

Newly Appointed Members: Headshots and Bio's**Melodie Baker,**

Just Equations, National Policy Director

Rockefeller Institute of Government, Early Childhood Fellow
Raising New York, Co-Chair

Melodie Baker is the National Policy Director at Just Equations where she works to advance the role of math education in promoting equity through national partnerships and policy initiatives. Melodie is also the early childhood fellow for Rockefeller Institute of Government's partnership with New York States' First 1000 Days on Medicaid Initiative. A nationally recognized education leader and advocate, Baker has devoted her career to expanding opportunities for children and families. She has chaired various national, and state-wide initiatives, including the Coalition for Community Schools and Raising New York, and was recently tapped to serve on New York's *Reimagining Education Advisory Council* to devise strategies for re-opening schools amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to joining Just Equations in 2020, she was Director of Education for the United Way in Buffalo, New York. Melodie earned her Bachelor's in Public Relations from Buffalo State College, a Master's in Executive Leadership and Change from Daemen College and is finishing a PhD in Educational Psychology and Quantitative Methods at SUNY Buffalo.

**Laurie Black**

Early Childhood Alliance, Onondaga, Director

Laurie Black is the Director of the Early Childhood Alliance (ECA), a cross-sector collaborative working to improve school readiness throughout Onondaga County, NY. Laurie worked with local leadership to create the Early Childhood Alliance in 2015 and became the organization's first Director in 2016. Prior to the ECA, Laurie worked for fourteen years for SYRACUSE 20/20, a unique civic Board working to improve the quality of life in Syracuse and throughout the region. She has worked for the New York State Assembly and the Maryland General Assembly. Laurie did her undergraduate work at Bucknell University and received her Master's in Public Administration from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University.



Bonnie Catlin, LCSW

New York State Office of Mental Health
Office of Prevention and Health Initiatives
Director for Strategic Clinical Solutions

Since her arrival at OMH, Bonnie has pioneered prevention efforts, first as the Director for Strategic Clinical Solutions within the Division for Integrated Community Services for Children & Families, and now in the newly created Office for Prevention and Health Initiatives (OPHI). Her leadership on child and family prevention, infant and early childhood mental health, integration with primary care, cross system collaboration, and school-community partnership has helped move the dial on the social emotional wellness of children and families and helped lay the groundwork for OPHI. She has a knowledge base and wealth of experience in children's mental health, early childhood services, and Systems of Care. Prior to her tenure at OMH, she worked for nearly 20 years in county government. Having served as an Intensive Case Manager, Children's Single Point of Access (SPOA) Coordinator, and the Clinical Director, she has a deep understanding of the children's service delivery system and insights into how to continue to improve it.



Kelvin Chan PhD, MTS, MPH

Early Childhood, Robin Hood Foundation, Managing Director

www.robinhood.org

Kelvin Chan, Ph.D., is the Managing Director of Early Childhood at Robin Hood. He leads the Foundation's ambitious efforts to optimize birth outcomes, maternal health and early childhood development. Dr. Chan's portfolio includes the Fund for Early Learning, one of the nation's largest philanthropic funds focused on optimizing brain development in infants and toddlers. Before joining Robin Hood, Dr. Chan was the director of early childhood development at the New York City Health Department. Dr. Chan's undergraduate, master's and doctoral training in public health are from Brown, Columbia and Cambridge Universities, respectively. He also holds a master's degree in comparative world religions from Harvard University. Dr. Chan is also a member of the Board of Directors of Child Care Aware of America (www.childcareaware.org).



Amy Jimerson

Seneca Nation of Indians

Amy Jimerson resides on the Allegany Territory located in Salamanca New York with her husband of 35 years. She has a son and daughter who has blessed her with 4 beautiful Grandchildren. She is an enrolled member of the Seneca Nation of the Turtle Clan. She currently works for the nation as the Director of Seneca Arts and Learning Center. As a classroom teacher she has more than 30 years of experience, and 10 years of administrative work in the Early Childhood field.



Jackie Orr

NYS Community Action Association

<https://www.nyscommunityaction.org/>

Jackie is currently the New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA) CEO and has been since 2018. NYSCAA is the membership association, providing training and technical assistance to the 47 Community Action Agencies across the state. Jackie worked at NYSCAA as the Director of Operations at NYSCAA from 2010-2016. She left NYSCAA to work for the National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP) as the CSBG State Assistance Director. During her time with NASCSPP, Jackie worked to assist state offices with their management of Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) responsibilities, helped to organize the new CSBG Annual Report and created tools and resources for state office administrators. Jackie is a Certified Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) Master Trainer and has several years of experience in facilitation and training. She has also worked in community-based organizations in the areas of mental health and literacy.



Carolyn L. Wiggins

NYS Head Start Association, Fort George Community Services, Executive Director/CEO

<http://www.fortgeorgecenter.org>

Carolyn brings over 30 years of experience as an early childhood and higher education administrator to the Head Start Community. She is skilled in nonprofit organizations, event planning, program evaluation, strategic planning and organizational development. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education from Antioch College and a Master of Education from Antioch College Graduate School of Education in Elementary Education. She holds both New York State Permanent Teacher's Certification and California Community College Instructor's Credential in Early Childhood Education, valid for life. Under Carolyn's leadership she has expanded Fort George from a NYC Head Start Delegate Agency, serving 186 children, to a Direct Head Start/ Early Head Start Grantee serving 422 children. The agency now covers two boroughs and four communities: Washington Heights, West Harlem, and Hamilton Heights in Manhattan and Morrisania in the Bronx. In partnership with NYP Hospital Fort George provides community health workers serving children with chronic health conditions. Carolyn is also a member of NYP/PPS Finance Committee. She is member of South Bronx Rising, the New York City DOE Birth-Five Advisory Group, the National Head Start Association State Leadership Team and the President of the New York State Head Start Association.

Newly Added Nominee: Headshot and Bio



Tara N. Gardner

Day Care Council of New York

Tara N. Gardner is an executive leader with expertise in all facets of nonprofit management, operations, programming, and fundraising. Her work has consistently focused on leveling the playing field for those living in under-resourced NYC communities. Through her previous work at the New York City Mission Society, the Abyssinian Development Corporation, and The Fresh Air Fund, she has impacted the lives of thousands of NYC children and families. In her current role as the Executive Director of the Day Care Council of New York, she brings her experience to NYC's early childhood education and care sector. Her dedication to youth extends beyond the workplace. In addition to serving as the current Board President of Ice Hockey In Harlem, she serves as a Board member of Friends of St. Charles Borromeo School.