

15th Annual Early Childhood Mental Health Conference – We Can't Wait

September 26-27, 2024

We Don't Wait – Nurturing and Healing in Action

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Rahil Briggs, PsyD is the National Director of Zero to Three's HealthySteps pediatric primary care program which operates in 24 states, plus DC, and has reached nearly 500,000 children. She is a Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, Psychiatry, and Behavioral Sciences at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. She is also the editor of Integrated Early Childhood Behavioral Health in Primary Care. Dr. Briggs was the founder of one of the most comprehensive integrated pediatric behavioral health services in the nation, serving almost 90,000 children in the Bronx each year. She was also the recipient of the 2018 Health Care Delivery Award from the Academic Pediatric Association. Dr. Briggs completed her studies at Duke University and New York University. Visit: www.zerotothree.org



Richard Knecht, MS is Managing Partner at the Integrated Human Services Group, LLC, where he and his affiliates provide program operations, leadership, strategic planning and training services to public and private healthcare and human service systems. A former COO of a large behavioral health hospital, and former Sr. Vice President of Program Operations at the River Oak Center for Children, he is currently an advisor to state agencies, wherein he provides guidance and cross-system statewide technical assistance to multiple departments. He was the lead design engineer of the state's Integrated Core Practice Model and wrote the template which now anchors Children's System of Care in all 58 counties in California. Richard served for ten years as director of Placer County's highly regarded children's system in California. Richard is also the author of two children's books. Visit: <https://www.integratedhumanservicesgroup.com/home/>



Jeff Rowe, MD is a child and adolescent psychiatrist who has been working in the field of Early Childhood Mental Health for the past 25 years. He retired from the County of San Diego and the University of California San Diego in 2018, but continues to teach, consult, and practice psychiatry in San Diego. He specializes in the assessment and treatment of very young children, traumatized children, and children with complicated conditions. Dr. Rowe has been the Co-Chair of the Early Childhood Mental Health – We Can't Wait Conference since its inception



Pradeep Gidwani, MD, MPH, FAAP is a pediatrician and community health leader focused on creating systematic solutions and changes to improve the lives of children and their families. Currently, he works at American Academy of Pediatrics, California Chapter 3, San Diego and Imperial Counties (AAP-CA3) on a team that provides Countywide Coordination and Support for two large scale community initiatives: Healthy Development Services and First Step Home Visiting funded by First 5 San Diego. In the last 15 years, these communitywide programs have reached over 330,000 children and their families. Dr. Gidwani is a Past President of AAP-CA3, serves on numerous community advisory boards, and is a member of the Board Governors at the San Diego Foundation.



Amy Zeitz, LMFT has over twenty years of experience in non-profit leadership, built on a foundation of strategic partnerships and authentic collaboration. She currently serves as the Executive Director of Community Well-Being at YMCA San Diego County. Aimee attended Smith College, earning her BA in Anthropology, followed by her master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from San Diego State University.



Mirah de Matos, MA, MPH is a Senior Project Specialist with the American Academy of Pediatrics, CA Chapter 3, working on the countywide coordination and support of First 5 First Steps family support program. Miriah holds Master's degrees in Latin America Studies and Public Health, Bilingual Special Education and a Bachelor's in International Studies and Spanish. Miriah has been working to improve the lives of children and families for over 15 years. Her experience includes both direct service, program development, and community-based evaluation in the United States and abroad. In her current work, she has developed and adapted curriculum for multiple psychoeducational groups for parents with a focus on the social-emotional development of young children.



Ariane Porras, SEP has worked as an Early Childhood Mental Health consultant, promoting social development foundations, and with Kinship families facilitating support groups. In her current role as Program Director of Community and Partner Engagement at the YMCA San Diego Childcare Resource Service, she leads teams and informs the public on primary prevention frameworks, trauma-Informed care and culturally responsive practices. Her experience working with the end cap populations of our society has greatly contributed to her passion for equipping caregivers and social service professionals in San Diego, as it has provided a full scope of how trauma affects the entire family system and how responsive relationships are key to healing each other and in turn our communities. She holds a BSW with a minor in Psychology and is also a certified Somatic Experiencing Practitioner.