

Presenters' Bio

Charlotte Jahn has worked on behalf of children and families in Washington State for 40 years. As a parent educator, she has worked in a variety of settings that included a homeless shelter, a program for new immigrants and an economically privileged preschool. As a community college instructor and trainer, she teaches early childhood education in the context of culture. Ms. Jahn is a member of the African American child care task force, the culturally relevant anti-bias leadership group and is a past president of Washington AEYC. Charlotte is a retired licenser from the Department of Early Learning.

Theressa Lenear began her journey in early childhood education as a Head Start parent and has over 46 years of experience in the early childhood field. In that time, she has worked with many young children in multiple settings in both Alaska and Washington state. Her current focus centers on teaching, mentoring and coaching those wishing to strengthen their skills in providing services and resources relevant to the diverse children and families in their communities. She earned both her Bachelor and Master of Arts degree in Human Development with a specialization in Bicultural Development from Pacific Oaks College Northwest. She is a faculty member at Goddard College and a part time instructor at the Community College level.

Working in her community is a cultural expectation and both an individual and a collective responsibility; her grandchildren and great grandchildren are reminders of the importance. Theressa co-leads the Teaching Umoja Participatory Action Research 15 Year Commitment with Dr. Sharon Cronin, examining ethnic identity, bicultural, cross-cultural and trilliteracy development of children of color. This work has been a collaborative effort with diverse co-researchers from across the United States and the communities of Port Royal and Moore Town, Jamaica. As a member of the African American Childcare Task Force and the Culturally Relevant Anti-Bias Education, Theressa is actively engaged working with others on issues of equity and social justice.

Sandria Woods-Pollard is a mother of 3, grandmother of 8, wife, educator and strong advocate for children. In October, 1990 Ms. Woods-Pollard founded the African American Child Care Task Force (task force) a grass-roots advocacy group of African American women committed to making systemic changes to the quality of early learning and education for African American children. Her belief, along with the task force, is that improving early learning and education for our children enhances education for all children.

Sandria developed her strong advocacy skills from her mother and father. She grew up and attended all white schools where she and her sisters were harassed often. It was her parent's advocacy, voice and support that helped her get through school. She observed and learned that the actions her parents took made significant changes with her educators and administrators. Sandria uses those lessons learned in her daily work with educators, children, families and community. She has been the recipient of several awards for the work she has done individually and as a collective with the task force.

For more than four decades Ms. Woods-Pollard has been at the forefront in innovations of early learning and education. She has devoted her life's work to children for 46 years. She has been an educator of young children as well an educator of adult learners in several community colleges. She is a graduate of Pacific Oaks College Northwest with a Master of Arts degree in Human Development with Specialization in Leadership in Education, Human Services and Administration/Supervision. Sandria retired after 26 years with the City of Seattle Human Services Department as Manager of the Early Learning and Child Care programs.