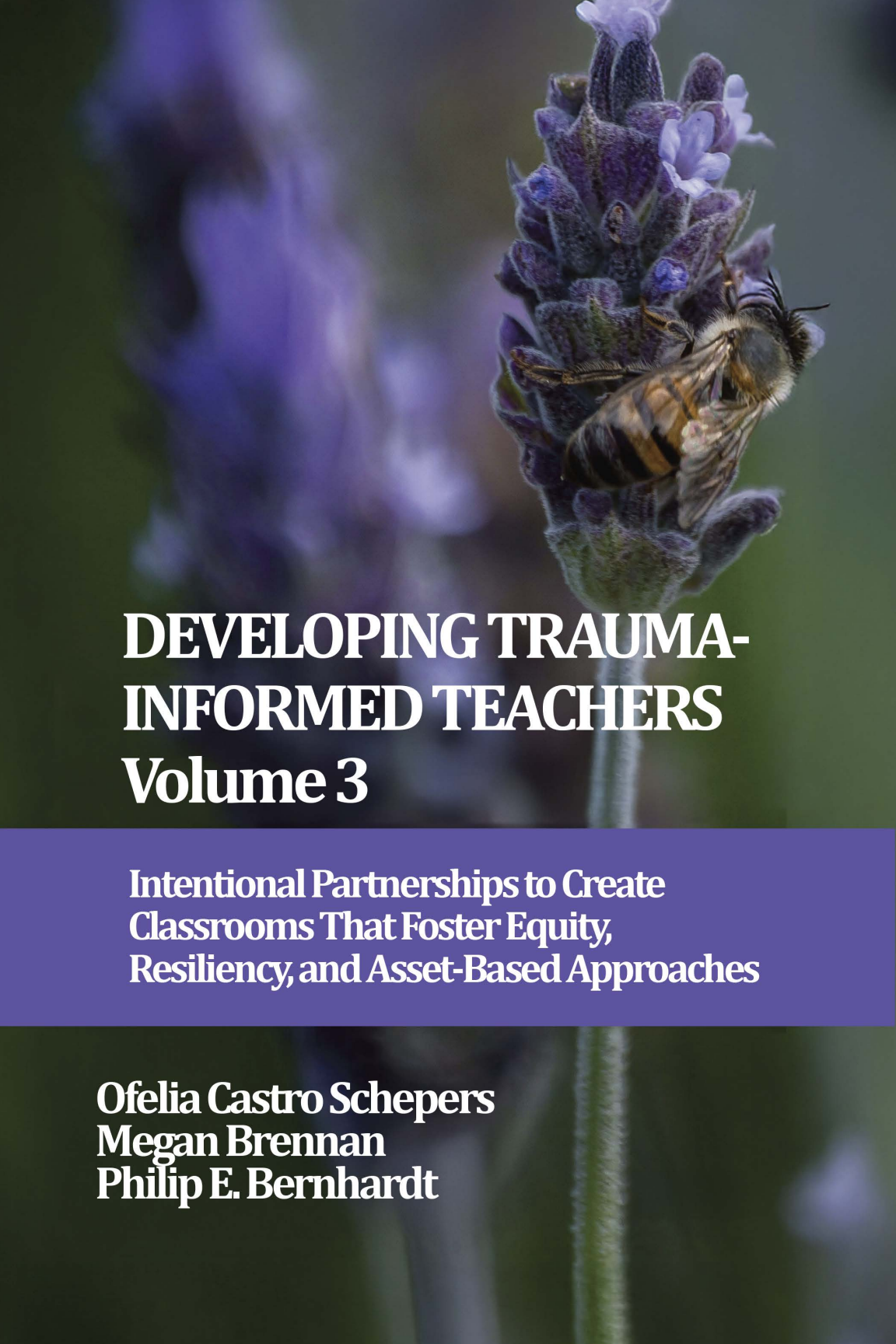

DEVELOPING TRAUMA-INFORMED TEACHERS Volume 3

Intentional Partnerships to Create Classrooms That Foster Equity, Resiliency, and Asset-Based Approaches

Ofelia Castro Schepers
Megan Brennan
Philip E. Bernhardt

Developing Trauma-Informed Teachers: Intentional Partnerships to Create Classrooms That Foster Equity, Resiliency, and Asset-Based Approaches
Volume 3

EMERALD: STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPING TRAUMA INFORMED TEACHERS

SERIES EDITORS:
Ofelia Castro Schepers, Purdue University
Megan Brennan, Resilient Futures
Philip E. Bernhardt, Metropolitan State University of Denver

Series Description

The use of Trauma-Informed Practices (TIP) in schools aims to create a safe, supportive climate, in which school personnel are encouraged to view and respond to students' behaviors with an understanding of the potential impact of trauma and the strength of resilience. These practices are intended to be holistic and require a paradigm shift framing potential concerns about students with what has happened rather than what is wrong with you? When educators understand the impact of trauma on a child's behavior, development, social-emotional skills, and readiness for learning, they can actively work to address these needs and more effectively promote student success.

Published Titles

Creating Classrooms that Foster Equity, Resiliency, and Asset-Based Approaches: Research Findings from Teacher Preparation. Contemporary Perspectives on Developing Trauma-Informed Teachers (2023)
O. Castro Schepers, M. Brennan, & P. E. Bernhardt,
IAP.

Developing Trauma-Informed Teachers: Intentional Partnerships to Create Classrooms That Foster Equity, Resiliency, and Asset-Based Approaches
Volume 3

EDITED BY

OFELIA CASTRO SCHEPERS

Purdue University

MEGAN BRENNAN

Resilient Futures

AND

PHILIP E. BERNHARDT

Metropolitan State University of Denver

United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Emerald Publishing, Floor 5, Northspring, 21-23 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4DL

First edition 2025

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83708-590-3 (HB)
ISBN: 978-1-83708-591-0 (PB)
ISBN: 978-1-83708-592-7 (EPDF)

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Kathryn Young
Metropolitan State University of Denver

I taught in a locked residential facility, a self-contained special education classroom, and in a school in Namibia right after the end of apartheid. Although these schools do not have much in common at first glance, what they do have in common is the amount of trauma that impacted the students and their teachers. Another thing they had in common is that few acknowledged these traumas or their effects on teaching and learning at the time. Fast forward a few decades and schools, districts, and universities are engaged with the important work of infusing trauma-informed practices into every level of education.

Developing Trauma-Informed Teachers: Intentional Partnerships to Create Classrooms that Foster Equity, Resiliency, and Asset-Based Approaches edited by Dr. Ofelia Castro Schepers, Dr. Megan Brennan, and Dr. Philip E. Bernhardt provides a much-needed resource for teachers, administrators, and university personnel to articulate the mutual beneficiality of partnership work. This edited volume highlights how partnership work is the way forward for trauma-informed educational practices. In a review pertaining to university school partnerships, Dr. Sean Kottke (n.d.) argues, "The idea that school district-university partnerships for educator preparation should be mutually beneficial is almost universally acknowledged, but often poorly articulated by practitioners when asked to provide

Developing Trauma-Informed Teachers: Intentional Partnerships to Create Classrooms That Foster Equity, Resiliency, Asset-Based Approaches, Vol. 3, pp. vii–xiii.

ISBN: 978-1-83708-590-3 (HB); 978-1-83708-591-0 (PB); 978-1-83708-592-7 (EPDF)

evidence of such a partnership," This book provides many different examples of what mutually beneficial looks like in a variety of settings. It acts as a guide for those who want to learn how to complete their own next step in infusing trauma-informed practices into their work.

Chapters are grounded in research from the field of teacher preparation, clinical practice, trauma informed practices, critical theories of trauma and other intersectional theories providing readers different avenues to conceptualize their own partnership work. Some chapters describe and explain content, curriculum, and pedagogies that ensure teacher candidates thoughtfully integrate trauma-informed practices and personal resiliency into their own future practice. Other chapters highlight program or curriculum implementation within a school and/or district from rural to urban experiences, from early childhood through high school. The breadth of experiences shared in these chapters makes the book an asset for any educator of any grade level.

Each of these chapters exemplifies tenets of trauma-informed practices themselves from collaboration to cultural humility, to relationship-building, to responsiveness within and across educational spaces. Below I highlight a few of these strong partnership models to demonstrate the complexity of this work and the care and trust each partner must exhibit while undertaking the work together.

The book opens with a poem by Eleanor Haberl of the Kevin Love Fund. Her poem is titled, "Our Stories Belong Here." The poem asks you to feel her uncertainty, her pain, her hope, her progress as she moves towards the first day of teaching in a semester, what to share about her personal story, what to leave out. These questions resonate with teachers of all levels as they decide how vulnerable to be with their students, what role that vulnerability has in creating a caring classroom. She interweaves her experiences with quotes from Dr. Elizabeth Dutro, an academic who encourages exploring vulnerability in education spaces. This emotive first-person account of the interweaving of trauma and teaching sets the tone for the edited volume.

In "Partnerships for Early Childhood Education Workforce Development" Dr. Shapland Rodriguez partners with Dr. Deverell, Ms. Greenbaum, and Dr. Nelson to provide Trauma Informed Resiliency-building Equitable Practices (TIP Equity) as professional development to staff and leadership of several preschools. This chapter does not shy away from the messiness of partnership work nor does it gloss over the difficulties in creating and maintaining solid partnerships; instead through the messiness and difficulties, the authors show how TIP Equity partnership can be operationalized and fulfilling for all sides of the partnership. These partnership sites provide placements for teacher candidates that are well aligned with the Trauma Informed and Equity practices of the university program. This chapter highlights the efforts to place teacher candidates in classrooms where they can see TIP Equity practices in action and receive TIP Equity coaching from supervising teachers who mentor them. This work has led to better alignment of experiences for teacher candidates, more centers requesting teacher candidates,

and reduction in harsh discipline, suspensions, and removals from learning for children in these centers.

In "That makes my heart so happy. How does that make you feel?": Care-informed practices in a rural kindergarten classroom, Dr. Oudghiri works with Ms. Call, a kindergarten teacher to think through and work to enact trauma-informed care (TIC) in a rural educational setting in ways that inform the development of strategies that promote well-being, resilience, and academic success for rural students affected by trauma. Perhaps just as important as their shared praxis, the authors also share the friendship that grew out of this process. This partnership filled the proverbial friendship bucket of both teacher and researcher while also exploring the importance of caring and the limits of this concept in an under-resourced, rural, kindergarten classroom. The rich narratives shared in this chapter can place anyone in this teacher's classroom, can help us experience her dilemmas, her efforts, and her joys. Other chapters in the volume like *Dismantling Ability Grouping to Promote Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Practices in Early Childhood Classrooms by* Dr. Amber Howard et al. also rely on narrative accounts of close partnership between an early childhood educator and a faculty member with each person in the partnership affecting the other in a powerful and educative iterative cycle.

The chapter by Rahimi et al "Establishing a Trauma-Informed and Mental Health Research Collaborative" highlights a partnership between a group of interdisciplinary university faculty and a district-level administrator in a local school district. This chapter shares how the Collaborative formed to address a resource gap in mental health services for local youth. They share the process of developing the Collaborative, how they developed their mission to serve as a hub for resources, research, training, connections to local practitioners and experts, and tools related to TIP and mental wellness. The Collaborative wanted to create free and easily accessible resources for the local schools and communities. This experience culminated in a series of modules housed on YouTube. These modules cover topics from Understanding Trauma: Implications for the Classroom to Wellness Strategies for Teachers, to Trauma in College Students and College Teaching to Developing Mental Wellness Interventions in Schools and Clinics. The chapter shows the synergy that can develop when interdisciplinary scholars and administrators work together to address a community need.

Other chapters in the edited volume like *Fostering Trauma-informed Teachers Within a Regional Community of Practice* by Stephanie J. Gardner et al. also share about the experiences of a university partnering with several community agencies, including a local intermediate unit supporting 17 school districts in a community of practice that seeks to support resilience in teachers in the area. This chapter shows how different communities of practice can act in similar and different ways to each other and provides different entry points to this collaborative partnership work.

The writing across all chapters in this edited volume highlights partnerships where university and school and district level educators are working together to develop equity-focused, trauma-informed content, curriculum, and pedagogies. These partnerships exemplify the power of relationality and collective efforts in creating positive change within educational communities from fostering collaboration to enhancing professional growth. Across chapters, authors share their experiences with opportunities and challenges in different grade levels, schools, and districts. They expand the existing trauma-informed theoretical framework and extend the theoretical exploration into ways to apply and integrate trauma-informed practices across the educational continuum.

One of my favorite parts in each chapter is the hope evidenced within the chapter, through the authors' plans to continue developing and enhancing their partnership work, the hope the authors have that trauma-informed practices can make schools better for teachers and for students who have experienced or are experiencing trauma and for all students. I also encourage readers to delve into the other books in this series: *Creating Classrooms That Foster Equity, Resiliency, and Asset-Based Approaches: Research Findings from the Field and Creating Classrooms that Foster Equity, Resiliency,* and *Asset-Based Approaches: Reflections from Teacher Preparation on Curricula and Program Implementation.*

INTRODUCTION

Trauma is a public health crisis. In the United States, approximately 60% of individuals ages 17 or younger report experiencing trauma (Felitti et al., 1998). These traumatic events do not live outside of the scope of schools and teaching. As children and teachers develop communities within their classrooms and schools, trauma comes with those who have experienced it, whether invited or not (Dutro & Bien, 2014). High rates of trauma exposure among youth in the United States and the detrimental effects of trauma on students' psychosocial and academic outcomes are well-established. There is a great deal of research documenting the impact of childhood trauma and stress on brain development and school performance, and cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development (Perfect et al., 2016).

The concepts of Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) began to spread after a SAMHSA study in 1998 of the Women, Co-Occurring Disorders and Violence Study provided recommendations for "trauma-integrated services." Over the last two decades, distinctions have been made to focus TIC specifically to trauma-informed practices, and these practices have expanded to schools in the past decade. Trauma-informed practices are intended to be holistic and require a paradigm shift framing potential concerns about students with *what has happened* rather than *what is wrong with you*? Rather than seeing trauma reactions through a deficit lens of defiance, TIC reframes these reactions as adaptive, realizing they are the individual's best attempt to cope with the experiences of trauma (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014)

In response to increased awareness of the impact of trauma on student behavioral, emotional, and academic outcomes, schools across the United States have begun to adopt trauma-informed approaches to better understand and meet the needs of these youth (Dorado et al., 2016; Overstreet & Chafouleas, 2016). Changing practices within schools so that children who have experienced trauma are better understood and more compassionately served is a goal shared by many schools and mental health professionals (Chafouleas et al., 2016; Wolpow et al., 2009). The use of trauma-informed practices in schools aims to create a safe, supportive climate in which school personnel are encouraged to view and respond to students' behaviors with an understanding of the potential impact of trauma and the strength of resilience. Several core assumptions include realizing the pervasive impact of trauma, identifying and understanding trauma symptoms, using knowledge of trauma to inform practice, and avoiding re-traumatization (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMSHA], 2018). Schools that recognize and respond to child trauma have seen gains in student achievement and reduced incidence of delinquency (Brown et al., 2020; McKinney de Royston & Nasir, 2017).

Teacher education programs are primed to support the intentional weaving of trauma-informed practices into their own curriculum. This humanizing approach can be used to support preservice educators through modeling of inviting trauma into classrooms with intention and truly allowing students to bring all parts of their lives to classrooms. Though TIP have not been largely present in preservice education, in recent years there have been impactful preservice education resources that explore trauma in K–12 classrooms with intentionality and as a way to honor the lived experiences of students (e.g., Dutro, 2019; Goodman, 2018; Jones, 2020; Simmons, 2020; Venet, 2021).

The vision and development of this edited text are driven by a desire to ensure that in-service teachers are thoughtfully prepared to more fully address students' needs and create classroom environments that are safe and sustainable for students. Specifically, this text will provide a more informed understanding of how educator preparation programs are intentionally partnering with early childhood centers, K–12 schools, and/or districts to ensure teachers have opportunities to develop the knowledge, practical skills, and expertise to effectively utilize trauma-informed practices that are rooted in an asset-based approach to foster resiliency skills that support students who have or are experiencing trauma.

When educators and future educators understand the impact of trauma on a child's behavior, development, social-emotional skills, and readiness for learning, they can actively work to address these needs and more effectively promote student success. The text will also consider how these partnerships are working together to develop equity-focused content, curriculum, & pedagogies to ensure teachers understand how to develop their own resiliency skills. This resource will highlight important and relevant tools, strategies, and approaches for preparing teachers to implement trauma-informed practices within their classrooms. The

following question will situate and frame the edited text and serve as a guide for contributing authors:

The following question situates and frames the edited text: In what ways are educator preparation programs intentionally partnering with early childhood centers, K–12 schools, and/or districts to develop and implement equity-focused, asset-based content, curriculum, & pedagogies to ensure teachers can successfully integrate trauma-informed practices as well as develop their own resiliency skills?

The prevalence of trauma among children in the United States underscores the urgent need for trauma-informed practices within all educational settings. The recognition of trauma's profound impact on students' academic, social, and emotional well-being has prompted a shift towards implementing TIC and TIP in schools. This paradigm emphasizes understanding and responding to students' behaviors through a lens of empathy and support rather than judgment or punishment. As schools increasingly adopt trauma-informed approaches, the focus is not only on addressing the needs of traumatized students but also on equipping educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to create safe and nurturing environments. The chapters within this text are intended to support the readers by providing a varied set of examples from teacher preparation programs that share models and personal experiences of integrating TIP into their practices, programs, or curricula. By integrating trauma-informed practices into teacher education programs and fostering partnerships between educational institutions and communities, we can better prepare educators to meet the diverse needs of students and cultivate resilience.

The chapters discuss the varied ways TIP can be conceptualized and implemented into individual courses, program-wide initiatives, and cross-discipline collaboration. Through intentional collaboration and a commitment to equity-focused, asset-based pedagogies, we can empower educators to effectively support students impacted by trauma, ultimately promoting student success and well-being. This text will be of primary interest to all those working in institutes of higher education, alternative licensure programs, and schools and districts involved with the preparation of teacher candidates.

REFERENCES

Brown, E. C., Freedle, A., Hurless, N. L., Miller, R. D., Martin, C., & Paul, Z. A. (2020). *Preparing teacher candidates for trauma-informed practices*. Urban Education, 0042085920974084

Chafouleas, S. M., Johnson, A. H., Overstreet, S., & Santos, N. M. (2016). Toward a blueprint for trauma-informed service delivery in schools. *School Mental Health*, *8*, 144–162.

de Royston, M. M., & Nasir, N. S.(2017). Racialized learning ecologies: Understanding race as a key feature of learning and developmental processes in schools. In N. Budwig, E. Turiel, P. D. Zelazo (Eds.), *New perspectives on human development* (pp. 258–286). Cambridge University Press.

Dorado, J., Martinez, M., McArthur, L., & Leibovitz, T. (2016). Healthy environments and response to trauma in schools (HEARTS): A whole-school, multi-level, prevention and intervention program for creating trauma-informed, safe and supportive schools. *School Mental Health, 8*, 163–176.

Dutro, E. (2019). *The vulnerable heart of literacy: Centering trauma as powerful pedagogy.* Teachers College Press.

Dutro, E, & Bien, A. (2014). Listening to the speaking wound: A trauma studies perspective on student positioning in schools. *American Educational Research Journal, 51*, 7–35. 10.3102/0002831213503181

Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., & Marks, J. S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, *14*(4), 245–258.

Goodman, S. (2018). *It's not about grit: Trauma, inequity, and the power of transformative teaching*.

Jones, S. P. (2020). Ending curriculum violence. *Teaching Tolerance, 64,* 47–50.

Kottke, S. (n.d.). *Improving America's schools together review.* Carnegie Foundation. https://www.carnegiefoundation.org/resources/publications/improving-americas-schools-together/

Overstreet, S., & Chafouleas S. (2016). Trauma-informed schools: Introduction to the special issue. *A Multidisciplinary Research and Practice Journal, 8*(1), 1–6. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12310-016-9184-1.

Perfect, M., Turley, M., Carlson, J. S., Yohannan, J., & Gilles, M. S. (2016). School-related outcomes of traumatic event exposure and traumatic stress symptoms in students: A systematic review of research from 1990 to 2015. *School Mental Health*. doi:10.1007/s12310-016-9175-2.

Simmons, D. (2020). The trauma we don't see. *Educational Leadership, 77*, 8, 88–89.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). *Trauma-informed care in behavioral health services. Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series 57.* HHS Publication No. (SMA) 13–4801.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2018). *National mental health information center child, adolescent, and family branch, center for mental health services*. http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/child

Venet, A. S. (2021). *Equity-centered trauma-informed education.* WWW Norton & Company.

Wolpow, R., Johnson, M. M., Hertel, R., & Kincaid, S. O. (2009). *The heart of learning and teaching: Compassion, resiliency, and academic success.* Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Compassionate Schools.

This page is intentionally left blank

INTRODUCTION

OUR STORIES BELONG HERE

Eleanor Haberl
Kevin Love Fund

I began to recognize that when I experienced testimony and witness in classrooms in productive, even transformative ways, it was not a linear, unidimensional process, but rather was circular and cyclical. I find the circular image appealing because it has no definitive end; it implies that there is not a point of leveling off and being "done." Rather, the smooth endlessness of the circle suggests that the compulsion and responsibility to witness and to testify are always present. In this view, the circle of testimony-witness begins when someone's difficult experience enters the classroom (in whatever way that occurs) and demands that others bear witness. Faced with such testimony and in acting as witness, the listener may respond with personal testimony that, in turn, must be witnessed and, again, may prompt testimony from her witnesses (Dutro, 2011, p. 198).

The entrance to the children's hospital is a central atrium in the round with a glass elevator that goes up. But I don't walk this circle while I'm living there with my newborn son, I walk the hallways. My hallway walk is my attempt to transcend time. I am hopeful it will be a portal, that it will carry me back in time so I can relive my son's birth, and this time, warn the nurses that there will be a low oxygen event during the birth and it will cause a severe brain injury. If I could find a portal, I could go back and beg them to intervene. In my imagination I scream down the hallway with desperation. And this time, help arrives in time. And this time, I live an alternative reality, one where we snuggle our baby, cozy and safe, healthy—all of us.

Developing Trauma-Informed Teachers: Intentional Partnerships to Create Classrooms That Foster Equity, Resiliency, Asset-Based Approaches, Vol. 3, pp. xv–xvii.

ISBN: 978-1-83708-590-3 (HB); 978-1-83708-591-0 (PB); 978-1-83708-592-7 (EPDF)

Of course, hallways are not timelines. And so I cannot walk backwards through time. But after a few weeks I discover that the elevator is a magic portal. I can take it to the atrium and walk outside of the hospital. And this is magic, too, because I can walk out into a world that doesn't know what happened, and that is almost like being in a world where it has not happened.

One day, I go to the Target, and I cannot believe it. No one knows. They are not worried about me. They do not hand me paperwork to sign or huddle around me to update me on Will's oxygen percentage. They put popsicles in their carts and buy gym shoes for their healthy children. All I see is healthy children. *How did you do it?* I want to run up to their parents and ask. I marvel and gape at their healthy children. But anonymity is relief. They don't know. It's just popsicles and gym shoes. It's just Wednesday.

In the middle of August, I flip the pages on my paper calendar, counting the weeks. Will was born on July 30th. The class I am teaching begins on August 27th. My eyes, blurry, count the days left. I sit cross-legged on our plastic foldout couchbed in his room. I decide that teaching might help.

I send an email to my students—27 undergraduates who want to be elementary teachers. It is the email I always send before the writing methods class begins. I am cheery and pleasant. Hello! Welcome to a new semester! I will be your instructor! This is my favorite class to teach! I overuse exclamation points. I type the email with one hand. I balance Will in my lap, all curled up and sleeping. We are tethered to the machines, oxygen and heart rate. My email and this scene are in sharp contrast. My tone is dishonest, but I cannot imagine it another way. I cannot picture a welcome email that describes the fresh shock I am still navigating. So, instead, I ask them to prepare for our first class by reading an article by my mentor, Elizabeth Dutro. *Writing Wounded: Trauma Testimony, and Critical Witness in Literacy Classrooms.*

It is the way she always began the class too. It is the framework, the foundation, the lens we hope they will bring to their work with children. She shares her pedagogy of critical witnessing and reciprocal vulnerability, the invitation to be witnesses to our students' difficult experiences. Many of those experiences get the capitol 'T' trauma labels, but we will complicate the label in class. We will resist easy classification. We will be critical of those deficit perspectives that often accompany the hardest stories. And we will invite children to be our witnesses too.

A circular notion of testimony and witness in classrooms requires teachers to participate as both witnesses to student experience and testifiers to their own. I think it is tempting to view teaching as involving witness, but not testimony. It is not unusual to hear teachers referred to as witnesses to students' lives and learning. But, as witnesses, are teachers merely vessels for the testimonies of Others? (Dutro, 2011, p. 198).

It is the first article we read together because we want to begin right away. Right away Professor Dutro shared. And me, too. I always used to share right away, on the very first day. I used to talk about addiction- my family's recovery from alcoholism,

my own struggle with anxiety. I used to read my writing to the class, start to chisel away at the school rules that said that teachers shouldn't cry in school.

But this first day of school will be different, and I am weighing what to share. My husband watches me get ready for my first day of teaching. I stand in our tiny NICU hospital room bathroom, no bigger than an airport bathroom, and curl my hair, cover my red face with make-up. "You could decide to wait to tell them. You don't have to tell them today?" He asks. I'm quiet, protesting. Later, he tells me he knew what I would do.

I take the elevator portal outside. I'm wearing the only dressy shirt I have that will cover my just recently pregnant belly. I wonder if I look like I live in a hospital. I wonder if my face still looks frozen with terror and if my students will mirror it to me, with their mirror neurons because we just can't help ourselves. It is empathy. It is instinct.

I reconsider the Target. The anonymity. They wouldn't need to know. We could just talk about the syllabus. But, I don't really consider it. I've done this enough to know that letting them witness my story will be better than the anonymity I felt in the Target. It is a lot harder. But also, better.

When I get to the classroom, I decide. Yes. I project a picture of Will on my first power point slide. The plastic oxygen tubes sticking out of his nose. A grey onesie with white stars on it. I will not tell them the brain injury is one of the most severe the neonatologist has ever seen. I will not tell them the prognosis. But I will tell them his name. And I will let myself cry some of my heartbroken terrified shocked feelings.

This time, the room fills with sadness, at first, and then with complicated celebration and congratulations, it is a baby after all. And then, at the end, with sadness again. They get the context. They take it in.

It is not uniform, their response. But the feelings they transmit blend together to create a sense of comfort. And I cry when I feel it. All at once, it takes me under.

I was going to teach them how to do this, how to be in the hardest place with someone but without the awful pity or positioning. It is amazing to me that they know how to do this already.

And so I focus, it is the heart of the class afterall-

I will show them that my story belongs in the classroom.

I will promise them that their story does too.

And someday, I hope, when they are teachers with students of their own, they will repeat the cycle.

This page is intentionally left blank

CHAPTER 1

PARTNERSHIPS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Dorothy Shapland Rodriguez
Metropolitan State University of Denver

Deb Deverell
Paddington Station Preschool

Jacqueline Greenbaum
Renaissance Montessori Academy

Mary Nelson
Denver Cooperative Preschool

MSU Denver's Early Childhood Education faculty developed partnerships with local childcare centers to provide professional development to the staff and leadership of these preschools. In turn, partnership sites provide placements for teacher candidates from the ECE program that are well aligned with the Trauma Informed and Equity practices of the university program. This chapter details partnerships with three childcare centers and the impacts of the partnership program on the centers' staff and families as well as on the teacher candidates completing their clinical experiences in these partnership sites.

Developing Trauma-Informed Teachers: Intentional Partnerships to Create Classrooms That Foster Equity, Resiliency, Asset-Based Approaches, Vol. 3, pp. 1–18.

ISBN: 978-1-83708-590-3 (HB); 978-1-83708-591-0 (PB); 978-1-83708-592-7 (EPDF)

INTRODUCTION

Trauma has profound and lasting effects on the health and well-being of young children and their families (Harris, 2018) and this trauma is compounded by an inequitable education system. Efforts to embed Trauma Informed Resiliency-building Equitable Practices (TIP Equity) into teacher preparation programs may help to produce new and future teachers ready to face these challenges (Schepers et al., 2022). Placing teacher candidates into classrooms where there is a disconnect between what students learn in theory and what they see modeled in the field can create additional challenges for learning (Clarke, et al., 2014). Intentional mentoring training is essential to the success of teacher candidates (Darling-Hammond, 2006) and especially supportive for learning to apply TIP Equity approaches (Miller et al., 2023).

The Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) prepares new teachers for the realities of today's classrooms by infusing equity, social justice (Darling-Hammond, 2014), and trauma informed teaching strategies (Avery et al., 2021; SAMHSA, 2014) into its Early Childhood Education (ECE) teacher preparation program. The Healthy Environments And Response to Trauma in Schools (HEARTS) framework of principles for TIP Equity practices (Dorado et al, 2016; Loomis, et al., 2019) guides this work.

ECE faculty collaborated to embed all coursework with the HEARTS principles, and to ensure that every student has opportunities to both experience these principles in their courses, and to learn to infuse their own teaching with these principles. Since spring 2021, all teacher candidates graduating from the ECE programs at MSU Denver have received a university awarded certificate for completion of this TIP Equity infused course of study.

While integrating these principles and practices into their classes, ECE faculty noticed that there was a dramatic disconnect between what teacher candidates were learning about TIP Equity, and what they were seeing modeled in their practicum placements. ECE faculty determined that their teacher candidates need to be working in classrooms where they can see these practices in action and receive TIP Equity coaching (Nicholson et al., 2018) from supervising teachers prepared to mentor them.

To ensure that ECE teachers in the profession are learning the same TIP Equity approaches that students are learning in their teacher preparation program, ECE faculty formed partnerships with local child development centers and then led professional development workshops on TIP Equity for each of these centers. Over the course of several years, including during the COVID 19 pandemic, ECE teachers from each partnership site were offered TIP Equity focused Professional Development (PD). All staff including teachers, assistant teachers, and administration at these centers were provided with targeted instruction, coaching, and follow-up based on the specific needs of the school and aligned to the goals of the university curriculum and TIP Equity model. These partner schools became

the sites where teacher candidates were required to complete their practicum field experience hours.

The directors of the first three child development centers that engaged in this work were invited to become contributing authors to this chapter and took time to consider the impacts of this partnership. They were given prompts to reflect on and then wrote about the following: the challenges they were facing with staffing, discipline, and families that led them to partner with MSU Denver's ECE Program, the experiences of learning and doing this work in concert with ECE faculty, and the outcomes for their centers, families, and communities.

The ECE program has experienced dramatic reduction in reports of teacher candidates feeling they are learning what NOT to do from their field experiences as well as an increase in being hired as subs while finishing their degrees and as full-time teaching staff after graduating. The ECE department has also seen a dramatic increase in centers and school districts requesting to form partnerships. Partner sites report a reduction in harsh discipline, suspensions, and removals from learning as their teachers become more adept at navigating trauma and equity issues, as well as more family engagement in equity efforts, and improvements to staffing owing to increased access to university teacher candidates and graduates.

Partnership models can be an important tool for ensuring alignment between learning and application, to increase current knowledge and pedagogy within the existing workforce, and to improve outcomes for children and their families. This chapter, written by one MSU Denver ECE faculty member and the directors of three childcare centers, chronicles efforts to build partnerships between MSU Denver's ECE teacher prep program and three very different preschools. The following details work done to develop the capacity of staff and teachers in these centers to provide more TIP Equity in classrooms and provides reflections on the outcomes of this work. This chapter begins with an overview of, and the makeup of, the MSU Denver ECE program and students, and the challenges faced in developing prepared teacher candidates. Descriptions follow of three partner centers and the challenges they faced that lead them to partner with the university, stories of these centers' professional development journeys, the process of building the TIP Equity capacities of existing staff, and the impacts of this work in communities. The chapter concludes with thoughts for moving this work forward to ensure that all children and families will be cared for by TIP Equity prepared teachers.

MSU DENVER'S EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM

Metropolitan State University of Denver is a public institution located in the heart of downtown Denver on a commuter campus, meaning that anyone who seeks to enroll is welcome. Because students do not live on campus, the majority (95%) are Colorado residents. The vast majority of MSU Denver students (78%) remain and work in the Denver Metro area after graduation, so programs truly serve the needs of the businesses, organizations, and partners in the surrounding communi-

ties. MSU Denver is a federally designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and the student body is 53% students of color, of which 35% identify as Hispanic or Latine. This population helps to support the diversification of the teaching workforce in Denver by preparing Black, White, Brown, Indigenous and Latine teachers who will go on to teach young children within their own communities and sometimes in their home languages.

The Early Childhood Education Bachelor of Arts program at MSU Denver consists of two concentrations. The first concentration leads to the opportunity to apply for state licensure to teach children aged 0–8. This enables teachers to instruct and support the development of infants, toddlers, preschoolers, kindergarten, first, second or third graders in private or public schools throughout the state. The ECE department additionally offers a post baccalaureate pathway to obtain licensure from the Colorado Department of Education for those who already hold a bachelor's degree in another field. The second concentration is that of Early Learning Specialist. This concentration allows students who are not interested in the public school system to obtain a bachelor's degree in ECE that enables them to teach infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, become a director of a childcare center, open their own preschool, and/or become involved in educational policy in the state.

In Colorado students do not need a full 4-year degree to obtain work in preschools, but to complete a licensure degree program they must have experience working in classrooms that span the ages they will be certified to teach. ECE teacher candidates work in or conduct observations in infant, toddler, preschool, kindergarten, first, second and third grade classrooms as a part of their program. Because MSU Denver's ECE programs emphasize social justice and infuse TIP Equity practices throughout the course work it is essential that students be able to work in settings where these practices are modeled. The need for TIP Equity preschool classrooms drives the partnerships the ECE faculty have developed.

PARTNER SCHOOLS

Personal connections formed by ECE faculty during their time as teachers, directors, and leaders in ECE were the foundation of the first practicum placements. The three centers that have collaborated in this work the longest and most consistently are Renaissance Montessori Academy, Denver Cooperative Preschool, and Paddington Station. Each school is unique in its structure, curricular model, and approach to teaching and learning.

Renaissance Montessori Academy

The Renaissance Montessori Academy (RMA) is a nonprofit Montessori school. RMA serves children 2.5 years old through elementary, currently ending in 5th grade. As a Montessori school, the lead teachers are Montessori trained and

certified from Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education training centers.

In Montessori, the Primary classroom is for children who are 2.5 years old through kindergarten. These mixed age group classrooms can serve about 30 children each at RMA. It is important for the balance of the curriculum that there is a mix of children's ages in each classroom. Older children become leaders in the classroom, supporting younger children in learning lessons, both academic and social/emotional. All children are able and encouraged to observe each other at work to be inspired and learn independent of the teacher.

The role of the teachers in the Primary classrooms is to act as a guide and support for the children in the classroom. Teachers are there to help children become independent in their daily needs as well as their learning. When one walks into a Primary classroom, they will often see one or two teachers observing the classroom. This is important to the work of the children. It allows the teachers to see where the children's interests and aptitudes are and to make individualized plans for each child.

RMA is in Douglas County Colorado, a suburb of Denver. Douglas County is one of the top 15 wealthiest counties in the United States. Most of the families served at RMA come from middle and upper middle class, dual income households. Almost all families and 95% of staff have their bachelor's degrees with many also having attended some graduate school. About 25% of families and 50% of staff come from multi-language households.

Staff at RMA have longevity both working at RMA and in the field of education. Half of the staff have worked at RMA or in education for over 10 years with 25% of staff having worked in education for about 20 years. For new staff, RMA provides sponsorship to do continuing education in both Montessori and ECE to support each staff members' individual goals.

As a private nonprofit school, RMA is run by a board of directors made up of parents, former parents, and community members. The board's ethnicity, race, socio-economic, and educational background is reflective of the school community.

Denver Cooperative Preschool

The Denver Cooperative Preschool (DCP) is a cooperative early childhood community that was founded in 1960. DCP envisions a learning environment that is supportive of powerful collaboration and reciprocal partnership among children, their families, and the school community. Located in central Denver, DCP serves families with children ages two through six years of age from zip codes throughout the city, representing twenty to twenty-five zip codes in a given school year. Families from around the Denver metro area choose this program because of the strong sense of community and commitment to valuing childhood above all else. As a cooperative school, DCP requires participation from every one of its member families. By choosing to be members of the cooperative preschool program, parents are asked to commit themselves to working collaboratively with

the educators, children, and fellow parents in the community. In turn, DCP school leadership and its Governing Board of Directors endeavors to make cooperative participation an enriching experience for families that does not limit access to the school, but rather feels achievable for all families and reflective of the school community.

All DCP classrooms are staffed by three educators - two lead educators who co-plan and document student learning, and an associate educator who supports all children and families in the classroom community. DCP follows a constructivist approach with a play-based, emergent curriculum. The preschool does not use a manufactured or boxed curriculum, but rather its educators write curriculum based on the interests, questions, and developmental levels of the children. All lessons are aligned with Colorado's Early Learning and Development Guidelines.

Student progress is monitored by individual, digitized portfolios that contain detailed records and samples of student work and learning, along with educator reflections. Parents have formalized conferences with educators twice a year where student portfolios are shared along with progress, and parents and educators work together on collaborative goal setting for the child as an individual and as a member of the classroom community. Additionally, DCP is run by a Governing Board of Directors that is composed of current parents and caregivers, alumni families, school leadership, educators, and community representatives. The Governing Board of Directors meets monthly and supports the operations and strategic vision of the school. All member families gather twice annually at a minimum, voting on any significant strategic or programmatic changes to the operations of the school.

Funding streams for DCP include the Denver Preschool Program (DPP), Colorado Child Care Access Program (CCCAP), Denver's Early Childhood Council, the Colorado Department of Early Childhood, and grants from organizations that fund early childhood. Currently, DCP has sixty-one students from fifty-one families enrolled in our toddler, young preschool, and older preschool classes. Twenty-eight students identify as male, and thirty-three students identify as female. Forty-six students identify as white, seven as Hispanic or Latino, three as Black or African American, four as Asian, and one as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Five students have a disability. Eighteen percent of students receive internal financial aid to attend the school, outside of any tuition support they receive from CCCAP or DPP.

The current DCP staff is composed of fourteen educators and administrators. Two staff members identify as Hispanic, one as Asian, and eleven as White. Languages spoken include English, Spanish, Gujarati, Hindi, and Farsi. All fourteen staff members identify as female and use she/her pronouns, one staff member identifies as a transgender female. One staff member has a disability. Staff ages range from 21 to 59. Three staff members have an associate degree, six staff members have a bachelor's degree, four have a master's degree, and one has a doctoral degree. Experience in ECE ranges from 1 to 25 years.

At present, the DCP Governing Board has twelve members. One member identifies as Asian, two as Hispanic, and nine as White. Nine members identify as female and three identify as male. Six board members hold a master's degree, and three hold a doctoral degree.

Paddington Station Preschool

Founded in 1993, Paddington Station is a stand-alone, non-profit, independent, tuition-based preschool. Enrolled families come from 25 zip codes throughout Denver and Aurora. Paddington is governed by a Board of Trustees who are parents, past parents, grandparents, and community members. The center's major revenue streams are through tuition and fund-raising. The school gifts approximately $120,000 annually in financial assistance to qualified families.

Paddington Station's mission is to create a welcoming and inclusive community that partners with families to celebrate childhood, embrace learning through play, and prepare confident individuals to joyfully explore the wonders of the world. The school embraces a child-centered and play-based philosophy, and its teachers strive to establish a joyful environment that inspires exploration, curiosity, discovery, play, love of learning, connections with others, and appropriate risk-taking by children. Additionally, the staff and teachers strive to foster a culture where all differences and identities among race, gender, ability, religion, ethnicity, family structure, and economic backgrounds are valued, celebrated, and recognized as an essential component of school life. Current enrollment includes 27% students of color, and there are 20 various languages spoken in the homes of students.

There are 245 children attending Paddington from toddlers to pre-kindergarten. The staff and teachers include three PhDs, nine MAs, 18 BAs or BS degrees, one teacher with a Child Development Associate certification, four teachers with bachelor's degrees in progress, and one teacher with an associate degree in progress.

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING ECE

In the years between 2016 and 2023 there have been some consistent challenges for the field of Early Childhood Education in Colorado. Some of these challenges have been felt across the U.S. and world including the stress and trauma caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent teacher shortages, the unaffordability of quality childcare, and the political, social, and racial unrest beginning with the presidential election and then ignited by the recorded murder of George Floyd. Other challenges have been specific to Colorado, such as the rolling out a new Universal Preschool Program across the state and the diversification of professional qualifications for entering the field of preschool education as a tool to address teacher shortages. And still other challenges have been specific to individual childcare centers, their boards, administration, staff, families, and children. These

difficulties led each of these schools to seek out support from MSU Denver's ECE program as a means of addressing the challenges they faced.

Challenges at RMA

At the time of the initial partnership with MSU in 2016, RMA was seeing an increase in student enrollment and the need to hire new staff. School leaders wanted all staff to have a universal view of how to offer respect for each child, and to carry into action a core set of values and beliefs about children, families, learning, and how to participate in a community.

Teachers needed additional training to understand how to support children with challenging behaviors in their unique classrooms. Teachers were doing well when working with children on their educational and social-emotional needs that fell within typical developmental ranges. However, teachers needed more support and training to help children who fell outside these ranges, or who presented challenges to the peace of the classrooms.

When the school first partnered with MSU Denver, Colorado did not provide free mental health services and there was a very long wait to get support from Child Find, the state sponsored child development assessment team. There was, and to some extent still is, a negative connotation with seeking mental health support, or even considering mental health support for very young children. RMA is working to change that culture, and after the pandemic, it became more widely accepted that this kind of support is essential for everyone. By providing staff with an understanding of TIP Equity, more children can be supported within the classroom.

Throughout the pandemic and the aftereffects of lockdowns, RMA found a need to update mindsets again. The "new normal" includes children being on a different timeline with developmental learning. For example, more children are showing up in classrooms with wonderful vocabularies but are having a hard time controlling their bodies at age four. More children of this age are demonstrating behaviors such as biting, hitting, and kicking which were previously more typical for a younger child. Finding ways to support these children within the classroom is why RMA continues to seek support from the partnership with MSU Denver.

Also, since RMA is continuously growing, it has been utilizing this partnership to identify teacher candidates and get support in establishing the most effective hiring practices for equity. Preparing students for the world they will live in, and maintaining a richly diverse and well qualified staff is an important part of this process.

Challenges at DCP

The Denver Cooperative Preschool began its partnership with MSU Denver's Early Childhood Education Program in 2017 when ECE faculty began supporting the DCP administrative team, specifically with leadership coaching, teacher