

# 2015 EARLY LEARNING SYMPOSIUM

*“Fulfilling America's Future: Research, Practice, & Policy  
Advancing Early Childhood Education for Hispanics”*



June 17-18, 2015  
Erikson Institute | Chicago, IL



**WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE**  
*on EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE for HISPANICS*



## WELCOME

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (“Initiative”) and the President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (“Commission”) welcome you to Chicago, IL for the 2015 Early Learning Symposium – Fulfilling America’s Future: Research, Practice & Policy Advancing Early Childhood Education for Hispanics.

According to Pew Research Center, Hispanics are the largest and youngest minority group in the United States. One-in-five schoolchildren and one-in-four newborns is Hispanic. As we work to increase quality early childhood care and education, it is critical that these efforts are reflective of the needs of Hispanic children and families.

In his 2013 State of the Union address, President Obama called upon Congress to expand access to high-quality preschool for every child in America, proposing investments that support a continuum of early learning opportunity, beginning at birth and continuing to age five. Since then, state and local leadership have funded new or expanded existing programs across the country. In December 2014, the President convened state and local policymakers, mayors, school superintendents, corporate and community leaders, and advocates, for the White House Summit on Early Education, highlighting collective leadership in support of early education for America’s children. At the Summit, leading private and philanthropic organizations announced new commitments to spur greater access to high-quality preschool and early learning. Together with new federal investments, the President announced a collective investment of over \$1 billion in the education and development of America’s youngest learners.

As a follow up to our [National Summit on Hispanic Early Learning in 2013](#) and as part of our continued efforts to ensure a quality early childhood education reflective of the needs and strategies that are working for Hispanic children, we are gathering national, state, and local leaders from the public and private sectors as well as early childhood education experts and practitioners for discussions on four key topics: STEAM education, family engagement, dual language learning and culturally relevant care and teaching. During the Symposium, we will hear about relevant research, policies at the local, state, and federal levels and strategies and practices that are helping inform and strengthen early childhood education for Hispanic children across the nation. The Symposium will produce a set of solution-based recommendations for federal, state, local and private sectors to consider as they work to develop, expand, and replicate strategies, practices, policies and programs delivering a quality early childhood education for Hispanic children.

Thank you and enjoy the Symposium.

Alejandra Ceja  
Executive Director,  
White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

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#### CONTACT INFORMATION

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## AGENDA

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

*Erikson Institute, 451 North LaSalle, Chicago, IL 60654*  
*Room: 201 and 202*

**8:00 a.m. Registration**

**8:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast**

**9:00 a.m. Welcome and Symposium Overview**

*Sylvia Acevedo,*

Chair, Early Learning Subcommittee, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

**Welcome Remarks**

*Dr. Geoffrey Nagle*

President and CEO, Erikson Institute

**9:30 a.m. Progress on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics**

*Alejandra Ceja*

Executive Director, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

**9:45 a.m. Cultural Relevant Care and Teaching**

Amidst a large and growing Hispanic population, it is imperative to have a teaching workforce that reflects the student demographics in order to meet the learning needs of those students and their families, in addition to helping decrease the education gap still present today. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 40 percent of the nation's students are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. A compelling number of teachers who work in low-performing schools are in the category of teachers "least prepared" to deal with the students who need the most help. Cultural competence encompasses the ability to recognize and respond to differences based on culture, language, race, ethnicity, and other aspects of individual identity. Meaningful cultural competence must also involve family engagement to support early learning efforts, which promotes school readiness and later academic success. The conversation will help inform programs and policies impacting teacher recruitment, preparation, development and further the knowledge base of what works for students and families of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

**Overview and Domain Moderator**

*Modesto Abety-Gutierrez*

Vice Chair, Early Learning Subcommittee, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics



Q1: How do we strengthen cultural relevancy and competency in teacher and early care provider preparation programs?

Q2: What types of professional development and family engagement strategies and programs available to educators are resulting in better supports and services for Hispanic students?

- 10:00 a.m. Domain Armchair Discussion**
- Dr. Luisiana Meléndez* Research  
Clinical Assistant Professor and Director,  
Bilingual/ESL Certificate Program, Erikson Institute
- Dr. Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro* Policy  
Research and Policy Analyst, Latino Policy Forum
- Dr. Ida Rose Florez* Practice  
Vice President, National Association for the Education  
of Young Children
- 10:30 a.m. Open Dialogue with Audience**  
Facilitated by *Modesto Abety-Gutierrez*
- 11:00 a.m. Speed Think Tank Session and Break**
- 11:20 a.m. Identification of Key Insights and Recommendations**  
Facilitated by *Dr. Libby Doggett*  
Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Early Learning, Office of Elementary and  
Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education
- Leading questions:*
- What are the policy implications of what has been presented?
  - What are the programs or systems changes that are needed based on what you heard?
  - How feasible is it to get policies (federal, state, local) to support these programs passed?
  - Are there changes to current programs or policies that you think need to be made to better support these efforts?
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch**
- 1:20 p.m. Introduction of Keynote Speaker**  
*Manny Sanchez*  
Member, Early Learning Subcommittee, President's Advisory Commission on  
Educational Excellence for Hispanics
- Keynote Remarks**  
*Diana Rauner*  
First Lady, State of Illinois and President, The Ounce of Prevention Fund



**1:45 p.m.**

**Dual Language Learning**

According to the U.S. Department of Health Human Services’ Office of Head Start, the loss of home language can intervene with important facets of a child’s life such as impeding communication with family members, restricting social interactions, and playing a role in the loss of intergenerational wisdom. Children who know two or more languages develop greater levels of cognitive acquisition than children who don’t. Often this advantage translates to better social and economic opportunities later in life. In addition, knowledge of the home language boosts the learning of a second one. Asking the right questions about Dual Language learners will bolster the conversation around practices in place that are working in early care and education settings. The conversation will help lead to tangible efforts aimed at informing policy by leveraging research, promising practices and increasing access to programs providing rich and meaningful supports to dual language learners.

**Overview and Domain Moderator**

*Rafael López*

Senior Policy Advisor, Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Domestic Policy Council, The White House

Q1: How do we collectively create awareness and increase engagement on dual language learning among Hispanic families and early care providers in an effort to increase biliteracy and academic achievement among Hispanic children?

Q2: What are the promising practices on dual language instruction that show evidence of success in supporting learning in the primary language and second language in the field, i.e. early care settings, schools and school districts?

**2:00 p.m.**

**Domain Armchair Discussion**

*Dr. Carol Hammer*

Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders,  
Teachers College, Columbia University

Research

*Dr. Conor Williams*

Senior Researcher, Early Education Initiative,  
New American Foundation

Policy

*Rey González*

President and Chief Executive Officer, El Valor

Practice

**2:30 p.m.**

**Open Dialogue with Audience**

Facilitated by *Rafael López*

**3:00 p.m.**

**Speed Think Tank Session and Break**



**3:20 p.m. Identification Key Insights and Recommendations**  
Facilitated by *Dr. Libia Gil*  
Assistant Deputy Secretary and Director, Office of English Language Acquisition, U.S. Department of Education

*Leading questions:*

- What are the policy implications of what has been presented?
- What are the programs or systems changes that are needed based on what you heard?
- How feasible is it to get policies (federal, state, local) to support these programs passed?
- Are there changes to current programs or policies that you think need to be made to better support these efforts?

**4:00 p.m. Introduction of Speaker**  
*Maribel Duran*  
Chief of Staff, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

**Closing Remarks**  
*Dr. Barbara Bowman*  
Professor, Erikson Institute

**4:20 p.m. Adjournment**

**4:30-6:30 p.m. Reception**

## Thursday, June 18, 2015

*Erikson Institute, 451 North LaSalle, Chicago, IL 60654*  
*Room: 201/202*

**8:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast**

**9:15 a.m. Welcome and Introduction of Speaker**  
*Maribel Duran*  
Chief of Staff, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

**Opening Remarks**  
*Invited Speaker*

**9:30 a.m. Family Engagement**  
Family engagement is a critical component of high-quality early care and education in children. The U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education recognize that the various programs and services that contribute to the care and education of young children need to be seen as an integrated whole. Effective partnerships between families and programs serving young children increase parent and family participation in the everyday learning of their children at home, school and in their communities. For families to become equal partners in their



child’s learning and development, they need to feel valued, respected and included by the program staff and educators. The conversation will highlight strategies that are working to better engage parents in an effort to better support learning and achievement.

**Overview and Domain Moderator**

*Adrián Pedroza*

Member, Early Learning Subcommittee, President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

Q1: How do we forge partnerships with early care and education programs to support family engagement in children’s learning?

Q2: What are educators, administrators and early care providers doing to better engage Hispanic families?

**9:45 a.m. Domain Armchair Discussion**

*Dr. Lina Guzman*

Senior Researcher and Director, Child Trends’ Hispanic Institute

Research

*Celia Ayala*

Chief Executive Officer, Los Angeles Universal Preschool

Policy/Practice

*Victoria Prieto*

Senior Bilingual Writer and Training Specialist,  
Transcultural Innovation, Zero to Three

Practice

**10:15 a.m. Open Dialogue with Audience**

Facilitated by *Adrián Pedroza*

**10:45 a.m. Speed Think Tank and Break**

**11:05 a.m. Identification Key Insights and Recommendations**

Facilitated by *Dr. Blanca Enriquez*

Director, Office of Head Start, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

*Leading questions:*

- What are the policy implications of what has been presented?
- What are the programs or systems changes that are needed based on what you heard?
- How feasible is it to get policies (federal, state, local) to support these programs passed?
- Are there changes to current programs or policies that you think need to be made to better support these efforts?

**11:45 a.m. Lunch**

**12:45 p.m. Introduction of Speaker**

*Mariana Vinson*



Deputy Director, Office of English Language Acquisition, U.S. Department of Education

**Keynote Remarks**

*Dr. Blanca Enriquez*

Director, Office of Head Start, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

**1:00 p.m.**

**STEAM Education**

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (“STEM”) skills are necessary now more than ever in order to compete in a global economy. Hispanics are currently the largest minority group in the public school system but they score lower than their white peers on national averages on math and science achievement tests. An arts education is also significant since it can prepare students with skills such as creativity and innovation that are critical for college and career readiness. A STEM education should not preclude an arts-rich curriculum; instead programs and schools should aim to provide a well-rounded education – one that includes both. It is critical, then, to expose Hispanic students to STEAM-rich education and careers at earlier ages. It is vital that children’s interests are sparked starting in preschool and well through a college or career. This discussion will inform efforts that seek to include and provide STEAM opportunities in early care and education programs.

**Overview and Domain Moderator**

*Sylvia Acevedo*

Chair, Early Learning Subcommittee, President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

Q1: How do we encourage STEAM professional development opportunities for early childhood educators?

Q2: What are the early care- and education-based promising practices integrating STEAM into early childhood education?

**1:15 p.m.**

**Domain Armchair Discussion**

Facilitated by *Sylvia Acevedo*

*Dr. Lilian Katz*

Professor Emerita, Early Childhood Education,  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Research

*Dr. Vikki Katz*

Associate Professor, School of Communication & Information,  
Rutgers University

Policy

*Dr. Pauline Dow*

Chief Academic Officer, Austin Independent School District

Practice

**1:45 p.m.**

**Open Dialogue with Audience**

Facilitated by *Sylvia Acevedo*

**2:15 p.m.**

**Speed Think Tank and Break**



- 2:35 p.m. Identification Key Insights and Recommendations**  
Facilitated by *Russ Shilling*  
Director, Office of STEM Policy, Office of Innovation and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education
- Leading questions:*
- What are the policy implications of what has been presented?
  - What are the programs or systems changes that are needed based on what you heard?
  - How feasible is it to get policies (federal, state, local) to support these programs passed?
  - Are there changes to current programs or policies that you think need to be made to better support these efforts?
- 3:15 p.m. Introduction of Speaker**  
*Sylvia Acevedo*  
Chair, Early Learning Subcommittee, President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics
- Why it matters and Moving a Movement Forward for Hispanics**  
*Sarah Rittling*  
National Director, First Five Years Fund
- 3:30 p.m. Anniversary Year of Action – Fulfilling America’s Future Announcement**  
*Alejandra Ceja*  
Executive Director, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics
- José Rico*  
Senior Vice President of Community Investment, United Way of Metropolitan Chicago
- 3:55 p.m. Closing Remarks**  
*Manny Sanchez,*  
Member, Early Learning Subcommittee, President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics
- 4:00 p.m. Adjournment of Symposium**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**A Special Thanks To:**



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