



**SAFER SCHOOLS AND CAMPUSES  
BEST PRACTICES  
CLEARINGHOUSE**

---

***Lessons from the Field: Guidance for Early  
Childhood Education Programs and Providers***

*Wednesday, April 14, 2021 3:00 - 4:00 PM ET*

***SPEAKER BIOS***

---

Christian Rhodes, Chief of Staff, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education

Christian Rhodes served as Chief of Staff for Prince George’s County Public Schools. In this role, Rhodes supported the chief executive officer through management of specific business functions of the school system. He began his career as a political organizer for the Maryland State Teachers Association, a state affiliate of the National Education Association, and education advisor Office of the Prince George’s County Executive. Rhodes has a Master of Public Administration degree from the American University in Washington, D.C., and a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Christy Kavulic, Associate Division Director, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education

Christy Kavulic is the Associate Division Director of the Early Childhood Team in the Office of Special Education Programs in the US Department of Education. In this position, she oversees the development and management of discretionary grants funded under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act that prepare an effective early childhood workforce; support the implementation of evidence-practices; and support high-quality early childhood systems at the State and local levels. She also supports collaboration with other Federal partners to ensure that infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities and their families have access to and full participation in high-quality early childhood programs and services. She has a master’s degree in speech-language pathology, a master’s degree in public health, and a doctorate in early childhood special education.

### [Angie Claussen, PhD, Research Scientist, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

Angelika (Angie) Claussen, PhD, is a Research Psychologist with the Child Development Studies team at the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. Her current work includes parenting interventions, children's mental health, and specific conditions affecting children's development such as ADHD and Tourette's syndrome. Prior to coming to CDC in 2003, she was Director of Research at the Linda Ray Intervention Center for the University of Miami, Department of Psychology. There she conducted research into early intervention for children at risk, social emotional development, maltreatment, parenting, and attachment. She is currently deployed to the CDC COVID-19 emergency response as an expert on early childhood education.

### [Dori Yorks, Director, Washington County Family Support Center](#)

Dori Yorks, M.Ed. began her work in the Early Childhood field over 30 years ago. She has been the Director of the Washington County Family Support Center since 2009 and is a leadership team member of the Washington County Early Childhood Advisory Council. Ms. Yorks earned her graduate degree in Alternative Education from Lock Haven University in Lock Haven, PA., and her BS in Social Sciences from the University of Maryland.

### [Mindy Zapata, Director, Early Head Start and Head Start, Southwest Human Development](#)

Mindy Zapata has worked for Head Start in the early childhood education field for more than 30 years. From holding leadership positions to providing direct services to children and families. Mindy's vast range of experiences have provided her valuable insight into translating regulations and applying them to the real-life applications.

Mindy has directed both Head Start and Early Head Start programs. As director of Head Start, Mindy's vision led to the opening of the first Early Head Start program located in a juvenile detention facility. This program received national recognition and has been the model for similar programs throughout the United States.

Mindy is a member of the Head Start /Association Board of Directors and in an adjunct faculty for Maricopa County Community College District in the areas of early childhood development and family studies. Mindy is a certified Head Start program monitoring reviewer and regional Head Start grantee application reviewer.