

# Research / Action

A Better Child Care System is  
Essential to Gender Equality  
—and Economic Recovery



**Featuring:**

Racial justice through conversation • Immigrant entrepreneurs and economic recovery • Delivering quality virtual learning experiences • Year in review

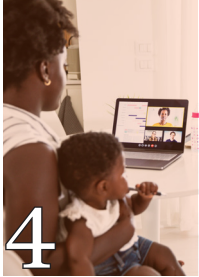
Shaping a  
Better World  
through  
Research  
& Action

**Wellesley  
Centers for  
Women**

# Research \ Action Report

annual report 2020

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The Wellesley  
Centers for Women  
is a program of  
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# From the Executive Director

## A World That Is Good for Women Is Good for Everyone.™

The Wellesley Centers for Women is an academic research and action institute at Wellesley College that is focused on women and gender and driven by social change. Our mission is to advance gender equality, social justice, and human wellbeing through high-quality research, theory, and action programs.

Production of this report was supported in part by the Mary Joe Gaw Frug Fund, an endowed gift to the Wellesley Centers for Women.

This year has been different than any other. We as a country are facing dual pandemics, one old and one new: racial injustice and COVID-19. But as we look ahead to 2021, and the sense of possibility a new year brings, I find many reasons to hope. I believe that together, we can shape a better world—one of justice, peace, and wellbeing. The Wellesley Centers for Women is working toward this vision with high-quality research, theory, and action.

As you'll read, our project directors continue to take action against racism. **SEED** Co-Directors **Gail Cruise-Roberson** and **Emmy Howe** talk here about their work furthering social justice through conversation, and what we can all learn about how to approach difficult conversations in our own lives.

Many of our research scientists have been examining the indirect effects of COVID-19 on our society. **Wendy Wagner Robeson** writes about how COVID-19 has revealed the gaping holes in the foundation of our early childhood care and education system, and why the creation of a new system that works better for everyone is essential not only to gender equality, but to economic recovery. **Sari Pekkala Kerr** recently completed a project funded by the National Science Foundation that examined the role of immigrant entrepreneurs in firm creation, innovation, and job growth in the U.S., showing that they will also play a key role in economic recovery.

**Autumn Green** received a gift from the Jacob Bluestein Foundation that will allow her to continue creating resources that further the success of college students with children—many of whom are now taking remote classes simultaneously with their children. Delivering quality virtual learning experiences is a challenge for all kinds of schools and organizations

right now, and the **National Institute on Out-of-School Time** (NIOST) has developed a list of best practices for afterschool programs and others. NIOST got ahead of the game by evaluating summer programs that went remote months ago, and can now share what they've learned so that others can benefit. **Kamilah Drummond-Forrester**, the director of **Open Circle**, recently testified before a Boston City Council committee hearing on the importance of focusing on the social and emotional wellbeing of both students and teachers during this extremely challenging time.

And in a reminder that the pandemic has changed our daily interactions in ways large and small, **Jennifer M. Grossman** surveyed parents and discovered that the way they are communicating with their teens about sex and relationships, and the way they are monitoring their teens' behavior, has shifted. Along with many of our other researchers, she'll be looking closely at what the changes brought on by COVID-19 mean and whether they will stick.

Our research and action here at the Wellesley Centers for Women has the power to drive social change. I've seen it happen, time and again. That's what gives me hope that even though we are faced with daunting challenges, the future is full of possibility. Supporters like you make this work possible. Thank you for standing with us to advance gender equality, social justice, and human wellbeing. ■



**Layli Maparyan, Ph.D.**

Katherine Stone Kaufmann '67 Executive Director



# Thank You

To our friends, supporters, funding partners, and colleagues—thank you for believing in our work. Your generosity supports **research that drives social change.**

We know there are many organizations worthy of your support during this unprecedented time, and we are so grateful that you have chosen to stand with us to improve the lives of women and girls, families and communities, in all their diversity around the world.

With you as our partner, we study the most pressing social issues and share our findings with policymakers, activists, and decision makers of all kinds so they can make evidence-based investments in policies, programs, and practices. **Better data means better solutions** to the critical problems facing our society today.

Thank you for making this work possible and for believing that **A World That Is Good for Women Is Good for Everyone.**<sup>™</sup>





# 2020

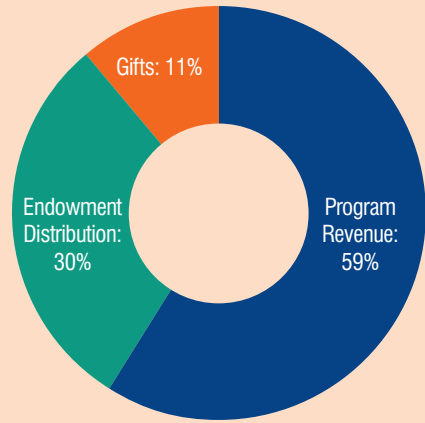
## HIGHLIGHTS

### from Fiscal Year 2020

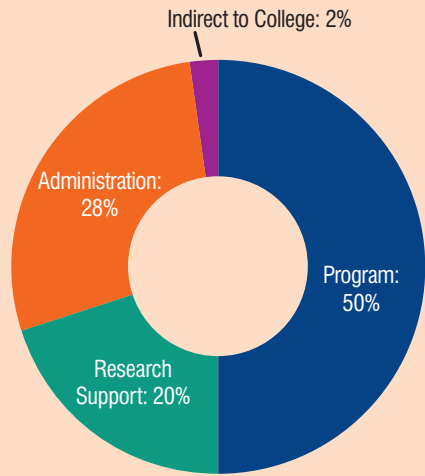
(July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020)

**Fiscal Year 2020**  
Budget: \$6M\*

\*based on unaudited data



### Revenue



### Expenses

**57**  
PUBLICATIONS  
such as book  
chapters and  
journal articles

**\$694K**  
IN DONATIONS

**44**  
PRESENTATIONS  
at virtual and  
in-person events

**893**  
PRACTITIONERS &  
administrators  
trained by NIOST

**45**  
MEDIA MENTIONS  
and op-eds

**764**  
GIFTS  
received

**29**  
ACTIVE RESEARCH  
projects

**362**  
OPEN CIRCLE  
schools  
nationwide

**\$2.4M**  
IN GRANTS  
and contracts

**79**  
PARTICIPANTS  
from 55 institutions  
trained by the National  
SEED Project

**10**  
NEW RESEARCH  
projects

# A Better Child Care System is Essential to Gender Equality—and Economic Recovery

We are in the midst of what has been called a “crisis of care.” Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the U.S. earlier this year, working parents have struggled to find care for their children as schools and child care centers closed. This crisis of care has been a disaster for women’s participation in the workforce and, by extension, for gender equality and the economy as a whole.

When families can’t access child care for their young children, or when older children need supervision while they attend school remotely, women end up cutting back their hours or leaving their jobs altogether. The gender wage gap contributes to this: In families with two working parents, it makes economic sense for the lower-earning spouse to be the one to stop working. In heterosexual couples, that is often the mother.

Data released by the U.S. Department of Labor in October show that women are leaving the workforce in droves, wiping out the hard-won gains made in the last several decades. Of the 1.1 million people aged 20 and older who left the workforce between August and September, over 800,000 were women. That includes 324,000 Latina women and 58,000 Black women. Women of color have suffered the most, with unemployment rates for both Latina and Black women rising to 11%.

According to the U.S. Census, between April and July, more than one-third of working millennial moms said they were unable to work due to caring for children not in school or child care. And the Lean In organization recently

reported that one in three mothers may be forced by the pandemic to scale back their hours or leave the workforce entirely.

When women drop out of the workforce, they have a difficult time re-entering it later, and a very difficult time finding jobs that pay as much as they were previously earning—reducing their lifetime earnings potential. This widens the gender pay gap and perpetuates the conditions that drive women to leave the workforce, creating a vicious cycle that results in more inequality.

Even when mothers are able to continue working, they are doing an impossible juggling act of work, child care, and housework—taking on a larger share of the child care and housework burden than fathers—that has detrimental effects on their careers and their mental health. A recent study by Qualtrics and theBoardlist found that twice as many women as men believed that working from home could have a somewhat or extremely negative impact on their careers, and that fathers were three times as likely as mothers to receive a promotion while working from home.

Over the summer, a colleague and I conducted focus groups with several dozen parents who have kids under the age of 5, sponsored by the Boston Mayor’s Office of Women’s Advancement. The parents told us how exhausting it was to always be either working or parenting, with no time left for themselves. Mothers in particular felt that they could not be both good moms and good employees; their inability to meet their own expectations was causing a lot of mental anguish. It’s no wonder that many are deciding this situation is unsustainable, and cutting back hours or dropping out of the workforce.

Economic recovery depends on parents being able to work, and therefore on a reliable system of child care. We’ve long known about the lack of affordable, accessible, and high-quality care for young children in the U.S., and now this problem has reached a breaking point. Child Care Aware estimates that 30-50% of child care programs will close permanently. These programs got by on razor-thin margins before the pandemic, and after being closed for months during lockdowns, and reopening with limited capacity and extra expenses due to new health regulations, many simply cannot afford to keep their doors open. This will make it harder for parents to find the child care they need in order to return to work.

“Economic recovery depends on parents being able to work, and therefore on a reliable system of child care.”



# 73% of the 1.1 million adults who left the workforce between August and September 2020 were women.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor

We should take this opportunity to not just help early childhood care and education programs get through this current crisis—though that is critical—but to rethink our whole system and build one that works better for everyone. While middle-class households spend on average 10% of their budget on child care, low-income households spend a third of their budget. This is a situation that cannot continue.

Since the pandemic began, I've been participating in daily calls with other early childhood care and education advocates in Massachusetts, led by the nonprofit organization Strategies for Children. We've been in communication with state and federal leaders about what kind of support child care programs and their staff need going forward. A major investment, particularly at the federal level, is necessary. This would allow for an expansion of affordable child care, improvement in the quality of that care, and higher wages for its woefully underpaid workforce.

My colleague **Nancy Marshall**, Ed.D., and I have spent 30 years studying early childhood care and education in the U.S. through WCW's Work, Families & Children Research Group. Our research has shown that a robust national child care policy is the only long-term solution that will meet the needs of children and families.

A national policy would have to address the issue of affordability, with free universal pre-kindergarten for all preschool-age children, subsidies on a sliding scale for families with infants, toddlers and school-age children, and guaranteed paid parental leave.



**Wendy Wagner Robeson**, Ed.D., is a senior research scientist with the Work, Families & Children Research Group at WCW and lecturer in Wellesley College's Department of Women's and Gender Studies. She has an extensive research background in child development, early childhood care and education, child care policy, school readiness, literacy, and language. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Robeson has worked with early childhood education advocates across Massachusetts to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the child care and education industry.

It would also need to ensure access to quality care, with national standards for group size, ratios of children to staff, health and safety, and workforce qualifications. It would align higher education with the core competencies for child care professionals, and provide ongoing professional development, including coaching.

Last but certainly not least, it would have to address challenges faced by the early childhood care and education workforce, with the goal of raising wages, maintaining diversity, and reducing turnover. This workforce needs wages worthy of the essential role they play, with pay comparable to that of public school teachers. They also need a career lattice rather than a single path, with multiple points of entry into careers in early childhood care and education, and various ways to advance in the field.

These are changes that would benefit both women and men. (As we say at WCW, a world that is good for women is good for everyone.) Child care is not a women's issue; it is a public good that is inseparable from the economy as a whole. We cannot achieve gender equality or economic recovery until our child care system is rebuilt from the ground up. Let's take this opportunity to do it sooner rather than later. ■

# Immigrant Entrepreneurs Will Play a Key Role in Economic Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating economic effect on U.S. households and businesses, particularly small businesses. Recovery will be a long and difficult road, and a key role will be played by a group we might not expect: immigrant entrepreneurs.

“The importance of immigrant entrepreneurs as firm founders and job creators has grown significantly over the last few decades,” said WCW Senior Research Scientist **Sari Pekkala Kerr**, Ph.D. “The share of immigrant entrepreneurs in the U.S. has increased, so the creation of new companies and new jobs is much more dependent on them than it was in the 1990s and early 2000s. That means they will play a major role in the economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.”

Kerr recently completed a project funded by the National Science Foundation that examined the role of immigrant entrepreneurs in firm creation, innovation, and job growth in the U.S. Despite the continuous and often heated debate about the appropriate rate and type of immigration for America, there has been little previous research related to the economic impact of immigrant entrepreneurs. This project provided the first comprehensive estimates of the effects of immigrants on firm starts and job creation.

Kerr found that immigrants start a large and growing share of new firms in the United States. Between 1995 and 2012, the share grew from about 16% to 25%. The role of immigrant entrepreneurs is as large (and sometimes larger) in the high-tech sector as it is in low-tech sectors. Immigrant-founded firms are unequally distributed across the country, with large differences across U.S. cities and states. But in all U.S. states, immigrants start more firms on a per capita basis than those who are born in the U.S.



The share of jobs that immigrant entrepreneurs create closely follows the share of firms they create. The jobs created by immigrant entrepreneurs pay somewhat less and provide fewer employee benefits, largely explained by their concentration in certain sectors like food service. And immigrant groups vary widely in terms

“The importance of immigrant entrepreneurs as firm founders and job creators has grown significantly over the last few decades.”

of who they hire as early employees in these startups. Some founders (e.g., those migrating from China and Vietnam) hire almost half of their early employees from their own ethnic group, which changes little as the firm ages. Conversely, other immigrant groups (e.g., those from Germany and Canada) hire mostly American workers and/or workers from other ethnicities than their own.

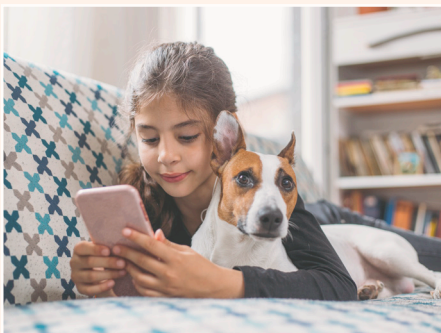
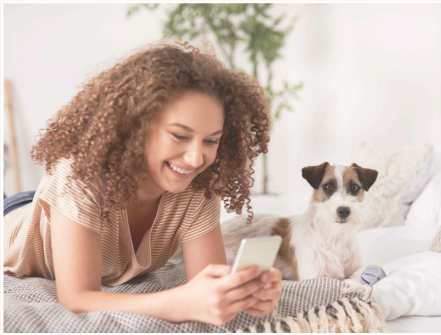
Kerr also surveyed startup founders, CEOs, inventors, and non-inventor employees in a large multi-city coworking facility. Within the same firms, she found significant differences in personality traits across individuals in those four roles. For example, founders showed a much greater tolerance for risk compared to the other groups, as well as greater self-efficacy and openness. Her research also showed that immigrant founders and employees valued networking more than those born in the U.S., and the networks developed by immigrants tended to be larger within the coworking facility.

“This research advances our understanding of the importance of immigrant entrepreneurs and business owners in the U.S. economy,” said Kerr. “It also helps us determine the role immigration policies play in mediating the impact of immigrant entrepreneurs—and how we might use that information to institute better policies moving forward.”



# Study Examines the Role of Pets in Adolescents' Online Social Interactions

“Both pets and social media can be sources of social and emotional support for adolescents, especially right now when many are quarantined at home.”



Pets are recognized as an important part of family systems, yet research on adolescents' relationships with their pets is limited. WCW Senior Research Scientist **Linda Charmaraman, Ph.D.**, recently co-authored an article delving into these relationships, and specifically how they are associated with adolescents' use of social media.

“Both pets and social media can be sources of social and emotional support for adolescents, especially right now when many are quarantined at home,” said Charmaraman. “But there hasn't been much research in this area, so we wanted to take a closer look at how interactions with pets are associated with online social behavior.”

The article, co-authored by Megan K. Mueller, Ph.D., assistant professor at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University, and **Amanda M. Richer, M.A.**, research associate and assistant methodologist at WCW, was published in September in a special issue of the *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal* focused on human-animal interactions.

Funded by Children and Screens: Institute of Digital Media and Child Development, it is the first study to explore links between owning pets, online social competence, and social technology use, particularly focused on how pets can act as either a substitute or a complement to social interactions online.

The research team surveyed 700 middle school students recruited from three schools in the Greater Boston area, and about half of the respondents took a longer survey with more detailed questions about pet relationship quality. The results were interesting and sometimes surprising: For example, the type of pet mattered. Adolescents who had dogs were more likely to check social media more frequently, to give and receive online social support, and to feel less social isolation.

“Adolescent dog owners preferred not to spend their free time alone,” said Charmaraman. “They were also more likely to report that online social support such as social media allows them to express themselves and relate to others.”

The research team found that the more time spent with a pet—no matter what kind of pet it was—the more likely the adolescent played online games for leisure and browsed the internet about animals. And the more attached the adolescent was to their pet, the more likely they provided and received online social support.

“We found that the more attached an adolescent is to their pet, the more likely it is that they will have a greater sense of community and connectedness to others online,” said Charmaraman. “They are willing to take higher social risks online—meaning they reach out to others who seek support, and they lean on their online communities when they need support. This demonstrates compassion and a desire to be emotionally connected to other people.”

The researchers think that perhaps youth who have strong social skills are more likely to have these skills reinforced through pet relationships and to further extend their social networks online. But more investigation is needed to understand the effects of pet ownership on adolescents.

Charmaraman and Mueller are embarking on a new project, funded by the National Institutes of Health, that will look at whether the quality of youths' relationships with their pets predicts healthy adolescent behaviors, and how parents influence the ways in which pets are integrated into the family system. The results, expected in 2022, will provide a better understanding of the benefits of pet ownership for adolescents, and what role family dynamics play in relationships between adolescents and their pets. ■

## Furthering Racial Justice Through Conversation

Since 1987, SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) has partnered with schools, organizations, and communities to develop leaders who guide their peers in conversational communities to drive personal, organizational, and societal change toward social justice. After attending New Leaders Week—held online for the first time this year—SEED leaders create local, year-long SEED seminars where they and colleagues use their own experiences to widen and deepen curricula and make communities more inclusive.

Co-directors **Emmy Howe**, M.Ed., and **Gail Cruise-Roberson** (**Jondou Chase Chen**, Ph.D., is the third co-director, based at the University of Washington) recently sat down to talk about what makes SEED work and what lessons we can learn from it on how to have hard conversations within our communities.

### What happens during New Leaders Week at SEED?

**EH:** Participants are introduced to SEED’s methodology, which involves personal reflection and serial testimony, listening deeply to others’ voices, and learning experientially and collectively, in the context of each person’s intersecting identities. Through this methodology, we equip participants to connect our lives to one another and to society at large by acknowledging systems of power, oppression, and privilege.

**GCR:** What we know works in SEED—speaking and listening without interruption, using texts and videos that give a systemic framework for how things impact people based on their identities—carried over to the virtual New Leaders Week we held this year. The difference was understanding people’s capacity to take in content and interact with such intensity online. In real life, we spend 12 hours together each day, whether in small or large groups or recreational time, which wasn’t going to be possible virtually. We created many of the same components, but we adapted them so they could be effective in a virtual space.

### How does SEED drive change in people and institutions?

**GCR:** Participating in SEED has a transformative effect on people. Those who are educators look at how they’ve been teaching and the impact (or lack thereof) they’ve had, and begin to use what they’ve talked about, read about, and thought about in SEED to make choices in what they teach. Their relationships with their colleagues change. Many say, “I’ve taught with this person for 15 years, and I’ve learned more about them in an hour of SEED than I ever knew before.” Institutional change takes longer. But those who hold positions of power begin to look at issues of access, class, and race in a different way. Admissions officers and human resources staff look differently at candidates who they thought weren’t a good fit. Leaders start to examine the complexion of their institution, and what needs to change if they want to have a different impact on students of color as well as white students. Once you see things through SEED that you didn’t notice before, it’s hard not to see them.

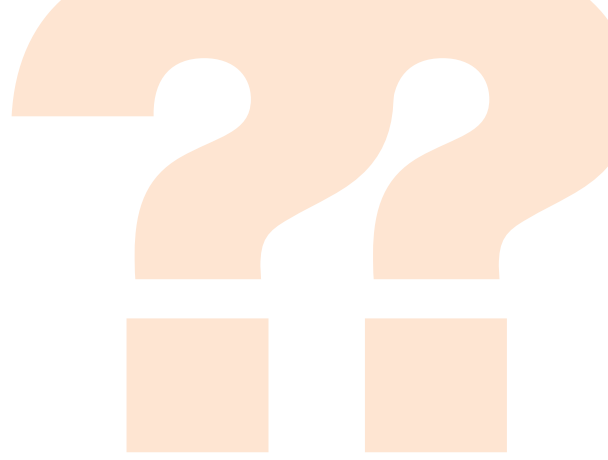
**EH:** White people often leave SEED saying, “How could I not have known this?” People

who’ve graduated from college in the last 10 years, in particular, wonder, “Why wasn’t I taught any of this?” By “this” they mean both the historical context of social injustice, and the experiences of the people they meet at SEED who are different from them. Because they’re sharing stories that are both head and heart, people begin to feel more attachment and more comfort with topics that they’re experiencing through these colleagues who they’ve gotten to know much better. We work with participants who come to SEED with a wealth of professional and personal knowledge and are able to build on skills they already have to become more impactful social justice activists within their workplaces. New SEED leaders and their SEED seminar participants take their identities and the stories of their lived experience to move their workplaces toward justice.

### What lessons can we learn from SEED about having hard conversations about race and injustice?

**GCR:** The first and most important thing is that relationships matter, and the relationship is more important than





“ In order for any movement toward social justice to occur, I have to be as willing to be changed by your story as you are to be changed by mine.”



Prior to the pandemic, participants would meet in person for SEED New Leaders Week.

the argument. You need to spend time getting to know your own place in the world and the place of the other person, so you can understand why they may think the way they do. And you must be committed to staying with the process of listening without interruption, which can feel uncomfortable at first. Also, we don't isolate racism in SEED

as though it were the one and only aspect of inequity we're dealing with. We understand there are interlocking systems, and race is foundational. But people have multiple identities that affect how they experience racism, and those all come into our conversations. How we are in the world in all of our aspects has everything to do with how we experience it and why we find it so difficult to understand how some people's experiences can be so different. That's why relationships matter. If you're truly in relationship with someone, you'll start seeing and understanding their perspective. In order for any movement toward social justice to occur, I have to be as willing to be changed by your story as you are to be changed by mine.

**EH:** There are two things that people leave New Leaders Week knowing: It's important to go in to listen, to

understand, not to respond. And though people sometimes like to say "let's assume positive intention," at SEED we emphasize that intention is one thing, but impact is the important piece. It's something that you can never say to yourself too many times. It doesn't matter what my intention is, if my impact doesn't match it. People will say, "But I've done this work all my life." All that matters are the results.

**GCR:** This climate we're in and this conversation we're trying to have is a very challenging one, and there's a reason it hasn't gone farther than it has in the last 50 years. There are specific approaches that are helpful, and SEED is one. ■

*See the SEED summer reading list on page 10.*



Gail Cruise-Roberson



Emmy Howe

**Gail Cruise-Roberson** and **Emmy Howe**, M.Ed., are co-directors of the National SEED Project, an action program at WCW. They both have backgrounds as educators and social justice advocates, with years of experience facilitating peer-led professional development programs on diversity and inclusion.

# SEED Summer Reading List

The first step to becoming a SEED leader is to attend New Leaders Week, where participants are introduced to SEED's methodology of speaking and listening without interruption, combined with texts and videos. During this summer's virtual New Leaders Week, SEED participants chose a selection of texts to read from the following list:

## BOOKS:

*The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present*  
by David Treuer

*Rethinking Sexism, Gender, and Sexuality*  
edited by Annika Butler-Wall, Kim Cosier, Rachel Harper, Jeff Sapp, Jody Sokolower, and Melissa Bollow Tempel

*Know My Name: A Memoir*  
by Chanel Miller

*White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*  
by Carol Anderson

*A Map Is Only One Story: Twenty Writers on Immigration, Family, and the Meaning of Home*  
edited by Nicole Chung and Mensah Demary

*Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*  
by Audre Lorde

*Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*  
by bell hooks

*The Poet X*  
by Elizabeth Acevedo

*Is Gender Fluid? A Primer for the 21st Century*  
by Sally Hines

*Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*  
by Robin Wall Kimmerer

*There There:*  
by Tommy Orange

*The Good Immigrant: 26 Writers Reflect on America*  
edited by Nikesh Shukla and Chimene Suleyman

*Teaching for Black Lives*  
edited by Dyan Watson, Jesse Hagopian, Wayne Au

## CHILDREN'S BOOKS:

*A Different Pond*  
by Bao Phi; illustrated by Thi Bui

*Dreamers*  
by Yuyi Morales

*Julián is a Mermaid*  
by Jessica Love

*Milo's Museum*  
by Zetta Elliott; illustrated by Purple Wong

*Drawn Together*  
by Minh Lê; illustrated by Dan Santat

*When We Were Alone*  
by David Robertson; illustrated by Julie Flett

*Mommy's Khimar*  
by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow; illustrated by Ebony Glenn

*The Day You Begin*  
by Jacqueline Woodson; illustrated by Rafael López

# Tracy Gladstone Takes on New Position of Research Director

**Tracy R.G. Gladstone**, Ph.D., is taking on a new role in addition to those of WCW senior research scientist, associate director, and inaugural director of the Robert S. and Grace W. Stone Primary Prevention Initiatives. As of November 1, she is serving as research director at the Centers.



In her new role, Gladstone will support the success of WCW's research scientists through peer review of proposals, thought partnership in mapping research trajectories, and mentorship. In the coming months, she will meet with research scientists and project directors at the Centers to discuss how best she can help bolster their work. The goal of the position is to provide advice both proactively and as needed.

"I'm delighted that Tracy has agreed to take on this position," said Executive Director **Layli Maparyan**, Ph.D. "She has a wealth of knowledge about grant proposals and publishing, a true talent for guiding others, demonstrated leadership of a team, and a desire to be of even greater service to WCW."

For her part, Gladstone is excited to have the opportunity to view the work of colleagues up close and to think together with others at WCW about how to optimize funding and publishing opportunities for the benefit of the entire organization.

"I love working with my colleagues to find new approaches and come up with solutions to tricky problems," she said. "Now I'll have a formalized way to do that on a regular basis. It's incredibly fulfilling, and hopefully will help further WCW's mission of advancing gender equality, social justice, and human wellbeing through research and action." ■



# Colleges Need to Include Info on Their Websites About Sexual Assault Response

In August 2020, new federal regulations went into effect that govern how colleges and universities must respond to allegations of sexual misconduct on campus. These new regulations from the U.S. Department of Education on educational institutions' response to sexual assault under Title IX have been the subject of considerable controversy and legal challenges.

Notwithstanding these challenges, one thing is clear: sexual violence is widespread on today's college campuses. The best evidence suggests that one in four or five college women and one in 16 college men experiences an attempted or completed sexual assault during their college career.

A primary resource for students who experience sexual violence, as well as for those they may tell, is the college or university's website. Yet the information available on websites varies widely and is often incomplete, as WCW Senior Research Scientist **Linda M. Williams**, Ph.D., Senior Scholar **April Pattavina**, Ph.D., and a team of co-investigators found while working on the project Responding to Sexual Assault on Campus, funded by the National Institute of Justice of the U.S. Department of Justice.

For a portion of the research, a team of trained undergraduate Wellesley College students reviewed 969 randomly selected college and university websites, beginning in January 2016. They examined the content each website provided related to reporting, investigation, and adjudication of sexual assault, looking at the material with a survivor-focused lens. Three percent of the websites contained nothing at all

on sexual assault, and many others had significant gaps in information—raising concerns about the extent to which these websites could serve as a resource for students.

“A high-quality website is a critical part of a transparent, fair and equitable response to campus sexual violence,” said Williams. “It provides victims, those accused, and those working to support them with information needed to make decisions about reporting, self-care, and participation in investigative or adjudicatory processes. To be helpful, information must be accurate, complete, comprehensive, and easy to locate and understand.”


“A high-quality website is a critical part of a transparent, fair and equitable response to campus sexual violence.”

The research team developed a checklist to aid institutions in designing and maintaining user-friendly website content related to the prevention of and response to sexual violence. For example, they recommend including clear instructions on how to report

an incident, including an online option for anonymous reporting, and a statement of confidentiality—how to request it, who will consider the request, and how it will be maintained. Victims should be advised on the option to notify law enforcement (or not), and provided with information about what happens after reporting and during an investigation. The website should also include a list of support resources available to victims and the accused, on and off campus; information about how adjudications, sanctions, and appeals work; and prevention and education materials.

“As colleges reassess their websites to ensure they comply with the new rules, we urge them to go above and beyond what is required, and consider making

available as much information as possible about their procedures,” said Williams. “Even if students aren't on campus this semester, incidents of online sexual harassment and stalking are likely, and students need to know how colleges will respond. Ensuring that they have complete, accurate information at the moment they need it is critical to ensuring a fair and transparent process.”



**1 in 4 or 5**  
college women will experience an attempted or completed sexual assault during their college career.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, Campus Climate Survey Validation Study Final Technical Report, January 2016.

# Project Director Testifies Before Boston City Council on Social and Emotional Wellbeing in Education

On October 27, 2020, **Kamilah Drummond-Forrester**, M.A., CAGS, director of **Open Circle**, testified at a Boston City Council committee hearing on reopening public schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Drummond-Forrester was invited to speak about the importance of focusing on the social and emotional wellbeing of both students and teachers during this extremely challenging time.

“Last spring, when schools and districts were suddenly met with the need to transition abruptly to remote learning, the emotional and social wellbeing of the students they served was front and center,” she said during her testimony. “Eight months later, the need to center the social and emotional wellbeing of our children is just as critical. We are all dealing with intense and multi-layered loss and grief and our children are feeling it just as intensely as the adults who care for them.”

Drummond-Forrester referenced her October 2020 op-ed in The Hechinger Report on this topic, “Teachers will need to focus more on how students are feeling in these tough times.” She also pointed to the work of WCW Visiting Scholar **Karen Craddock**, Ph.D., and Senior Scholar **Amy Banks**, M.D., which highlights that the brain registers the pain of social exclusion and isolation in the same way it registers physical pain. Craddock and Banks have developed a framework that can be used in conjunction with social and emotional learning (SEL) strategies to support wellbeing, especially during this dual pandemic of COVID-19 and racial injustice, when the pain of social exclusion and marginalization is compounded.

And students aren’t the only ones whose wellbeing should be prioritized. “No conversation about the wellbeing of students can occur without a simultaneous conversation about the psychosocial wellbeing of educators and administrators,” said Drummond-Forrester. “We cannot expect our children’s SEL needs to be met with care and concern if the adults charged with that task are stressed and uncared for themselves. Empty vessels cannot fill others up.”

The Committee on Education hearing, chaired by Boston City Councilor At-Large Annessa Essaibi George, also included testimony from Brenda Cassellius, Boston Public Schools superintendent, and Jessica Tang, president of the Boston Teachers Union.

Drummond-Forrester concluded her remarks with an eye to the future, saying, “This is certainly a difficult and complex time, and it is an opportunity to center what should have been foundational from the start—the social and emotional wellness of students, their teachers, and their families.” ▀

“No conversation about the wellbeing of students can occur without a simultaneous conversation about the psychosocial wellbeing of educators and administrators.”

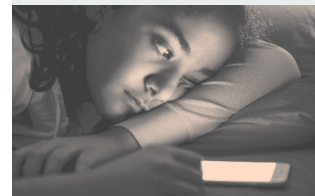
## More WCW News

Head to our website to read the latest news from WCW, including the following stories:



### New HHS Grant Will Fund Study on Child Care for Low-Income Families

Our Work, Families & Children Research Group will examine how nonstandard and/or unpredictable work schedules make it difficult for low-income parents to access quality child care.



### Quantity, Content, and Context of Social Media Use May Affect Adolescents’ Sleep

A new study found that the quantity of social technology use, type of content viewed, and social context is significantly related to later bedtimes and less sleep for early adolescents.



### Mental Health Campaign Aims to Build Teen Resilience During COVID-19

The Path 2 Purpose campaign aims to help teens cope during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keep reading at [wcwonline.org/news](http://wcwonline.org/news)



A young woman with long brown hair, wearing a pink top, is sitting on a green couch. She is holding a blue folder and a pen, looking down at it. A baby is sitting next to her, holding a green toy. There are books and a blue bag on the couch next to her.

# COVID-19 Has Compounded Challenges for College Students Who Are Parents

As colleges across the country started classes this fall, many students faced challenges. Those on campus had to adjust to a host of new social distancing measures that drastically changed the college experience, while those taking classes remotely had to grapple with learning mainly from a screen. But one subset of students had particularly tough adjustments to make: those who are parents.

More than one in five of today's college students are parents, and they have been stretched thin during this crisis. School and child care arrangements have been massively disrupted, and many student parents are low-income and work in jobs that don't allow for telecommuting. COVID-19 has compounded the daunting challenges that student parents previously faced. WCW Research Scientist **Autumn Green**, Ph.D., has spent nearly 20 years studying student parents and what they need to succeed—and then transforming that research into action.

“Student parents have unique needs, and those needs haven't changed,” said Green, who leads WCW's Higher Education Access for Student Parents Research Initiative. “They need a place to live with their children—preferably somewhere affordable, on or close to campus. They need access to safe, reliable, convenient, and affordable child care. They need help balancing work and family, and opportunities to engage with other students on campus. Importantly, they need to know what resources are out there that can support them.”

To that end, Green has created a number of helpful tools for student parents. A recent award from the Jacob Bluestein Foundation, based in New York, will allow her to update these tools and create new ones. With it, Green and Research Associate **Sarah Galison**, MSW, will be able to update the Campus Family Housing Database, which comprehensively identifies colleges and universities in the United States offering students the opportunity to live in college-affiliated housing with their children.

The gift will also support data collection for the Find Your Way regional study of postsecondary student parent programs, specifically in the Pacific Northwest and Western regions. (Several other regions have already been completed.) Through a collaboration with the University of Hawaii Bridge to Hope Program—a state-wide partnership between the Hawaii Department of Human Services and the University of Hawaii system—Green and Galison will work with Teresa Bill, the director of Bridge to Hope, to lead student parent researchers from across the University of Hawaii's community college and university system in completing research training, data collection, and analysis of research findings. They will

comprehensively identify colleges and universities offering student parent support services in Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and the American Pacific Islands and Territories (such as Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Marianas Islands).

“I'm really excited about this project, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Green. “The student parents with whom we'll be working need jobs they can do remotely, and Bridge to Hope is able to hire them through our partnership. And because of COVID-19 and concerns about program closures, it's an important time to update the Campus Family Housing Database and to begin to document and track other programs and closures. Once we know how these student parent supports have been affected, we can work on filling the gaps.”

A woman with dark hair, wearing a blue top, is sitting on the floor. She has a baby on her back, who is wearing a light blue shirt. She is looking at a laptop screen. There are colorful toys on the floor around her.

More than **1 in 5**  
of today's college  
students are parents.

Source: Institute for Women's Policy Research.  
Parents in College By the Numbers.  
April 2019.



# What NIOST Has Learned About Delivering Quality Virtual Learning Experiences

When many out-of-school time (OST) programs shifted to virtual programming this past spring and summer, it seemed like a dramatic change. But now with several months of experience behind them, the researchers at the **National Institute on Out-of-School Time** (NIOST) have learned a surprisingly simple lesson: best practices for OST programs haven't changed.

“We saw OST professionals use significant flexibility, creativity, and skill to transition from in-person to virtual programming,” said **Georgia Hall**, director of NIOST. “A lot has changed, but a lot hasn't. Being fun and engaging still counts—now it's a matter of determining how to deliver fun and engaging experiences online.”

NIOST researchers observed over 200 hours of online academic and general enrichment delivered through school and community-based organization partnerships as part of the Boston Summer Learning Community. The program quality-building work at NIOST has always been embedded in the research-based framework of the Assessment of Program Practices Tool (APT), and this past summer was no different. Researchers collected examples of high-quality practices for virtual learning that connect to the major principles and elements of APT along with other OST program quality tools. These practices likely apply to other types of youth programming as well.

For example, the researchers found that it can be helpful for online activities to be broken up into 10- to 15-minute segments, depending on the age of the participants, with a physical break in between or a switch in delivery mode. Physical stretching and movement for

two minutes can re-energize everyone. A call and response routine can gather and refocus. A switch from a slide presentation to an interactive mode such as a poll or breakout room can maintain engagement. As always, routines and transitions should be planned and used consistently so that youth know what to expect.

When it comes to engaging youth, the researchers found that it's important to leverage virtual meeting tools, interactive software, and virtual resources. Using the chat to comment or ask questions, responding with emojis and nonverbal reactions, taking polls for quick feedback, and using whiteboards and annotation for a collaborative experience are all ways to keep participants engaged. Taking a few minutes each session for feedback and reflection—not just on the content but on the process—allows youth to shape activities going forward. And breakout rooms offer valuable opportunities for collaboration and leadership, just as small, in-person group activities once did.

Finally, being prepared is always key for a smooth-running activity, whether in person or online. Virtual activities require some additional preparation, such as testing software ahead of time. Other types of preparation help, too, like having all links, videos, and shared screen slides loaded and easily accessible, and minimizing the number of meeting room links—especially for younger youth and families who may be managing siblings' links too. For younger youth, it can be useful to distribute physical flashcards that depict the icons they need to click for easy reference (such as a picture of the microphone for muting/unmuting).



And a staff member's virtual backdrop can be enhanced with art, colorful posters, and uplifting messages.

“These kinds of high-quality practices can help keep youth engaged and supported, and build skills and relationships that further their success in school, work, and life,” said Hall. “As we go forward, we can build on what we learned this summer to meet the challenges that lie ahead.” ■

# Parents' Communication with Teens About Dating is Changing During the Pandemic



The pandemic has altered family life in unexpected ways. For example, some kids are happier now that they've gotten a chance to slow down, and more people are spending time cooking at home. Parents' conversations with their teens about dating and relationships, and their monitoring of their teens' behavior, have also changed.

Senior Research Scientist **Jennifer M. Grossman**, Ph.D., and her team surveyed 328 parents of high school students throughout the U.S. between March and June of this year. They asked questions about how parents communicated with their teens about dating and relationships before schools closed due to COVID-19 as compared to afterwards. They also asked questions about parents' stress levels and whether and how they monitored their teens' behavior.

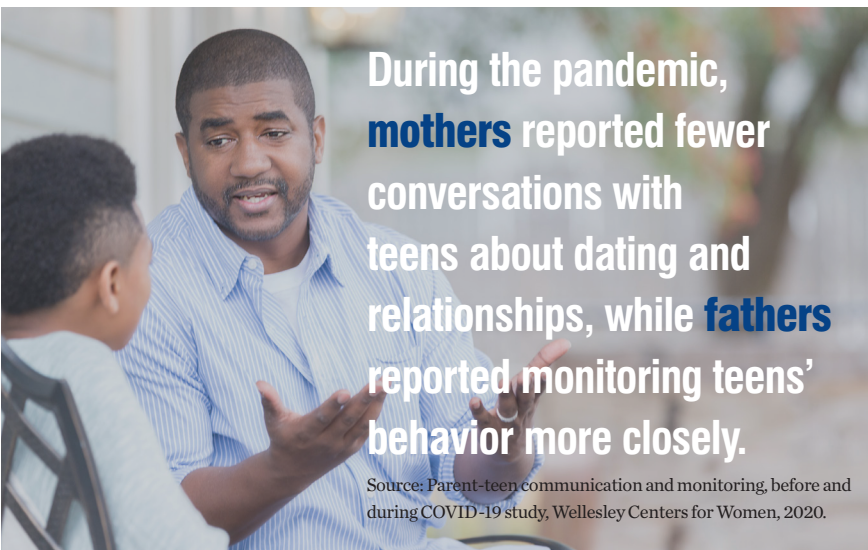
"We were really interested to find out how the pandemic has affected family communication about sex, and whether there were any changes in mothers' and fathers' roles in these conversations," said Grossman. The team also included **Lisette M. DeSouza**, Ph.D., and **Amanda M. Richer**, M.A., both of WCW, and Alicia Doyle Lynch, Ph.D., of Lynch Research Associates.

essential work requirements, financial difficulties, and the general anxiety of the pandemic, which likely led them to focus on the immediate day-to-day needs of their families and put off these types of conversations. And with many teens stuck at home, parents may assume that teens' relationships and physical intimacy in particular are on hold, so the need to talk about them is not as critical.

The researchers also found an interesting change in gender roles among heterosexual parents. Mothers reported having fewer conversations with their teens about dating and relationships, and fathers reported monitoring their teens' behavior more closely than before the pandemic. This increase in fathers' monitoring may in part reflect fathers' shift from working outside the home to being at home during the pandemic (61% of fathers in the sample made this transition compared to 39% of mothers). While mothers are still monitoring and communicating more than fathers, it may be that since many fathers are spending more time at home, parents' roles have shifted, and fathers are taking a more active part in their teens' lives.

"More research is needed to delve into what this data means, but it's an important reminder that parenting roles aren't set in stone," said Grossman. "Sometimes a crisis can prompt unpredictable and even positive changes. The way parents have communicated with and monitored their teens in the past doesn't necessarily dictate their future actions."

Thinking outside the box can help. Though mothers are often assumed to be the ones in charge of having these conversations, Grossman's research has shown that fathers play an important role too, as do extended families. In fact, she recently received a grant from the National Institutes of Health to study fathers' communication with their teens about sex and relationships, and whether these conversations can protect teens from risky sexual behavior. The study, which will run through 2022, will use secondary survey data from 952 urban high school students and new interviews with 30 fathers and their families. Fathers' perspectives on communication with their teens about sex and relationships will be analyzed and compared across contexts, along with the perspectives of other family members. ■



The researchers found a significant drop in parent-teen communication about dating and relationships once COVID-19 hit. This makes sense: parents reported higher stress levels as many dealt with sick family members,

# Virtual Social Change Dialogues

In October 2020, WCW hosted two virtual Social Change Dialogues to highlight the direct and indirect impacts of the dual pandemic we are all facing—COVID-19 and racial injustice.

## Gender Equality and COVID-19

Pandemics tend to have an outsize impact on women and families, beyond the immediate health risks. COVID-19 is no exception. Panelists discussed the unique ways that COVID-19 is impacting women's work-life balance, economic opportunity, and mental wellbeing.



Featuring: **Karen Craddock**, Ph.D., visiting scholar, **Sari Pekkala Kerr**, Ph.D., senior research scientist, **Wendy Wagner Robeson**, Ed.D., senior research scientist, with moderator **Layli Maparyan**, Ph.D., executive director.

## Advancing Racial Justice Through Research and Action

The U.S. is in the midst of a long-overdue reckoning with racial inequality. To move the needle on this issue, each of us needs to take it upon ourselves to understand racism, and—just as importantly—take action to dismantle it. Panelists discussed the ways they advance racial justice through their research and action work at WCW and offered ways that participants can advance racial justice in their lives and communities.



Featuring: **Gail Cruise-Roberson**, SEED co-director, **Lisette M. DeSouza**, Ph.D., associate research scientist, **Kamilah Drummond-Forrester**, M.A., CAGS, Open Circle director, **LaShawnda Lindsay**, Ph.D., research scientist, with moderator **Layli Maparyan**, Ph.D., executive director.

Watch both of these programs at [wcwonline.org/video](http://wcwonline.org/video)

# OUR WORK in the World

A selection of recent media coverage and presentations

## APRIL 2020

Visiting Scholar  
**Hauwa Ibrahim**, J.D.,  
S.J.D., M.L., authored

the op-ed, "Editing the Code of Violence in Northern Nigeria," for *EduCeleb*, a news outlet focused on the education sector in Nigeria.

**EDUCELEB**.COM

**Linda Charmaraman**, Ph.D., senior research scientist, spoke at a virtual ideation session on cognitive diversity hosted by Forbes Ignite.

## JUNE 2020

**Peggy McIntosh**, Ph.D., senior research scientist, spoke with *BBC NewsHour* about systemic privilege and oppression.

## JULY 2020

Visiting Scholar  
**Karen Craddock**, Ph.D., was  
quoted in a *Verywell Family* article, "Racial Disparities in Maternal Health May Be at a Pivot Point."

**verywell**

## OCTOBER 2020

**SHIFTING BOUNDARIES:**  
Lessons on Relationships  
for Students in Middle Schools

Senior Research Scientist  
**Nan Stein**, Ed.D., held a virtual training through the Tennessee Department of Health on **Shifting Boundaries**, an evidence-based, multi-level program for middle school students on preventing sexual harassment and precursors to dating violence.

The op-ed, "Colleges Must Accommodate Students Who Are Breastfeeding—Even in Zoom Classes," by **Autumn Green**, Ph.D., research scientist, was published on *MsMagazine.com*.

**Ms.**  
MAGAZINE

See more media coverage at [wcwonline.org/inthenews](http://wcwonline.org/inthenews)



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