



Panelist Biographies

Dr. David G. Carter

In February 2006, Dr. David G. Carter became chancellor of the Connecticut State University System, which includes Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, Eastern Connecticut State University in Willimantic, Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, and Western Connecticut State University in Danbury. Born in Dayton, Ohio, he earned a B.S. degree from Central State University in Ohio, an MEd. from Miami University in Ohio, and a PhD from Ohio State University. He began as an elementary school teacher, then became a vice principal, principal, and unit facilitator responsible for overseeing more than 20,000 elementary, middle and high school students in 24 Ohio schools. He spent four years as an associate professor in the College of Education at Pennsylvania State University before serving the next 11 years as a professor and administrator at the University of Connecticut. In 1988, he became president of Eastern Connecticut State University, making him the first African-American president of a four-year institution of higher education in Connecticut.

Dr. Carter has published many journal articles and book chapters and has edited several volumes. His many awards include the NAACP's Roy Wilkins Civil Rights Award, the Outstanding Service and Leadership in Enhancing International Education Award, and the Americanism Award from the Connecticut American Legion.

Dr. Patrice Farquharson

Dr. Patrice E. Farquharson is well known for her expertise in early care and education. She has been the executive director of the West Haven Child Development Center for 28 years, during which she has secured several million dollars in grants for the excellent multi-service program. She also is an assistant professor at Post University in Waterbury, where she developed an online early childhood program. She has received many awards and accolades for her efforts to improve the lives of children and families. In 2001, she was named Outstanding Leader of the Year in recognition of her many contributions to the city of West Haven. She also has collaborated on many clinical and research projects with her colleagues in nursing. These focus on issues in early child development, including literacy, international adoption, and effects of violence. She has presented at many interdisciplinary conferences on these topics. She was one of the first administrators to formally recognize the importance of providing quality onsite nursing in her center and has had a PNP consultant for more than 10 years.

Dr. Farquharson received her BS from the University of Connecticut with an MS in Early Childhood Education from Southern Connecticut State University. She received her EdD from Nova Southeastern University in 1995.

Dr. M. Alex Geertsma

Dr. M. Alex Geertsma is chairman of the Department of Pediatrics and director of the Children's Health Center at St. Mary's Hospital in Waterbury. He has been active in quality and efficiency aspects of managed care for children, and with various local, state, regional, and national child and family advocacy programs. He has also been involved for a number of years in advocacy for children's behavioral health services via the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics. His areas of academic interest have been infancy and early childhood development, the nature of infant crying/colic, and early childhood behavioral feeding disorders.

Elsa E. Jones, MA

For 21 years, Elsa Jones has focused on improving quality care and education for young children in the Northeast. She has a master of arts degree from the Tufts University Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development. Her professional roles and experiences include: Head Start teacher, director, and federal program reviewer; CDA advisor; early childhood coach and researcher; early literacy mentor and instructor; and program developer. Currently, her primary work is with the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving as the Program Associate for the Brighter Futures Initiative. She provides technical assistance to the staff of Hartford's six Brighter Futures Family Centers, which support parents as their children's first and most influential teachers. She also serves on the Hartford Mayor's Blueprint Task Force on Neighborhood-Based Family Support and Development.

T. Diane Wilder

T. Diane Wilder has an extensive background in early-childhood education, that includes graduate degrees in early childhood special education and social work with experiences in a variety of early childhood settings. Since 2000 she has been a reading mentor in association with Haskins Laboratories in New Haven. She has served as an external reading consultant in collaboration with school-based literacy teams in Hartford, New Haven, Bloomfield, and New Britain. The collaborations have been guided by scientifically based reading research, with provision for professional development, in-service training, modeling, and coaching to teachers of students in kindergarten through third grade. She also works as a mentor in collaboration with the Hartford Mayor's Office for Young Children. The goal of this collaboration is to increase teacher knowledge as a means to improve child literacy.

Previously, Ms. Wilder taught kindergarten and middle-school special education, served as project coordinator of a demonstration project for inclusion of preschool children with disabilities across early education settings, directed a regional birth-to-three program, and administered a nonprofit child-care program. She is enrolled in a doctoral program of study in early reading problems at University of Connecticut.