



Speaker Biographies

13th Annual ECMH Conference – We Can't Wait!
How Are the Children? The Path from Healing to Well-Being

September 15-16, 2022
Virtual Conference



ECMH 2022 Speaker Biographies

Speaker and Session

Biography

Marilee Burgeson, MA, CCC-SLP



Thursday, 3:00 PM Breakout B-4

Marilee Burgeson is a Developmental Speech Therapist and Clinical Consultant. Marilee has over 30 years of experience in early intervention with the San Diego County Office of Education and in private practice. She was the team leader of the Autism Services Team for 15 years, which was recognized for outstanding service by the San Diego North County Consortium for Special Education. Marilee has been a part of DIR/Floortime® training and supervision since 1996. She is a faculty member with Profectum Foundation and teaches online classes and provides individual mentoring. Currently, she is Clinical Lead for Positive Development, a nationwide organization providing developmental intervention in a transdisciplinary format. Marilee is in private practice serving families and young autistic children in their homes. She has been a part of the San Diego BRIDGE Collaborative, which is a community collaborative group that has brought together researchers, practitioners, and stakeholders to provide Project Impact for Toddlers as a community-based option for young children at risk for disorders of communicating and relating. This collaborative effort has been funded for numerous research grants and has resulted in number of published papers highlighting the effectiveness of this model from different perspectives. Marilee is also a founding member of the California Association for Infant Mental Health and is a member of the Early Childhood Mental Health Leaders Collaborative in San Diego. She is passionate about transforming the practice of professionals in the DIR/Floortime® model and coaching parents in connecting with their child through meaningful shared experiences.

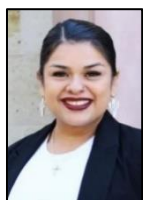
Darryl Chairez, MS



Friday, 3:00 PM Breakout D-4

Darryl Chairez is the Program Director for the Foster Care Bridge Program at the YMCA San Diego County Child Resource Service, where he previously served as a trainer. Darryl has been working in early childhood for about 10 years, focusing primarily on children who experience homelessness. Darryl is passionate about teaching early childhood educators about trauma and what trauma responses are telling us about children's behavior. Two quotes that Darryl enjoys are: "If you can name it, you can tame it," by Dan Siegel and "Every child needs one person who is crazy about them," by Urie Bronfenbrenner.

Alma Daniela Cruz



Thursday, 1:00 PM Breakout A-5

Dani Cruz currently serves her community as a Quality Support Specialist for the Foster Care Bridge Program provided by the YMCA of San Diego County's Childcare Resource Service. Her passion for trauma-informed care has led her to give various trainings and coaching sessions on this topic. Through years of experience in early childhood, she strives to build and connect with providers all over the county. Born and raised in San Diego, Dani has dedicated her career to helping her community grow resilient by providing a nurturing environment built on empathy, equality, and care for all.

Speaker and Session

Biography

Kelly Curtis-Hughes, LMFT, RPT



Thursday, 3:00 PM Breakout B-2

Kelly Curtis-Hughes is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, working as an early childhood mental health therapist in San Diego. She holds a Master of Science degree in Counseling with an Emphasis in Marriage and Family Therapy from San Diego State University, as well as the designation of a Registered Play Therapist. Kelly works at KidSTART, an award winning transdisciplinary Infant Family Early Child Mental Health Treatment Program at Rady Children's Hospital. The KidSTART program works with the most complex children aged 0-5 and their families. These children have a multitude of diagnostic possibilities, which include not only mental health concerns, but also developmental, medical, and/or familial complexity. Kelly provides dyadic and family therapy utilizing therapy modalities of Child-Parent Psychotherapy, Trauma Assessment Pathway model, and Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, with play therapy and attachment-based techniques.

Kristen Eberly, LCSW



Thursday, 3:00 PM Breakout B-2

Kristen Eberly is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who works as a Mental Health Therapist specializing in peripartum mental health. Kristen provides counseling services to individuals and families who are navigating the journey of parenthood in its many forms at Well-Mamas Family Counseling. While providing a relationship-based and strengths-based approach to therapy, she supports the parents' understanding of their experiences, potential identity shifts, and emotions such as anxiety, intrusive thoughts, depression, anger, grief and loss, trauma symptoms, and exhaustion that can occur throughout the peripartum journey. Kristen approaches therapy with connection, empathy and understanding to create a trusting relationship for parents to feel heard, understood, and emotionally held to promote wellness and healing. Her approach includes the support of the parents' understanding of their strengths, values, and worth as they navigate parenting. Kristen also has experience as an Early Childhood Mental Health Therapist working with complex children ages 0-5 and their families, providing dyadic mental health treatment to navigate traumatic experiences, support the parent-child relationship, and promote family system wellness. Kristen holds a Master of Social Work and the Early Childhood Socio-Emotional and Behavior Regulation Intervention Specialist (EC-SEBRIS) Certification from San Diego State University.

Natalie Elms, MA



Thursday, 1:00 PM Breakout A-4

Natalie Elms has her MA in Developmental Psychology, and her clinical background is Behavior Therapy. She has worked in a number of roles for 20 years, providing direct treatment and/or managing teams that provide services for children of all abilities. She has been involved in grant-funded programs at Rady Children's Hospital since 2012 and is currently the manager for KidSTART Center. KidSTART Center provides services for children birth to six years old with complex developmental and behavioral health needs in addition to medical and or family complexity.

Speaker and Session

Biography

LaTysa Flowers, CPDTC



Thursday, 3:00 PM Breakout B-3
Friday, 1:00 PM Breakout C-4

LaTysa Flowers, CPDTC, is the Founder of Parents Empowerment Services, an organization which provides educational advocacy, consultation and coaching for the parents and caregivers of children with academic, developmental and social emotional challenges. She is a prescribed disruptor and advocate for the dissolution of the “preschool to prison pipeline.” LaTysa is employed with the YMCA of San Diego County where she provides organizational leadership, training and development on inclusion, anti-racism and culturally responsive practices. She is an alumna and the current Family Support Discipline Director for the California Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities (CA-LEND)—an interdisciplinary program of USC and Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles, and serves as Affiliate Discipline Faculty for Family Support in the (San Diego) SD-LEND Program. A certified Positive Discipline Educator for parents, classroom management and early childhood professionals, she is also a lived experience professional and courageous mother to four adult children and GiGi to two amazingly bright and brilliant grandsons!

Pradeep Gidwani, MD, MPH, FAAP



Friday, 8:45 AM Keynote
Friday, 10:30 AM Keynote
Thursday, 1:00 PM Breakout

Pradeep Gidwani, MD, MPH, FAAP, is a pediatrician and community health leader focused on creating systematic solutions and changes to improve the lives of children and their families. Currently, he works at American Academy of Pediatrics, California Chapter 3, San Diego and Imperial Counties (AAP-CA3) on a team that provides Countywide Coordination and Support for two large scale community initiatives: Healthy Development Services and First Step Home Visiting funded by First 5 San Diego. In the last 15 years, these communitywide programs have reached over 330,000 children and their families. Dr. Gidwani is a Past President of AAP-CA3, serves on numerous community advisory boards, and is a member of the Board Governors at the San Diego Foundation.

Lauren Gist, MD, MPH



Friday, 3:00 PM Breakout D-1

Lauren Gist, MD, MPH, is a board-certified developmental and behavioral pediatrician. She is an Associate Health Sciences Professor of Pediatrics at UC San Diego and combines time between Rady Children’s Hospital and UC San Diego Developmental Pediatrics for her clinical services. Developmental-behavioral pediatricians work with families to evaluate, treat, and coordinate care for children with developmental delays, behavioral issues, learning difficulties or mental health concerns. Dr. Gist has a special interest in the evaluation and care of young children with behavioral challenges, children with developmental and behavioral concerns associated with genetic conditions, autism, and fetal alcohol spectrum disorders. Dr. Gist currently works in a variety of clinical settings. She is the Medical Director of the Rady’s Children’s Down Syndrome Center and works as a developmental pediatrician in Rady’s KidStart program, which aims to serve complex children birth to six. She is a member of the multidisciplinary Turner syndrome clinic and she spends most of her time in the UC San Diego Developmental-Behavioral Pediatric consult clinic.

Speaker and Session

Wanjiru Golly, PhD



Friday, 1:00 PM Breakout C-3

Biography

Wanjiru Golly, PhD, was born and raised in Kenya and immigrated to San Diego in 1993. She received her BA in Psychology and Sociology from University Guelph, Canada, and her MA and PhD in Psychology from United States International University, San Diego Campus, in 1998, completing 3,000 clinical hours towards licensure. She worked as a Human Resources Professional at Pepsi Bottling Group for three years. In 2002, she decided to pursue her passion in working with children and families and made a career change to the non-profit sector, where she worked with a refugee resettlement agency, the Alliance for African Assistance, as the Program Director for the Family Strengthening and Community Building Department. Dr. Golly then worked with Community Housing Works as a Community Building Coordinator and provided trainings and support to refugee and immigrant families. She also consulted on various projects to give a voice to the communities and worked as a Protective Service Worker for the County of San Diego for eight years. Her roles included investigations, case carrying, and Pathways to Well-Being (provided mental health screenings and facilitated Child and Family Team meetings). Dr. Golly began training as an Independent Contractor for The Academy for Professional Excellence in 2005. Topic areas included Working with Refugee and Immigrant Families, Social Work in a Multi-Cultural Environment, Intimate Partner Violence, and Pathways to Well-Being. She was also a Best Practice Coach for supervisors and social workers, and in February 2016 she joined the Academy full-time as the Program Manager for the Cultural Responsiveness Academy. In this current role she is responsible for developing a series of learning experiences for Child Welfare Services (CWS) staff to address the disproportionality and disparity in CWS.

Habeebah Rasheed Grimes, MA



Thursday, 8:45 AM Keynote
Thursday, 10:30 AM Keynote

Habeebah Rasheed Grimes, MA, has made serving Northeast Ohio's most vulnerable children her life's work. She is a sought-after public speaker, community leader, and creator of "No Crystal Stair" Podcast. As CEO of Positive Education Program (PEP), Habeebah leads a staff of 450 professionals committed to supporting healing in children who have experienced significant adversity and mental health challenges. Recognizing the harm that trauma and chronic stress cause in the lives of the young people PEP serves, Habeebah worked closely with The Neurosequential Network to certify the agency as a Phase 2 Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT) site. Her current focus is providing leadership in support of culturally affirming and healing-centered practices at PEP and in the broader community.

Habeebah holds a master's degree in clinical/counseling psychology and a specialist degree in school psychology from Cleveland State University. She is a trustee of The Woodruff Foundation and an appointee to Cuyahoga County's Advisory Council on Equity. She also serves on the State of Ohio's OhioRISE (Resilience through Integrated Systems and Excellence) Advisory Council and is the Vice Chair of the Northeast Ohio Steering Committee of the Mental Health and Addiction Advocacy Coalition. Habeebah grew up witnessing her brother, Hashim, struggle with severe childhood and adult mental health challenges. She sees her work and service as a tribute to his memory. She resides in Cleveland, Ohio with her husband, John, and their two young sons.

Speaker and Session

Biography

Cinnamon Harper, LCSW



Cinnamon Harper, LCSW, has been a part of the KidSTART team at Rady Children's Hospital San Diego for close to ten years. She spent the first eight years of that time as a Care Coordinator with KidSTART Center helping to meet the developmental needs of children 0 to 5 with complex needs. She earned her LCSW and transitioned to the position of Early Childhood Trauma Therapist with KidSTART's mental health clinic in January of 2021, serving the same population. In addition, Ms. Harper has over ten years of experience in a variety of settings, primarily working with children and families.

Thursday, 1:00 PM Breakout A-4

Lori Jenkinson, MS, CCC-SLP



Lori Jenkinson, MS, CCC-SLP, is a licensed speech language pathologist in California. She received her undergraduate and graduate degrees from Arizona State University. She has a passion for early childhood language development and working with parents in supporting their understanding of their child's development. She is a consultant and supervisor with Positive Development and owner of Circles Developmental Therapies.

Thursday, 1:00 PM Breakout A-2

Maggie Knight, LMFT



Maggie Knight, LMFT, is a bilingual (Spanish/English) Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist currently working at the KidSTART Clinic, Chadwick Center for Children and Families at Rady Children's Hospital San Diego, as an early childhood mental health therapist for children 0-5 and their families. She completed her undergraduate degree at San Diego State University with a degree in Psychology and Spanish and completed her Master's degree at California State University, Fullerton. Maggie has been trained in various treatment modalities, including Parent Child Interaction Therapy, Trauma Assessment Pathway, and Child Parent Psychotherapy. With experience treating children, adolescents, and families, Maggie's passion has really been working with the 0-5 population supporting healthy attachment and developmental growth.

Friday, 3:00 PM Breakout D-5

Anthony Kuleto, MD



Anthony Kuleto, MD is a Navy Developmental Behavioral Pediatrician. He has been Active Duty for over 23 years with multiple overseas deployments, including combat deployments to Iraq in 2003 and 2004. He is happily married to his best friend, and they have two teenage boys and a dog, Oliver, whom they love to travel and surf with.

Friday, 3:00 PM Breakout D-2

Speaker and Session

Biography

Meghan Lukasik, PhD



Meghan Lukasik, PhD, has been a licensed clinical psychologist since 1998 and has worked at Rady Children's Hospital since 1999. Meghan specializes in the assessment of infants and young children, and she has extensive experience in diagnostic assessment of neurodevelopmental disorders and early mental health concerns. She is the former clinical director of Rady Children's KidSTART Clinic, a program for children ages 0-5 with complex developmental and mental health needs. In addition to providing direct clinical service, Meghan currently manages the Developmental Evaluation Clinic and is the co-training director for the clinic's APPIC-approved postdoctoral fellowship program.

Friday, 1:00 PM Breakout C-2

Veronica Miller, BS



Veronica Miller is the Program Supervisor at the Developmental Screening and Enhancement Program (DSEP), Rady Children's Hospital, with over 25 years of experience working with children 0-5 years of age. She has been with DSEP for nearly 14 years. She started at DSEP in 2008 as one of the first Developmental Specialists and was later promoted to the program's first Bilingual Lead. During her time as a Lead, Veronica became a Certified Infant Massage Instructor (CIMI) through World Institute for Nurturing Communication (WINC) and pioneered the Infant Massage program at DSEP. She later was promoted to Program Supervisor where she continues to advocate for children and families as well as for her team members.

Thursday, 1:00 PM Breakout A-6
Thursday, 3:00 PM Breakout B-6

Rajkumari Neogy, MA, MNLP



Rajkumari Neogy, BA, MA, MNLP is an epigenetic coach and executive consultant focused on the intersection of neurobiology, culture and empathy. She is excited to bring this cutting-edge knowledge to early childhood development in order to examine the impact on transgenerational trauma and why a sense of belonging is critical for young children and their families. Previously, Rajkumari held positions in training and development at well-known technology companies, including Adobe and Facebook. She frequently presents on epigenetics and the biology of belonging at worldwide conferences, including Culturati, Responsive Conference and Culture Summit.

Thursday, 8:45 AM Keynote
Thursday, 10:30 AM Keynote
Friday, 1:00 PM Breakout C-6

Rajkumari holds a bachelor's degree in film from San Jose State University, a master's degree in Transformative Leadership Development from the California Institute of Integral Studies, and is the author of *The WIT Factor: Shifting the Workplace Paradigm by Becoming Your Optimal Self*. Based in San Francisco, Rajkumari is an aspiring bread baker who enjoys cooking, venturing to three-star Michelin restaurants, and attending the opera and symphony.

Brandi Paniagua, MAEd



Brandi Paniagua is currently the Coordinator and Trainer with Partners in Prevention, a community-based grant program that is stewarded by the YMCA of San Diego County's Childcare Resource Service. She has a passion for education and equity and has pursued education as her focus in higher learning. As a lifelong San Diegan, she is committed to the community she grew up in, and passionate about family voice and choice, shared language, continuous quality improvement and self-reflection, and prioritizing the dignity of all people.

Thursday, 3:00 PM Breakout B-5
Friday, 3:00 PM Breakout D-4

Speaker and Session

Biography

Aisha Pope, LCSW



Thursday, 3:00 PM Breakout B-3
Friday, 1:00 PM Breakout C-4

Aisha Pope, LCSW, has worked in San Diego's Children's Behavioral Health System of Care for over 20 years. Currently working for San Diego Center for Children as a Program Director in the Foster Family Agency Stabilization and Treatment (FFAST) program, Aisha also sees families in private practice at Roots and Wings Consulting. A Certified Positive Discipline Lead Trainer and one of the authors of the *Positive Discipline Tools for Kids* Social Emotional Learning program, she is passionate about social justice and working with marginalized families. She is one of the founders of the Birth of Brilliance Conference which focuses on equity in services provided to youth and their families. Aisha loves the work that she does and the families she serves, but above all, she is proud and grateful for her job as mom to Jayden and Maya.

Ariane Porras, BA



Thursday, 1:00 PM Breakout A-5

Ariane Porras has been working in the early childhood sector as an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant and Trainer for the past 14 years. She trains on Trauma-Informed practices, strengths-based frameworks and cultural competencies. Ariane is passionate about creating spaces for people to learn and reflect on what it means to be in responsive relationship and community.

Charmi Patel Rao, MD



Thursday, 1:00 PM Breakout A-2
Friday, 1:00 PM Breakout C-2

Charmi Patel Rao, MD, is board certified in adult psychiatry and child and adolescent psychiatry. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of California, Riverside, her medical degree from UC Irvine, and completed her internship and residency at UC San Diego and her fellowship at UC San Francisco and UC San Diego. She has developed an expertise in early childhood mental health and co-morbid mental health/developmental delays. She is the Director of Psychiatric Services for Positive Development and was previously the Supervising Psychiatrist for Juvenile Forensics with the County of San Diego Behavioral Health Services. She is also a Health Sciences Assistant Clinical Professor for UC San Diego Department of Psychiatry.



Speaker and Session

Biography

Neda Rivera, MA, LMFT, MHB



Friday, 1:00 PM Breakout C-3

Neda Rivera, MA, LMFT, MHB, is a Licensed Mental Health Clinician for San Diego County Child Welfare Services, where she works with staff closely and trains them on secondary trauma stress to support and retain workers. She has worked with refugees and immigrant families from the Middle East for over 23 years and serves as a consultant for the Middle Eastern community in San Diego County. Neda is a graduate of National University, receiving a Master's in Human Behavior with a focus on domestic violence and eating disorders, and a Master's in Counseling Psychology, Marriage and Child Therapy Counseling. In 20 years with Child Welfare Services she has served as a Protective Services Worker, Senior Protective Services Worker, Protective Services Supervisor, and currently as a licensed mental Health Clinician for Child Welfare. She also volunteered with License to Freedom for four years and worked with both victims and perpetrators of abuse, particularly of domestic violence. Neda has also worked as a team member with law enforcement agencies and medical professionals, including providing training to law enforcement agencies on child welfare laws. She has taken an active role in her community, participating as a mental health liaison for over ten years with the Saint Pius X Church, where she connected residents with needed services. Additionally, she works as a part-time therapist in private practice and provides individual, family, and couple counseling for adults and children who come from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds and struggle with bullying, social injustice, discrimination, and identity issues.

Jeff Rowe, MD



Thursday, 8:00 AM Welcome
Thursday, 3:00 PM Breakout B-1
Friday, 8:00 AM Welcome
Friday, 3:00 PM Breakout D-3

Jeff Rowe, MD, is a psychiatrist who works with children, adolescents, and adults. After retiring as an administrative psychiatrist for the County of San Diego and the University of California San Diego, Dr. Rowe has continued his private practice and role as a teacher for child psychiatry fellows, students at local universities, and the community. He specializes in the assessment and treatment of very young children, traumatized children, and children with complicated conditions.

Bianca Ruiz, BA



Friday, 3:00 PM Breakout D-5

Bianca Ruiz is a child and family specialist for the KidSTART program, Chadwick Center for Children and Families, Rady Children's Hospital San Diego. Her medical specialization is as case manager/care coordinator, in which she provides case management services and assists individuals in gaining access to needed medical, social, educational, and other services. She assists caregivers with activities of daily living, overcoming cultural barriers, and conducting home visits. She offers coaching on community resources, as well as referrals to outside agencies for the child, caregiver, and extended family members. In assisting children and families, Bianca creates a caring and safe environment during services and serves as a support person for both the client and clinician.

Speaker and Session

Biography

Lodia Ruiz, MPA



Lodia Ruiz, MPA, holds a Master's degree in public administration with a specialty in organizational leadership. Lodia has over 20 years of combined experience in non-profit direct services and program management, providing leadership to diverse communities impacted by trauma and adverse community experiences. She currently is an Integrated Learning Developer for YMCA Community Support Services (CSS) and is responsible for supporting staff learning and integration of social service delivery best practices, including relationally-responsive, trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches.

Thursday, 3:00 PM Breakout B-5
Friday, 1:00 PM Breakout C-5

Mannie Sanchez-Curtis, BA



Mannie Sanchez-Curtis (they/them/their) has a background in child and adolescent development and has worked for various non-profit social service agencies in Arizona and Southern California throughout their career. Their experience ranges from early intervention services, case management, social advocacy, domestic violence support, and parenting education. Currently, Mannie works as a Developmental Specialist for the Rady Children's Hospital HealthySteps Program in Murrieta and Temecula. With HealthySteps, they are able to utilize their skills in supporting physicians and caregivers with the developmental and behavioral needs of infants and young children in a clinical setting. They are passionate about helping parents see the unique perspectives of their children as well as advocating for diversity, inclusion, and representation within the field of child development. On their free time, Mannie enjoys baking, cooking, travel, hiking, camping, and cat cuddles their fur-babies, Violet and Hermione.

Thursday, 1:00 PM Breakout A-6
Thursday, 3:00 PM Breakout B-6

Tracey Tasker, MBA, MA, CCC/SLP



Tracey Tasker, MBA, MA, CCC/SLP, holds a BA in English and Economics and an MBA from Rutgers University, an MA in Speech-Language Pathology from Montclair State University, and started her career at AT&T/Lucent Technologies. She had a set of twin boys (one autistic son) and three years later a set of twin girls (born two months premature) and became immersed in the world of early intervention. That's when she decided that her true passion was to help other parents help their young children to communicate. Tracey has been providing evaluations and therapy to early intervention families for twelve years and mentors graduate students and new clinicians. She has provided professional training and has had several articles published on the dangers of screen time and the benefits of early literacy for young children. Tracey is a board member and co-chair of the Membership Outreach and Belonging committee for the Infant Development Association of California.

Friday, 1:00 PM Breakout C-1

Christopher Walsh, LMFT



Christopher Walsh is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with over 25 years of experience in the field of mental health where he has served as an administrator, consultant, educator and provider of psychotherapy to families in San Diego area. He currently is the Clinical Director at Community Resource Center in Encinitas and in private practice specializing in Integrative psychotherapy.

Friday, 3:00 PM Breakout D-3

Speaker and Session

Babbi Winegarden, PhD, MHPE



Thursday, 1:00 PM Breakout A-3

Biography

Babbi Winegarden, PhD, MHPE, is the Behavioral Health Program Coordinator for San Diego County Child Welfare Services, where she provides a leadership role in the mental health services provided to children and families that become part of the child welfare system. She also has a special interest in secondary trauma as it affects child welfare workers.

Dr. Winegarden was licensed by the California Board of Psychology in 1994. She received her PhD from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee in Clinical Psychology in 1989. She completed her internship at the Palo Alto Department of Veteran Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) focusing on neuropsychology and post-traumatic stress disorder. She then completed two years of Fellowship training in Neuropsychology at the Palo Alto VAMC and Stanford University Medical Center. She has worked in Medical Education at the University of Illinois Chicago and the UC San Diego School of Medicine. Her primary research has focused on the reliability and validity of assessment tools as well as their potential disparate impact. Her clinical work has focused on the treatment of trauma, depression, anxiety, grief and loss, and rehabilitation.

