational research organization in the world. The theme for 2024 was "Dismantling Racial Injustice and Constructing Educational Possibilities: A Call to Action."

Eleven Erikson faculty members participated by presenting research, facilitating scholarly conversations or supporting AERA's work as leaders within the organization. AERA receives 15,000 presentation submissions of which they accept less than 30%. This remarkable representation from Erikson illustrates great progress toward Erikson's goal to contribute to knowledge generation via research.



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

We are leaders in influencing early childhood policy.

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