

Child Care is in Crisis and it's not a Woman's Issue — It's an Economic One

SPEAKER BIOS



[Lea Austin](#), Executive Director, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment

Lea has more than a decade of experience in early childhood workforce and professional development. She plays a leadership role in the research and policy work of CSCCE, with a particular interest in the status accorded educators and educational and professional pathways in early childhood education. Her interest in securing access and opportunities for early educators to leadership and decision-making roles in the field were spurred by her work with

Mills College and First 5 Alameda County (California), where she developed leadership programs in higher education and community settings and implemented a professional development initiative focused on attainment of college education. Lea earned a master's degree in Public Administration from California State University, Hayward, and a master's degree and Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from Mills College.



[Mary Ignatius](#), Statewide Organizer, Parent Voices

Mary Ignatius is the Statewide Organizer of Parent Voices, a parent-led grassroots organizing effort fighting to make quality child care accessible and affordable for all families. As the Statewide Organizer since August 2005, she coordinates the work of its 13 chapters and implements the leadership development model Parent Voices has crafted for over 20 years. Under her tenure, Parent Voices has won the most progressive child care eligibility policies in the nation, restored a child care

program that was eliminated, and protected child care subsidies for thousands of families.

Born and raised in the Bay Area by Indian immigrants and as a mother of 2 budding feminist sons, Mary's commitment to social and economic justice is both personal and political. She holds a Master of Social Work in Administration and Social Planning from Temple University and a Bachelor of Social Work from Rutgers University. She was a fellow of the Ms. Foundation for Women's OpEd Project-Public Voices program and received the Foundation's prestigious Woman of Vision Award in April 2016. In 2018, Mary joined the Assembly's Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Care and Education as a Community Commissioner.

Her previous experience includes work with the Kensington Welfare Rights Union, Community Legal Services in Philadelphia, Instructor- City College of San Francisco, and Project SURVIVE.



[Natalie Renew](#), Director, Home Grown

Natalie Renew is the director of Home Grown, a national initiative committed to improving the quality of and access to home-based child care. She is an early childhood professional with more than 15 years of experience in the nonprofit and social service sector supporting children and families furthest from opportunity. Prior to joining Home Grown, Renew led the expansion of the early childhood education group at Public Health Management Corporation in Philadelphia. She has overseen the development of large programs, secured sustaining funding for major initiatives and supported local

systems change in the early learning sector. Early in her career, she worked in child welfare and food access.



[Christine Thorsteinson](#), Director, Early Childhood Development, Silicon Valley Community Foundation

As SVCF's Director of Early Childhood Development, Christine Thorsteinson works to ensure that all young children in Silicon Valley have access to the care, education and resources they need to grow and flourish. Recognizing the critical importance of the first years of a child's life, and the subsequent impact on future success, Christine strives to support local, state and federal efforts to dismantle the systemic barriers that stack the deck against our youngest and most vulnerable. Christine joined SVCF in 2016 and her earlier work included efforts to bridge the

gaps between preschool and TK – 12 education systems and develop early learning leadership competencies.

Christine graduated from Queen's University in Kingston, Canada with a Bachelor's of Arts in English and Psychology and a Bachelor's of Education, with a specialization in secondary English and Mathematics. As a passionate believer in the value of high-quality public education, her previous work experience includes serving as the early learning program consultant for Pacifica School District, executive director of Pacifica School Volunteers and president of the Burlingame Community for Education foundation.



Hayley Wiser, Owner, A Wise Choice Daycare / Preschool

Hayley Wise is originally from Birmingham, England. She immigrated to the USA back in 1985 where she moved to New York (5 years), Boston (1 year), and then California for 30 years. She is a single Mother of 25 and 21 year old daughters and a 17 year old son. She holds an AA in Early Childhood Education and a Bachelors in Human Services with a double concentration of Counselling and Administration.

Hayley's 40 year career experience has involved working with children newborn to 21 years of age and in a variety of environments from nonprofit agencies to the private sector. She has worked with children with special learning needs, children in foster care, residential programs and in preschool and childcare centers. Hayley has also been an inhome parent educator working with the most vulnerable. She has been a Nanny, Teacher, Childcare Director, Child Protector Services Liaison, Independent Living Skills Coordinator, Housing Specialist and more.

In 2007 while going through a divorce, she decided to open up her own small daycare program. Fourteen years later, she has expanded to a large family daycare/preschool serving children and families 3 months to school age in San Mateo, California.

DESCRIPTION

COVID 19 has catapulted the racial and gender inequities associated with the lack of accessible and affordable child care and exposed a multi-pronged emergency -- massive temporary and permanent lay-offs for low-wage childcare workers (who tend to be Black, Brown and immigrant women); pending closures of family based child care businesses; and long-term economic consequences for women who must leave the workforce due to the loss of child care supports. These consequences not only impact women's economic health but also the longer-term financial health of their families.

Despite California's new *Master Plan for Early Learning and Care* and a new federal administration willing to fund bold and catalytic policies, questions remain such as:

- How has the current child care crisis exacerbated the economic insecurity of families?
- What gaps remain despite statewide and national plans to address the issue?
- What are the most effective local, regional and national solutions; and
- What critical role can philanthropy play in supporting short term needs while keeping the longer-term policy solutions in mind?

We must understand that child care is not a personal issue, nor a women's issue but an economic issue that must be addressed to realize a more equitable and inclusive society.

Join us as we hear perspectives from national and local policy advocates, practitioners and philanthropy about the interrelated issues surrounding the child care sector and how funders can play a role in addressing the structural and systemic issues which have impacted this critical sector.

Speakers:

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Natalie Renew, Director, Home Grown

Christine Thorsteinson, Director, Early Childhood Development, Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Hayley Wisner, Owner, A Wise Choice Daycare / Preschool