



# Speaker Biographies

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15<sup>th</sup> Annual ECMH Conference – We Can't Wait!  
*We Don't Wait: Nurturing and Healing in Action*

September 26-27, 2024

Hybrid Event ♦ Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina ♦ Online



## ECMH 2024 Speaker Biographies

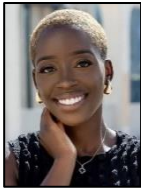
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### Speaker and Session

### Biography

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Ania Boyd, MPH



Friday, 1:30 PM Breakout C-5

Ania Boyd is the Community Engagement Lead for BrightLife Kids, where she leverages her Master of Public Health (MPH) degree to advance community outreach and resource bridging in underserved and minority communities. With a dedicated focus on addressing gaps in needed resources, Ania plays a pivotal role in enhancing the well-being of vulnerable populations. Her career has been marked by a commitment to community education, environmental safety, and pediatric mental health. Ania's expertise includes collecting and analyzing data, developing research studies, and implementing trial protocols. Her work extends to identifying opportunities for improvement in water resources and environmental safety. Driven by a passion for equity and social justice, Ania is dedicated to addressing disparities and improving access to critical resources and support for children and families, particularly in the realm of pediatric mental health.

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Joy Brewster, MEd, SLP



Thursday, 3:30 PM Breakout B-2

Joy has been practicing as a speech language pathologist working with young children for over 30 years. At Rady Children's Hospital San Diego's KidSTART, Joy plays a lead clinical role in supporting the development and implementation of assessment and treatment for children with complex developmental and behavioral health needs. Recently, she has played a lead role in launching KidSTART's multidisciplinary assessments, integrating SLP, OT, DB Pediatricians and Psychologists to work together to improve access for children with complex needs. Joy is an experienced clinician with training across disciplines including Hanen, Prompt, Floortime, Hope, Child- Parent Psychotherapy (3-day training) and several courses in sensory regulation. She is as passionate about helping children and their families as she is about mentoring and supporting new clinicians, which has helped shape the strong team she works with at KidSTART.

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Rahil Briggs, PsyD



Thursday, 8:45 AM Keynote  
Thursday, 12:30 PM Lunch & Learn

Rahil Briggs, PsyD, is the National Director of Zero to Three's HealthySteps pediatric primary care program which operates in 24 states, plus DC, and has reached nearly 500,000 children. She is a Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, Psychiatry, and Behavioral Sciences at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. She is also the editor of Integrated Early Childhood Behavioral Health in Primary Care. Dr. Briggs was the founder of one of the most comprehensive integrated pediatric behavioral health services in the nation, serving almost 90,000 children in the Bronx each year. She was also the recipient of the 2018 Health Care Delivery Award from the Academic Pediatric Association. Dr. Briggs completed her studies at Duke University and New York University.

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## Speaker and Session

## Biography

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Francisco Castillo, BA Psychology



Friday, 1:30 PM Breakout C-3

Francisco received his bachelor's degree in psychology from California State University of San Marcos. He has been working with young children and their families at Palomar Health Healthy Development Services since 2017 as a developmental service specialist providing screening, developmental assessments, facilitating group classes, and providing one-on-one parental coaching. His professional expertise is complemented by his personal experience as a father to his seven-year-old son, Luca, which gives him a unique perspective on the challenges faced by families. Francisco is deeply passionate about his work and recognizes the critical role that a father figure plays in the overall development of a young child.

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Lori Scott Clarke, MA



Friday, 1:30 PM Breakout C-4

Lori Clarke is the Director/Principal Investigator of the Social Policy Institute (SPI) at San Diego State University. She leads SPI's system change work with various state and county cross-sector leadership teams, bringing innovation and excellence to design/development and capacity-building centered on parent and youth voice and choice. Throughout her career she has infused hope and progress into statewide and local initiatives focused on child, family, and community wellness. After serving as the lead facilitator for California's Child Welfare Services Redesign that brought Differential Response to California, she helped design the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare and continues to develop integrated learning systems statewide and nationally on a wide range of health and human services issues.

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Kelly Curtis-Hughes, LMFT, RPT



Thursday, 1:30 PM Breakout A-2

Kelly Curtis-Hughes is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, working as an early childhood mental health therapist in San Diego with infants and children ages 0-5 and their families. 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's specialties, in addition to infant and early childhood mental health, include trauma, parenting, and perinatal mental health. 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. She also provides reflective supervision and is entering the field of early child mental health consultation. Kelly is the author of the children's book, *The Room in My Heart*, to help children and their special adults process difficult goodbyes.

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Miriah de Matos, MPH, MA



Friday, 10:45 AM Keynote

Miriah de Matos, MPH, MA, is the Training and Technical Assistance Senior Manager with the American Academy of Pediatrics, California Chapter 3, and works on the countywide coordination and support of First 5 First Steps family support program. Miriah holds Master's degrees in Latin America Studies and Public Health, Bilingual Special Education and a Bachelor's in International Studies and Spanish. Miriah has been working to improve the lives of children and families for over 15 years. Her experience includes both direct service, program development, and community-based evaluation in the United States and abroad. In her current work, she has developed and adapted curriculum for multiple psychoeducational groups for parents with a focus on the social-emotional development of young children.

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## Speaker and Session

## Biography

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Natalie Elms, MA



Natalie, who has her MA in Developmental Psychology, is the manager of KidSTART Center at Rady Children's Hospital, bringing over 20 years of experience in leadership and clinical roles supporting children of all abilities. Starting her career as a therapist with a background in behavior, she has advanced to lead multidisciplinary teams and establish diverse funding streams. Natalie has spearheaded the development of innovative programs tailored to meet the unique clinical needs of children, driven by her passion for creative solutions and collaboration.

Thursday, 1:30 PM Breakout A-1

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Krysta Esquivel, MSW



Krysta Esquivel is the Vice President of YMCA of San Diego County's Social Services and Executive Director of YMCA Youth and Family Services (YFS). With a career spanning over two decades, Krysta entered the social service field in 2001 and has been making a significant impact ever since. An active advocate in the policy arena, Krysta plays a pivotal role in providing advocacy and education to policy-makers with the aim to move forward and implement practical, culturally responsive approaches that effectively and equitably support under-resourced youth and families. Recognized nationally for her expertise in the field, Krysta is a committed visionary who continuously explores collective efforts to improve organizational practices and better serve communities.

Friday, 3:30 PM Breakout D-3

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Angeles Flores, MEd, CEIM



Angeles Flores has been a Development Services Specialist at Palomar Health Healthy Development Services since 2013. She provides evaluations and assessments of children's development and behavior, develops and implements individualized treatment plans, and monitors progress to ensure that the child is developing in a positive direction. Angeles is CEIM (Certified Educator of Infant Massage) and a parent/infant educator. For over a decade, Angeles served diverse families as a preschool teacher in the Head Start programs. She graduated with honors from Ashford University with a BA in Early Childhood Education and received her master's degree in Education from the National Hispanic University. Angeles' experiences as an immigrant equipped her with tools to connect with the diverse families in San Diego. She is passionate about sharing with families the importance of maintaining their culture, the impact of healthy eating in child development, and our role in taking care of our planet. She is inspired by both minor or significant changes she sees in the interactions between children and families and by the disadvantaged families that defeat obstacles to pursuing their goals.

Friday, 1:30 PM Breakout C-3

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Ali Freedman, PsyD, MBA



Ali Freedman is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist in San Diego who also completed her MBA with an interest in supporting the sustainability of social services for youth and families. Ali has worked anywhere from clinician to executive to consultant in a variety of nonprofits within the social service sector. Her belief in the importance of early intervention prompted her to complete the Advanced Infant and Preschool Mental Health Certificate. Always looking for effective ways to help and engage people, Ali became certified as an Equus Coach where people are brought together with horses to gain insight and see their patterns and potential through those unique relationships. Currently working as a consultant, she is also committed to several projects for which she volunteers. Ali has been co-chair of the ECMH Conference since its inception.

Friday, 8:00 AM Welcome

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## Speaker and Session

## Biography

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Pradeep Gidwani, MD, MPH, FAAP



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

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 of Governors at the San Diego Foundation.

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Lauren Gist, MD, MPH



Thursday, 3:30 PM Breakout B-2

Lauren Gist, MD, MPH is a board-certified developmental and behavioral pediatrician. She is an Associate Health Sciences Professor of Pediatrics at University of California 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 and 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 spends most of her time in the UC San Diego Developmental-Behavioral Pediatric consult clinic.

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Sarah Glass, MSW



Friday, 3:30 PM Breakout D-1

Sarah Glass, who has been with the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency since 2007, is a Deputy Director in the Child and Family Well-Being Department where she oversees the Office of Child and Family Strengthening. She has experience as a case carrying social worker in various programs and has managed the Placement, Intensive Family Preservation, Voluntary Services, and Fostering Academic Success in Education programs in every regional child welfare office. As a policy analyst and policy manager she focused on the expansion of the Continuous Quality Improvement program to focus on improving practice and engagement with families within the department. In her current role as Deputy Director in the Office of Child and Family Strengthening she oversees the San Diego County Childcare Blueprint and the San Diego County Comprehensive Prevention Plan to support the implementation of "no wrong door" prevention supports to families. She is also a lecturer at San Diego State University in the Social Work department.

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## Speaker and Session

## Biography

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Aneesah Grayson, MPA



Aneesah, a recent graduate of the University of Southern California with a Master's Degree in Public Administration, developed a deep interest in climate change through her personal health journey and its effects on her community. Inspired by her own experiences, she now aims to use her story to advocate for and support policies that can benefit others facing similar challenges.

Thursday, 3:30 PM Breakout B-4

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Alfredo Guardado, MSW



Alfredo Guardado has worked for the County of San Diego for over 24 years with 21 years being in Child Welfare Services, serving as the Assistant Director for Child Welfare Services for the last four years. He has helped lead the change from the traditional approach to child safety by focusing on prevention and upstream services. He also helped lead the department's Innovation in Foster Care: Cash Transfer for At Risk Families program and Community Response Guide (CRG). In addition, Alfredo led the department's response to the pandemic and, most recently, has focused his efforts on modernizing and transitioning the Child Abuse Hotline to a Helpline. He is a graduate of San Diego State University where he received his Master of Social Work degree.

Friday, 3:30 PM Breakout D-1

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Kristina Halmi-Gillan, LMFT



Kristina Halmi-Gillan, LMFT is the Director of Service Innovation at YMCA Youth and Family Services. She is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, having worked in the mental health field for 20 years, and holds a graduate certificate in Substance Use Counseling. She has worked with a wide array of youth in both residential and outpatient settings. She translates research in order to apply practices that support high quality youth programming design and equity in positive youth outcomes. Through funding through the U.S. Administration for Children and Families, Kristina co-founded the C.A.A.V.E. approach, which has been adopted by social workers and therapists across the country.

Friday, 3:30 PM Breakout D-3

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Cinnamon Harper, LCSW



Cinnamon Harper, LCSW, has been a part of the KidSTART team at Rady Children's Hospital San Diego for close to 12 years. She spent the first eight years of that time as a Social Worker with KidSTART Center helping to meet the developmental challenges 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, 3:30 PM Breakout B-2

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## Speaker and Session

## Biography

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Amy Isiaho, MSW



Amy Isiaho has a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from Missouri State University and a Master's Degree in Social Work from San Diego State University. She is a policy analyst at the San Diego County Child and Family Well-Being Department (CFWB), working in prevention. Amy has worked in child welfare for over 13 years in California and Texas in various programs including prevention, emergency response, placement, and ongoing services. She has served as a line worker, supervisor and policy analyst within CFWB, and is a HOPE facilitator providing trainings on the HOPE framework.

Thursday, 1:30 PM Breakout A-1

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Shannon Jeng-Lin Apel, MA,  
CCC-SLP



Shannon Apel is a bilingual pediatric speech language pathologist who currently works at Rady Children's Hospital San Diego. She is passionate about working with behaviorally and medically complex children from birth to 21 who also have complex communication needs. In addition to Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), her areas of clinical expertise also include gender affirming voice, autism, and feeding and swallowing disorders. Shannon received her BA in Speech and Hearing Science from the University of Illinois and her MA in Speech Language Pathology from the University of Iowa.

Thursday, 3:30 PM Breakout B-1

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Hannah Kenny, MSW



Hannah Kenny, MSW, works as a Social Worker at Rady Children's Hospital San Diego KidSTART Center supporting families through complex care coordination. Informed by her background in mental health therapy for children who have experienced trauma, Hannah is committed to enhancing the integration trauma-responsive care across practice settings.

Thursday, 3:30 PM Breakout B-2

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Richard Knecht, MS



Friday, 8:45 AM Keynote  
Friday, 1:30 PM Breakout C-4

Richard Knecht, MS, is Managing Partner at the Integrated Human Services Group, LLC, where he and his affiliates provide program operations, leadership, strategic planning and training services to public and private healthcare and human service systems. A former COO of a large behavioral health hospital, and former Sr. Vice President of Program Operations at the River Oak Center for Children, he is currently an advisor to state agencies, wherein he provides guidance and cross-system statewide technical assistance to multiple departments. He was the lead design engineer of the state's Integrated Core Practice Model and wrote the template which now anchors Children's System of Care in all 58 counties in California. Richard served for ten years as director of Placer County's highly regarded children's system in California. Richard is also the author of two children's books.

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## Speaker and Session

## Biography

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Brynn Knight, DPT



Friday, 1:30 PM Breakout C-3

Brynn received her bachelor's degree in kinesiology from San Diego State University and her doctorate in physical therapy from Loma Linda University. She has been working as a pediatric physical therapist since 2008, starting at Rady's Children Hospital before taking a position as the primary physical therapist and parent/ infant educator at Palomar Health Healthy Development Services in 2012. She is committed to helping parents/caregivers better understand and build strong and healthy relationships with their infants. Brynn's personal experiences with her own children's developmental delays and mental health struggles have helped prepare her to provide patient sensitive and comprehensive treatment plans for the families she serves. Brynn is passionate about infant development and is inspired by watching new parents build strong healthy attachment bonds with their babies.

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Heidi Leininger, MS, CCC-SLP



Friday, 1:30 PM Breakout C-3

Heidi earned her master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology from California State University San Marcos, after having completed her bachelor's degree in Speech-Language Science and Technology at Northern Arizona University. Her special interests include working with bilingual families in the early intervention setting, creating holistic treatment plans with interdisciplinary team members, and providing culturally competent services. She has been called upon to share her knowledge in autism spectrum disorder, early language development, speech sound disorders, and creating a trauma-responsive environment. Her career has included working in-home and in clinical settings for nearly a decade, with her most recent placement at Palomar Health Healthy Development Services, providing services for children 0-5 years old.

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Caroline Loretan, LMFT



Friday, 1:30 PM Breakout C-3

Caroline received her master's in counseling from San Diego State University and graduated from Kliment Ohridski Sofia University, Bulgaria with a master's in psychology. She is a bilingual Licensed Mental Health Clinician and Behavior Specialist at Palomar Health, Healthy Development Services. Caroline's cultural background has prepared her to provide culturally sensitive services to families of diverse cultural groups and ethnic minorities. She is committed to helping parents/caregivers build strong and healthy relationships with their children, focusing on maternal mental health and attachment relationship, as well as the influence of culture in family structure and child rearing. Caroline is passionate about anthropology, looking at all aspects of humans within societies—how linguistics, culture, history, and generational trauma shape each one of us and how we interact with each other. Caroline's true inspiration are the children and families she has met along the way.

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Honor Medina, LMFT



Thursday, 1:30 PM Breakout A-3

Honor is a marriage and family therapist who has been practicing for 30 years. She is an Advanced Clinical Hypnotherapist, Trauma-Informed Therapist, Certified Master Facilitator of Equus Coaching, Certified Transpersonal Coach, and Leadership Circle Certified. She is known for assisting people with breaking patterns of behavior they haven't been able to stop and helping people to show up with renewed integrity and balance in their lives. Honor values spirituality and loves connecting people with their spiritual resources. Her private practice is located in Carlsbad, New Mexico and she sees clients via Zoom.

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## Speaker and Session

## Biography

Clorinda Merino, MA



Clorinda Merino is the Integrated Learning Director with the Social Policy Institute at San Diego State University and a private consultant in areas of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) for school districts and other organizations. She has a BA in Psychology and a MA in Counseling from the University of San Diego. Clorinda is an experienced international trainer and program developer, and has managed county, state, and federal contracts in different organizations that focused on evidence-based practices to address child, family, and community well-being. She is passionate about ensuring that culturally affirming interventions are woven into evidence-based and trauma-informed practices.

Friday, 1:30 PM Breakout C-4

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Melanie Morones, LMFT, ATR,  
ECMHS



Melanie Morones, LMFT, ATR, ECMHS, began her career in infant and early childhood mental health in south central Los Angeles providing intensive mental health services to youth and their families. Concurrently she was holding a role as a facilitator in the Early Intervention Training Institute where she was selected to be in the first cohort to complete and join the rosters of the CPP (Child Parent Psychotherapy) family. Melanie enjoys facilitating training and conversations to support reflective practice, program development and ensure youth and families receive appropriate trauma-informed care. She holds an adjunct faculty position at Loyola Marymount University, providing group and individual Clinical Art Therapy supervision to emerging providers within the graduate program. Melanie is the Early Childhood Mental Health Clinical Program Director at the YMCA San Diego and is also a co-founder and Tri-Chair of the annual Birth of Brilliance Conference. In its 5<sup>th</sup> year, the conference continues to challenge racism and other inequities that impact children and families and support movement toward true systems change. Raised in the smallest of rural towns near the border of New Mexico and Arizona, she is well versed in the impacts of racial disparities and implicit bias. Her roots, combined with intentionally sought diverse professional experiences, have cultivated a frame of compassionate curiosity and cultural reverence that is the foundation of both her clinical work and approach to life.

Friday, 3:30 PM Breakout D-5

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Vi Thuy Nguyen, MD



Vi Thuy Nguyen, MD, FAAP is a Fellow of Environmental Health as part of the American Academy of Pediatrics and serves as Chair of AAP California State Government Affairs Expert Committee on Environmental Health and Climate Change. She is Co-Founder of San Diego Pediatricians for Clean Air, a coalition of concerned pediatricians who advocate for pediatric asthmatic patients. She also serves as Co-Chair of the Public Health Advisory Council for Climate Actions Campaign in San Diego and Orange County. She earned her MD at Harvard Medical School and trained in general pediatrics and pediatric endocrinology at Massachusetts General Hospital and the National Institutes of Health. In her professional life, she managed over 90 outpatient general pediatricians with special oversight on the South County. She was responsible for pediatric quality measures with special emphasis on pediatric asthma health and vaccine measures. Dr. Nguyen has pivoted her extra-curricular physician time to being an advocate for physician wellness and joy and climate work. She is a proud trained Climate Reality Leader, Co-Lead of Kaiser San Diego's Sustainability/Green Team, and actively blogs and Instagrams as an alternate eco-avatar plogger (jogger and beach cleaner). She is currently laser focused on decarbonization. She was able to successfully orchestrate H3SD San Diego's Heat and Human Health Summit with Harvard Medical alumnus friend Dr. Luis Castellanos from UC San Diego School of Medicine.

Thursday, 3:30 PM Breakout B-4

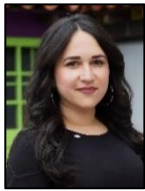
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## Speaker and Session

## Biography

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Brandi Paniagua, MEd



Brandi Paniagua is currently a 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 devoted to community re-investment, social and educational equity, family voice and choice, shared language, and prioritizing the dignity of all people.

Thursday, 1:30 PM Breakout A-4

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Charmi Patel Rao, MD



Charmi Patel Rao, MD, is board certified in adult psychiatry and child and adolescent psychiatry. She has developed an expertise in early childhood mental health and co-morbid mental health/developmental delays. She is Co-Medical Director at Vista Hill Foundation. Previously Dr. Patel Rao was the Supervising Psychiatrist for Juvenile Forensics with the County of San Diego Behavioral Health Services and was the consulting psychiatrist for Rady Children's KidSTART Clinic for 10 years. She is also a Clinical Professor for UC San Diego Department of Psychiatry and chair of the Critical Issues in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Conference (CICAMH).

Thursday, 1:30 PM Breakout A-2

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Ariane Porras, BSW, SEP



Ariane Porras holds a BSW with a minor in Psychology and is a Somatic Experiencing Practitioner and Somatic Educator. In her 15 years with the YMCA of San Diego County, she has worked as an Early Childhood Mental Health consultant, promoting social development foundations, facilitating support groups, and providing trainings on primary preventive frameworks, trauma-informed care, and culturally responsive practices. In her current role as Community Collaborative Director, she leads teams and equips the public on primary prevention frameworks, trauma-informed care, and culturally responsive practices. Her experience working with the end cap populations of our society has greatly contributed to her passion for equipping caregivers and social service professionals in San Diego, as it has provided a full scope of how trauma affects the entire family system and how responsive relationships are key to healing each other and in turn our communities.

Friday, 10:45 AM Keynote  
Thursday, 3:30 PM Breakout B-5

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Monica Rollins, MA



With 15+ years in the education field, Monica is serious about play. Whether she is working with adults or children, she always infuses learning experiences with whimsy, fun and playfulness. She has worked in a variety of educational settings, including children's museums, PK-5 classrooms, universities, and most recently in Early Head Start as the Education Manager. With an MA in Early Childhood/Special Education and 650+ hours of yoga teacher training, she specializes in teaching others how to infuse yoga and mindfulness into their daily routines using an inclusive and trauma-informed approach. She also founded Rooted: A Wellness Collective, where she helps education professionals live their lives rooted in wealth and wellness.

Thursday, 3:30 PM Breakout B-3

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## Speaker and Session

## Biography

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Jeff Rowe, MD



Thursday, 10:45 AM Keynote  
Friday, 1:30 PM Breakout C-2  
Friday, 3:30 PM Breakout D-2

Dr. Rowe is a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist in private practice. He retired from the County of San Diego after 20 years serving as their Supervising Psychiatrist for Children and Adolescents. He also retired from UC San Diego Department of Psychiatry as the Acting Chair of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Dr. Rowe is a clinician, teacher, and consultant. He treats children and youth with all types of mental health difficulties, attends IEP (Individualized Education Program) meetings, teaches residents and medical students, and gives lectures to parent groups about a variety of topics. He is well versed in medication therapies, individual psychotherapy, family psychotherapy, behavior modification, group therapy, and school consultation. For many years he assisted the County of San Diego Behavioral Health Services in the development of new mental health and substance abuse treatment programs, supervised the County's Child Psychiatrists, and provided clinical consultation to the Juvenile Court.

Dr. Rowe is the Co-Chair of this Early Childhood Mental Health Conference and is also a member of the planning committees for two other San Diego conferences: Critical Issues in Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CICAMH) and the Birth of Brilliance.

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Renee Sievert, RN, LMFT, PCC



Friday, 3:30 PM Breakout D-4

With over 30 years in the healthcare field, Renee Sievert specializes in consulting, teaching, and coaching in the areas of leadership and team development. She travels nationwide to facilitate Equus team-building workshops where participants have opportunities to increase self-awareness, leadership presence, communication skills, and congruence as they interact with horses. Renee's quiet wisdom and calm energy provide a safety net that invites people to learn and grow.

Renee is a Professional Certified Coach (PCC) and an Equus Master Facilitator. She holds a master's degree in counseling psychology and is a Registered Nurse and a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT). Renee is also a Brené Brown Certified Daring Way and Dare to Lead Facilitator, and is a member of the International Coach Federation (ICF) and the International Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT).

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Liz Sizemore, MA, AMFT, AT



Friday, 3:30 PM Breakout D-5

Liz Sizemore is an Art Therapist and AMFT who serves as a Family Therapist at San Diego Center for Children's FFAST (Foster Family Agency Stabilization and Treatment) program. Liz has a background in crisis support, family systems, and running groups for varying and intersecting populations. She has developed an art therapy program for foster youth and their families focused on developing attachment, self-expression, and personal confidence. Liz believes that clear is kind and thinks the best way to influence the world is through our families, tribes, and communities. Liz is a caretaker by nature, and a connector by practice, and strongly holds that creativity is an energy source available to all. She received her Master of Arts in Marital and Family Therapy/Art Therapy from Loyola Marymount University.

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## Speaker and Session

## Biography

Denise VonRotz, LMFT, RPT-S,  
IF-ECMHS, RPF II

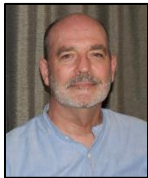


Denise VonRotz is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Registered Play Therapist Supervisor (RPT-S) working with children and families in private practice. She holds endorsement as an Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist (IF-ECMHS) as well as a Reflective Practice Facilitator II (RPF II) through the California Center for Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health. In addition to private practice, Denise provides reflective supervision for individuals and groups in non-profit agencies and has provided trainings and workshops in both Northern and Southern California at conferences, non-profit agencies, and community associations covering topics related to trauma and attachment for young children (ages 0-5) and their caregivers.

Thursday, 1:30 PM Breakout A-5

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Christopher Walsh, LMFT



Christopher Walsh is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with over 25 years of experience in the field of mental health, serving as an administrator, consultant, educator and provider of psychotherapy to families in the San Diego area. He currently is the Clinical Director at Community Resource Center in Encinitas. Chris has provided numerous trainings in Reflective Practice to mental health and allied health professionals over the last decade. Chris sits on several community advisory boards, including the Early Childhood Mental Health Leaders Committee.

Friday, 1:30 PM Breakout C-2

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Amy Zeitz, LMFT



Aimee Zeitz, LMFT, has over twenty years of experience in non-profit leadership, built on a foundation of strategic partnerships and authentic collaboration. In 2017 she joined the YMCA Childcare Resource Service, a social services branch of the YMCA of San Diego County, where she currently serves as the Associate Executive Director of Community Well-Being. In her role at the YMCA she has supported programs across the agency in providing comprehensive, family-centered services, building out the YMCA "Community Connection Hub" model, and oversaw multiple early childhood mental health programs. She also serves as the Project Director for Partners in Prevention, a local collaborative effort to increase child and family well-being and prevent child abuse and neglect. Aimee attended Smith College, earning her BA in Anthropology, followed by her Master's Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from San Diego State University.

Friday, 10:45 AM Keynote

