

# Newsletter

October 2024

Volume 18, Issue 1

## Early Education and Child Development Special Interest Group

<https://www.aera-eecd-sig.org/>



# Chair's Message

## Melissa Sherfinski

Dear Early Education and Child Development (EECD) SIG Members,

Welcome to a new academic year filled with possibilities, no matter our particular contexts in our individual institutions of higher education. I am sure you join me in looking forward to spring of 2024, when our AERA conference will be held in a place-based only format Philadelphia, PA. Our meeting will be an opportunity to experience more deeply our joy for the past and present of our field, as well as to experience a feeling of hope for its future and contemplate and plan ways to put that hope into action. In this letter, I review highlights of the 2023 Annual Meeting, summarize our newest EECD SIG activities, and preview the 2024 conference.

The AERA Annual Conference in 2023 was held both in-person (in Chicago, Illinois) and virtually, which provided flexible attendance possibilities. I was impressed by the quality and variation among the sessions and papers, my thanks and appreciation for all of the presenters and attendees. My deepest thanks to Katherine Kresin Delaney of the University of Toledo, Sophia Han of the University of South Florida, and Julia Atilas of East Tennessee State University for their hard work as the 2023 Program Committee co-chairs, overseeing the review process and organizing a dynamic conference program for multiple modalities. This was a tremendous amount of work teasing out proposals for both conferences, and they stuck with the challenges to create a great program.

The AERA EECD SIG business meeting was held in a place-based format in Chicago and transmitted virtually in 2023. The SIG honored Dr. Diane Horm of the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa for her distinguished contributions to the Early Education and Child Development fields during her career. Dr. Horm gave an inspiring speech about how our field has changed over time, where we are at, and how we might grow in our unique mission to children and families.

At the SIG business meeting, we presented awards to Dr. Crystasany Turner of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Dr. Gerylyn Slicker of the University of Nevada-Las Vegas for their excellent dissertations.



Dr. Arya Ansari of the Ohio State University and Dr. Cassie Brownell of the University of Toronto deservedly received the Early Career Award from the SIG. Several of these scholars were able to share their work through enlightening presentations. My thanks to Dr. Ana Whitaker, of the University of Delaware, and Dr. Ji-Young Choi of the Ohio State University, who led the committees who selected the dissertation and early career award recipients, respectively.

The SIG was very fortunate to have funding to provide generous travel awards to graduate students attending AERA. Dr. Bethany Wilinski, of Michigan State University, led the organization of these awards for the AERA 2023 annual conference. The recipients of the graduate student travel awards were Chungsoo Na from Utah State University and Cara Kelly from the University of Delaware.

I am sure that all who attended would agree that we had an amazing SIG Reception at the Fairmont Hotel during the place-based conference. Thanks to Alison Hooper for carefully planning of the details of the reception with me. We had a Mexican buffet, drink tickets, and most importantly a buzz of excitement as graduate students and early career scholars met mid-career scholars and veterans in the field.

There were lots of smiles and much laughter and warm embraces as folks who had not seen each other in years were reunited and new friendships and professional relationships were forged. There was a great energy at this event that we hope to repeat in Philadelphia.

## Chair's Message (Cont.)

We had a nice turnout at our mixer, held during the virtual component of the 2023 annual conference. We had early childhood scholars from all levels of experience (grad student through veteran scholars) attend, and I thank Dr. Christine Wang, Dr. Myae Han, Dr. Katy Chapman, and Dr. Alison Hooper for coordinating mini sessions and providing a space for stimulating dialogue and mentorship at this online event.

A special thanks to Dr. Amber Brown of the University of Houston-Clear Lake for photographing our SIG events and working with Dr. Sohyun Meacham of the University of Northern Iowa to broadcast these on social media.

Thank you so much to all of our dedicated board members, including all of those individuals named thus far and to our Chair Elect, Dr. Jennifer Baumgartner of Louisiana State University, to Dr. Christine Wang of the University at Buffalo who coordinated the SIG Board election call, to our 2020-2023 newsletter editor, Dr. Sohyun Meacham, to our 2021-2023 Communications Officer Dr. Amber Brown, Dr. Christine Wang for managing the SIG website, and Valkessha Marshall who served as our graduate student representative, and to all of our SIG members and conference presenters who contributed to a very strong conference program and who dedicate their lives to our field for the benefit of young children.

I would also like to congratulate and provide a warm welcome to the folks who have been elected recently to the SIG board and are already hard at work preparing for the 2023 AERA Conference in Philadelphia and virtually: our new newsletter editor, Dr. Grace Keengwe of the University of North Dakota, our new Senior Member at Large, Sohyun Meacham of the University of Northern Iowa, our new Junior Member at Large, Katy Chapman of the University of Florida, our new Program Committee Co-chair, Tomoko Wakabayashi of Oakland University, our new Communications Officer, Dr. Cindy Wiltshire of the University of Texas at El Paso, and our new graduate student representative, Cara Kelly of the University of Delaware.

Already early this year, the EECD SIG has been hosting opportunities to benefit our membership. This summer, our new graduate student representative Cara Kelly sent a survey to our graduate student membership. She found that the two most popular interests of our graduate students are (1) a writing group for graduate students, and (2) a mentor-mentee event before the Reception or Business Meeting at the 2024 conference in Philadelphia. We will be doing both of these this year. The graduate writing group has already started, so be sure to reach out to Cara if you are a grad student and interested.

Looking ahead this fall, we will have an election for new board members in the following positions: Chair Elect (6-year term), Secretary/Treasurer, Senior Member at Large, Junior Member at Large, and Graduate Student Representative. Be sure to vote! 😊 Additionally, right now we are calling for dissertation award and early career award nominations, as well as graduate student travel award applications (see this newsletter for more details). We have a tremendously talented SIG and look forward to all of your applications.

In an effort to reach more members, the SIG is piloting a social media presence. This fall, we will roll out X (formerly Twitter; @AERA\_EECD\_SIG) and Instagram (@aeraeccd) accounts alongside our current email listserv, website ([aera-eecd-sig.org](http://aera-eecd-sig.org)), and Facebook page. Thanks to Dr. Cindy Wiltshire and Dr. Sohyun Meacham for helping to foster this initiative.

AERA 2024 in Philadelphia is going to be tremendous! We are anticipating a strong program and a very large turnout. The EECD SIG is planning a traditional business meeting, a mentoring event, and a buffet reception, among other opportunities to gather and grow as a SIG. On behalf of the AERA EECD SIG board, I hope to see you all there!

Best,  
Melissa Sherfinski, West Virginia University  
Chair, AERA Early Education and Child Development  
SIG

# SEEKING NOMINATIONS for 2024 AERA EE/CD SIG BOARD MEMBERS

**The Early Education and Child Development (EE/CD) SIG #32 is now accepting nominations for the following board leadership positions:**

## **Chair-Elect (2-year term)**

The Chair-elect shall be responsible for assisting the Chair during their 2-year term. Other specific responsibilities include organizing the SIG reception at the annual business meeting (with the Secretary/Treasurer), overseeing the nominations process, and planning the business meeting. In the event that the Chair is not available to chair the annual business meeting, the Chair-elect shall convene the meeting. There shall be an automatic succession of the following offices, from Chair-elect to Chair, in that order such that the person elected as Chair-elect shall automatically assume the office of Chair following the completion of one term (two years) as Chair-elect.

## **Secretary/Treasurer (2-year term)**

The Secretary/Treasurer shall be responsible for managing and reporting on the financial accounts of the SIG and the safe keeping of all financial documents of the SIG.

## **Senior Member-at-Large (2-year term)**

One senior member-at-large shall serve as a member of the nominations committee, and one senior member-at-large shall be responsible for managing the Early Career Awards (soliciting nominations, creating a committee, and deciding winners). Designation of these duties will be determined by the SIG Executive Committee.

## **Junior Member-at-Large (2-year term)**

One junior member-at-large shall be responsible for managing the Dissertation Awards (soliciting nominations, creating a committee, deciding winners), and one junior member-at-large shall be responsible for managing the Travel Awards (soliciting nominations, creating a committee, deciding winners). Designation of these duties will be determined by the SIG Executive Committee.

## **Graduate Student Representative (1-year term)**

The Graduate Student Representative shall be responsible for attending to special project (s) at the discretion of the Chair. Other specific responsibilities include graduate recruitment to and involvement in the SIG.

Nominees must be current, [voting members](#) of members of AERA and the Early Education and Child Development SIG. If you're nominating someone else, please be sure to communicate with the nominee and get their agreement and biographical statement prior to filling out the nomination form. A person can only be nominated for a single office. In order to nominate yourself or someone else, you must provide the following information using this [nomination form](#)

- The full name of the candidate
- The institutional affiliation of the candidate
- The candidate's email address
- A biographical statement for the candidate, which can be up to 200 words.

# SEEKING NOMINATIONS for the 2024 EARLY CAREER AWARD

The EE/CD SIG is soliciting nominations for our Early Career Award. The committee urges all EE/CD SIG members to consider nominating a deserving early career scholar. The award recipient will be notified in February 2024 and recognized at the EECD SIG Business Meeting at the 2024 AERA Annual Meeting. Please see description and nomination guidelines below.

The EE/CD SIG Early Career Award is made annually to an individual with an early and promising record as a researcher and scholar in the early childhood field, as evidenced through their competitive publications and other scholarly activities suggesting their vital research agenda. Recipients of this award receive a \$500 monetary prize and are invited to present a brief summary of their research and interests at the SIG business meeting.

## Eligibility Criteria

1. Viable candidates for the EE/CD Early Research Career Award are no more than 10 years out from receiving their doctorate and have not received tenure.
2. Nominees must be members of the EE/CD SIG.

*Note.* Nominees from previous years who did not receive the award are encouraged to apply if they still meet the eligibility criteria above.



## Application Materials

1. A letter of nomination from a scholar, with sufficient justification of the nominee's qualifications.
2. A copy of the nominee's most recent Curriculum Vitae, including complete bibliographic information and present employment status.
3. Copies of 2 or more publications representative of the nominee's scholarly contributions to the early childhood/child development field thus far.

Please send all required materials as one combined PDF via email to Soh Meacham ([sohyun.meacham@uni.edu](mailto:sohyun.meacham@uni.edu)) with the subject "AERA EE/CD SIG Early Career Award" by November 1, 2023, 11:59pm EST. For inquiries, please contact Soh Meacham ([sohyun.meacham@uni.edu](mailto:sohyun.meacham@uni.edu)).

# SEEKING NOMINATIONS for the 2024 OUTSTANDING DISSERTATION AWARD

Annually, the EE/CD SIG awards the Outstanding Dissertation Award for a recent dissertation of exceptional merit. The recipient will receive a plaque from the SIG and a monetary gift at the EE/CD SIG Business meeting. The recipient also receives an automatic invitation to present the dissertation work as part of the EE/CD Business Meeting. The EE/CD SIG is soliciting nominations for our Dissertation Award. **All nominations and required materials should be submitted to [this nomination form](#) by November 3, 2023.** Contact Dissertation Award Committee Chair Katy Chapman ([kathryncchapman@ufl.edu](mailto:kathryncchapman@ufl.edu)) with any questions about the award or nomination process.

The criteria for this award are:

A completed and defended dissertation accepted by the Graduate School of the nominee's university within two years of the deadline for submission.

A study that investigates a topic related to the development of children between birth and age 8, including studies focused on families, teachers and others who care for and educate young children.

A nominating professor who is a current member of AERA.

To be considered for the award, please complete [this nomination form](#) and upload the materials listed below. Please include the nominee's name in the file name for all materials.

- **One letter of faculty endorsement** from a member of the student's dissertation committee who is an AERA member, attesting that the dissertation was completed by the student during the time period specified and that the faculty member nominating or endorsing the nomination served on the dissertation committee. Please also include the oral defense date. This letter should include a brief clarification of the purposes, scope, and quality of the student's dissertation research, as well as an explanation of how the dissertation contributes to the field of early childhood, child development, or early education. **This letter can be uploaded to the google form or sent directly to Katy Chapman ([kathryncchapman@ufl.edu](mailto:kathryncchapman@ufl.edu)) with the subject line "EECD Dissertation Award."** All other materials *must* be uploaded to the google form.
  - **A single Word document or PDF that contains:**
    - **Title page for the dissertation** (including university/college, name of the professor chairing the dissertation committee and a complete list of committee members). In addition, please add to the title page complete contact information (e-mail) of either the student or the nominator that can be used for all correspondence regarding the award.
    - **Table of Contents** from the dissertation.
    - **1–2-page summary** (abstract) of the study to be published in the SIG newsletter should the award be given to the recipient.
    - **Scholarly summary of the dissertation**, written by the nominee. This summary should adhere to the APA manual's (7th ed.) guidelines for manuscript preparation and should be approximately 15-20 pages (double spaced). The summary should provide an overview of the dissertation study, including objectives/purpose; perspectives/theoretical framework; methods/mode of inquiry; data sources and analyses; results/discussion; and conclusion and educational/scientific importance of study. The summary will be evaluated by a panel of scholars in the field and former dissertation award winners. **Please note that *all* nominees are required to submit a summary, regardless of dissertation format (e.g., traditional dissertation or three article dissertation).**

### Eligibility Criteria:

Dissertation topic should be congruent with the award purposes as described above.

The dissertation was completed within the past two academic years (2021-2022 or 2022-2023).

Nominees are encouraged to become a member of the EE/CD SIG if not already members. However, membership is not required.

Self-nominations will be accepted.

Submit all required materials as Word or PDF documents through the nomination form no later than November 3, 2023. Please direct any questions to Dissertation Award Committee Chair Katy Chapman ([kathryncchapman@ufl.edu](mailto:kathryncchapman@ufl.edu)).

# 2024 TRAVEL AWARDS for GRADUATE STUDENTS

The EE/CD SIG is pleased to once again offer a competitive funding opportunity for graduate students who are SIG members, have been selected to present in an EE/CD SIG session at the 2024 Annual Meeting, and plan to attend the conference in person.

This year, we anticipate being able to provide multiple awards ranging from \$300-\$500. To apply for a travel award, please provide the following information through [this google form](#):

- A copy of the letter of acceptance from AERA for the 2024 Annual Meeting.
- A brief statement (max 200 words) of your plans to attend AERA this year as well as how a travel award will enhance your professional development.
- Please indicate if your institution does or does not provide any support for conference travel. If your institution does provide support for conference travel, please indicate the amount you anticipate receiving this year for AERA.

Deadline for submission is December 1, 2023.  
Please contact Anamarie Whitaker ([awhit@udel.edu](mailto:awhit@udel.edu)) with any questions pertaining to this award or application process.

AERA EE/CD SIG's

GRADUATE STUDENT  
WRITING GROUP

MONDAYS @ 9AM PT/11AM  
CT/12PM ET

[HTTPS://UDEL.ZOOM.US/J/95829657422](https://udel.zoom.us/j/95829657422)

Cara Kelly, the Graduate Student Representative for the EE/CD SIG, is hosting formal writing groups for all graduate students who are interested in participating. The writing groups are held every **Monday at 9am PT / 11am CT / 12pm ET.**

The writing group lasts for an hour, and we dedicate the first five minutes of every session to discussing our goals for the hour. This is a great opportunity to connect with fellow graduate students who are interested in EE/CD and hear about their work. Please join us if you are interested in networking with other graduate students and dedicating time to writing each week!

# 2023 Membership & Budget Report

## Membership

Membership Categories	April 2019 (Toronto)	2020 (No Conference)	2021 (Virtual)	2022 (San Diego)	2023 (Chicago)	Current Membership
Current	378	413	373	342	388	444
New	86	93	92	68	66	99
Lapsed/still in AERA <sup>+</sup>	74	109	93	86	87	97

<sup>+</sup>The “Lapsed/Still in AERA” row reflects people who have an active AERA membership but are no longer part of our SIG



# Budget

Category	Description	2023	2022	2021	2020	
<b>Beginning Balance</b>		\$19,282.45	\$17,623.89	\$14,013.79	\$10,016.52	
<b>Income</b>	Membership dues	\$3,330.00	\$7,350.00	\$6,030.00	\$5,760.00	
	Sponsorships	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
	Reimbursements	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1630.00	\$0.00	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		\$3,330.00	\$7,350.00	\$7,660.00	\$15,776.25	
<b>Expenses</b>	Awards	(\$2,000.00)	(\$1,000.00)	(\$1,500.00)	(\$1,000.00)	
	Plaques/Certificates (+shipping)	(\$272.33)	(\$121.09)	(\$119.90)	(\$171.24)	
	Graduate Student and Early Career Registration Grants	(\$1,000.00)	(\$2,820.00)	(\$1,630.00)		
	Conference reception	(\$4,098.88)				
	Board meeting	(\$734.32)	(\$650.35)			
	Webinar honorarium		(\$800.00)	(\$500.00)		
	AERA Management Fee		(\$300.00)	(\$300.00)	(\$300.00)	
	Web hosting/management	(\$365.61)			(\$291.49)	
	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		(\$8,471.14)	(\$5,691.44)	(\$4,059.90)	(\$1,762.73)
	<b>Ending Balance</b>		\$14,141.31	\$19,282.45	\$17,623.89	\$14,013.79

# EE/CD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS 2023-2024

## Elected Members



Melissa Sherfinski  
Chair  
(2022-2024)  
Associate Professor,  
West Virginia University



Jennifer Baumgartner  
Chair Elect  
(2022-2024)  
Associate Professor,  
Louisiana State University



Myae Han  
Past Chair  
(2022-2024)  
Professor,  
University of Delaware



Alison Hooper  
Secretary / Treasurer  
(2022-2024)  
Assistant Professor,  
University of Alabama



Ji-Young Choi  
Senior Member-at-Large  
(2022-2024)  
Associate Professor,  
The Ohio State University



Sohyun Meacham  
Senior Member-at-Large  
(2023-2025)  
Associate Professor  
University of Northern Iowa



Anamarie Whitaker  
Junior Member-at-Large  
(2022-2024)  
Assistant Professor,  
University of Delaware



Katy Chapman  
Junior Member-at-Large  
(2023- 2025)  
Assistant Professor,  
University of Florida



Cara Kelly  
Graduate Student Representative  
(2023 – 2025)  
University of Delaware



Grace Keengwe  
Newsletter Editor  
(2023-2025)  
Associate Professor,  
University of North Dakota

# EE/CD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS 2023-2024

## Cont.

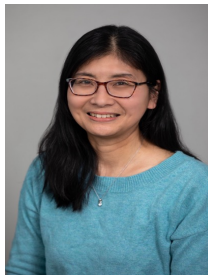
Sophia Han  
Program Co-Chair  
(2021-2024- Appointed)  
Associate Professor,  
University of South Florida



Julia Atilas  
Program Co-Chair  
(2022-2025: Appointed)  
Associate Professor,  
East Tennessee State University



Tomoko Wakabayashi  
Program Co-Chair  
(2023 – 2026; Appointed)  
Associate Professor  
Oakland University



Cindy Wiltshire  
Communications Officer  
(2023-2025)  
Assistant Professor  
University of Texas at El Paso



X. Christine Wang  
Website Master  
(Appointed)  
Professor,  
University of New York at  
Buffalo

