

Advancing Early Learning: A National Framework and Strategies for Measuring Impact

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**Kareena DuPlessis
Director**

Child Development Infoline, Connecticut 2-1-1

Kareena DuPlessis, B.S., is Director of the Child Development Infoline, a specialized unit within Connecticut's 2-1-1 comprehensive telephone information and referral service. She began as the Director of the Birth to Three Infoline, which served as the single point of entry into the state's early intervention program, Birth to Three, and has been involved in the evolution and expansion of this unit from serving as one access point to now serving as the access point for 4 different programs. In this role, she has collaborated with several state agencies, including the Children's Trust Fund for the Help Me Grow Program, the Department of Developmental Services for the Connecticut Birth to Three System, the Department of Education for the Preschool Special Education Program and the Department of Public Health for the Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Medical Home Initiative. Together with these partners, protocols for triaging referrals for children with or at-risk for developmental, behavioral or health related issues to appropriate services have been developed. She has also been instrumental in the design of a unique data system for collection of information on the calls that come into unit. This data can then help to inform funders and policy makers about service needs, gaps and barriers. Ms. DuPlessis received her B.S. in Rehabilitation Services from the University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT.

**Neal Halfon
Director**

UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities

Neal Halfon, MD, MPH is director of the UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities. He is also a professor of pediatrics in the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, health services in the UCLA School of Public Health, and policy studies in the UCLA School of Public Affairs. Dr. Halfon's research has spanned clinical, health services, epidemiologic and health policy domains. This includes studies focused on health and health care needs of children in foster care; trends in childhood chronic illness and disability; access to health insurance and care; quality of health care and developmental services; provisions of preventive services. Dr. Halfon directs the National Center for Infancy and Early Childhood Health Policy. In collaboration with Lynn Olson at the American Academy of Pediatrics, he has co-directed the development, fielding and analysis of the 2000 National Survey of Early Childhood Health (NSECH) and is working with Dr. Olson and others on the development of the NSECH II. Dr. Halfon is also the Principal Investigator for the Los Angeles and Ventura Study Center for the National Children's Study. In 2007, he and co-authors Helen DuPlessis and Moira

Inkelas published “Transforming the US Child Health System” the lead article in a Health Affairs special issue March/April 2007 on Designing Children's Health Care.

Dr. Halfon received his undergraduate degree in Psychobiology and Chemistry from UC Santa Cruz (1973); his medical degree from UC Davis (1978); and his masters in Public Health degree from UC Berkeley (1984). He completed his pediatric training at UC San Diego and UC San Francisco, and went on to be a Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholar in the UCSF-Stanford Program (1982-84). He is on the faculty at UCSF and UC Berkeley from 1984 through 1991, and was director of the Center for the Vulnerable Child at Oakland Children’s Hospital from 1986- 1991. In 1992 he joined the faculty at UCLA.

Peg Sprague

Vice President of Community Impact

United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley

Peg Sprague is Vice President in the Community Impact division at United Way of MA Bay and the Merrimack Valley , which serves 87 cities and towns in eastern Massachusetts. Her responsibilities include development and oversight for UW’s community impact strategies focused on *Healthy Child Development* for children birth through age six, and *Increasing Youth Opportunities* for school-age youth. Peg has over thirty years experience as a teacher, administrator, consultant and program developer in the fields of early education and care, out of school time and work-life. She serves on boards at both the local and national levels. She holds a bachelor’s degree from Simmons College and completed her graduate studies at Wheelock College where she has been a member of the adjunct faculty.