

Benefits of the District of Columbia's Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund for Workforce Well-Being and Retention

Speaker Biographies

Justin B. Doromal is a senior research associate in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute. His research focuses on policy initiatives aiming to stabilize, build, and strengthen the availability of high-quality early care and education, and he is particularly interested in workforce stability and compensation issues. In addition to studying the Pay Equity Fund in the District of Columbia, Doromal has led and contributed to projects examining child care compensation in Virginia and Maryland, as well as in King County, Washington. Before joining Urban, Doromal was a postdoctoral research associate at the Annenberg Institute at Brown University. He also received an American Educational Research Association Minority Dissertation Fellowship in Education Research in 2020 to support his doctoral research on child care teacher turnover and program closure in three state policy contexts. Doromal holds a BA from the University of South Florida. He received an MPP and an MEd in educational psychology and a PhD in education policy from the University of Virginia.

Erica Greenberg is a senior fellow and PK–12 team lead in the Center on Education Data and Policy at the Urban Institute. Her research spans early childhood and K–12 education with a focus on equity. Greenberg's current projects examine the implementation and impact of innovative policies in Washington, DC. She is coprincipal investigator of the DC Child Care Policy Research Partnership, which evaluates implementation of the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, and principal investigator of the DC Prekindergarten Study, which leverages a centralized admissions lottery to measure the efficacy of public preschool at scale. Recent national projects center the early care and education workforce, segregation in early education programs, and the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on early childhood systems and families with young children. Before joining Urban, Greenberg was an intern in the US Department of Education Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development and a prekindergarten teacher in Washington, DC. Greenberg holds a BA from Yale University. She received her MA in political science and her PhD in education policy from Stanford University.

Laura Jimenez Parra is a research associate in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute. Her research focuses on child care and early education policies and practices that improve the outcomes of young children, families, and child care providers, with a particular interest in matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion amongst vulnerable populations. She also has experience with the implementation and evaluation of early childhood programs examining issues of quality of care, the early education workforce, and cultural processes within these settings. Before joining Urban, Jimenez Parra was an Early Care and Education Research Scholar through the Administration for Children and Families, which supported her dissertation research on the close relationships family child care providers form with families and children in their programs and how these influence providers' and parents' well-being. She has a PhD in human development and quantitative methodology from the University of Maryland, College Park.

Sara Mead is Deputy Superintendent of Early Learning with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education for the District of Columbia. In this role, she leads the District's efforts to ensure that all young children and their families have access to high-quality early learning programs that support family needs and children's learning and development, and that early learning programs and early educators are supported by funding, policies and systems that equip them to thrive. Prior to joining OSSE, Mead was a partner with Bellwether Education Partners, where she led Bellwether's Policy and Evaluation team and early childhood work. She has written extensively and conducted policy analysis on early childhood

education, charter schools, teacher quality, and state and federal education policy issues and has provided strategic advising support to foundations, advocacy organizations, and school and early childhood program operators working to improve early learning and educational outcomes for children in diverse communities, states and nationally. Her work has been featured in media outlets including The Washington Post, The New York Times, Slate, USA Today, and U.S. News & World Report. Mead previously directed the New America Foundation's Early Education Initiative and worked for Education Sector, the Progressive Policy Institute, and the U.S. Department of Education. From September 2009-July 2017 she served on the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board, which authorizes charter schools in Washington, D.C., and since 2017 she has served on the board of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, which she currently chairs. The daughter, granddaughter, and sister of public-school educators, she lives in the District of Columbia with her husband. She holds a bachelor's degree in public policy from Vanderbilt University.

Heather Sandstrom is a senior fellow in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute where she co-leads the child policy research area. Her research focuses on child care and early education and two-generation programs that support the well-being of children and families, such as Head Start and Early Head Start, child care subsidies, and early childhood home visiting. As a trained developmental scientist, Dr. Sandstrom applies a developmental lens to her work and considers the role of family, the home environment, and child care settings in children's learning. She has experience designing studies employing both qualitative and quantitative methods and has directed multiple federal research studies. She is currently Principal Investigator for the District of Columbia Child Care Policy Research Partnership, funded with two consecutive grants from the federal Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. Before joining Urban in 2009, Dr. Sandstrom worked as an independent early childhood research consultant, serving organizations and institutions around the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, including Child Trends and the Maryland State Department of Education. Sandstrom has a PhD in human development with a certification in measurement, statistics, and evaluation from the University of Maryland, College Park.