

preschool
☆☆☆☆
PROMISE

because the first 5 years matter

Making
CONNECTIONS

child + school + community

16TH ANNUAL READINESS SUMMIT



Presented by



Friday, March 7, 2025
Sinclair College

Welcome to the
16TH ANNUAL READINESS SUMMIT!

Thank you for joining us for the 16th Annual Readiness Summit! Over the years, we've delved deeply into the challenges our children and families face in their efforts to succeed, teasing out information from the data; surveying the impact of racial inequities, poverty and mental health; and exploring research on the brain and child development. This year, we are focusing on how our community can better connect families and children with services, including health care, so necessary to success in school and in life. And we will talk about the value of place - our schools and institutions, neighborhoods and region - in connecting people. Our keynoters and breakout presenters, like you, have a wealth of diverse experience, and we are so grateful to have you all with us.

Robyn
 Robyn Lightcap,
 Executive Director
 Preschool Promise



16TH ANNUAL READINESS SUMMIT



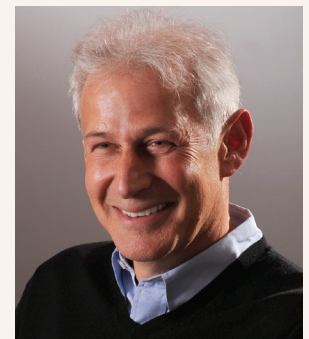
MONTGOMERY
 C O U N T Y

Keynote Speaker
DARNESHIA ALLEN



Darneshia Allen has more than 29 years of experience working with young children, including intensive work with families in urban communities, and years of experience in early care and education. She joined ZERO TO THREE, a national nonprofit that focuses on the science of early childhood development, in 2009. She is Manager of Training and Technical Assistance Integration for the organization's Safe Babies program, which works to prevent the maltreatment of babies and toddlers and to keep families together. She has spoken regularly at state and national infant mental health and early childhood conferences.

Keynote Speaker
DR. JACK SHONKOFF



Jack P. Shonkoff, MD, is the Julius B. Richmond FAMRI Professor of Child Health and Development at the Harvard Chan School of Public Health and Harvard Graduate School of Education; Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital; and Founding Director of the university-wide Center on the Developing Child. He currently directs a new initiative titled Connecting Science + Community (CSC) whose aim is to achieve greater impacts on current well-being and future life outcomes for children experiencing poverty, economic insecurity, racism and/or other structural inequities. CSC's strategy draws on advances in the science of early childhood development (ECD 2.0), lessons learned from direct services for young children and the adults who care for them, and deeper engagement in place-based investments through an early childhood lens.

Gold Sponsors



Bronze Sponsor **Learn to Earn**

7:00 a.m.	Registration & Breakfast Buffet	
8:00 a.m.	Welcome and Introduction	Robyn Lightcap Executive Director, Preschool Promise
	Strengthening Connections and Staying Purpose Driven	Darneshia Allen, Training Manager Safe Babies, ZERO TO THREE
	Be Ready by 5: Serving Children, Families Better	Video
	Be Ready by 5 Montgomery County	Deborah Feldman, President and CEO Dayton Children's Hospital Board Chair, Preschool Promise
	Introduction of Jack Shonkoff	Dr. Alonzo Patterson III Chief Medical Health Equity Officer Dayton Children's Hospital
	Connecting Science + Community: Breakthrough Opportunities in Challenging Times	Dr. Jack Shonkoff, Founding Director Center on the Developing Child Harvard University
	Sendoff to Breakouts	Robyn Lightcap
9:45 a.m.	Break	
10 a.m.	Breakout Session 1	
10:45 a.m.	Break	
11 a.m.	Breakout Session 2	
11:45 a.m.	End	



If you appreciate the work Preschool Promise is doing in our community, scan here to make a secure (and greatly appreciated!) donation.

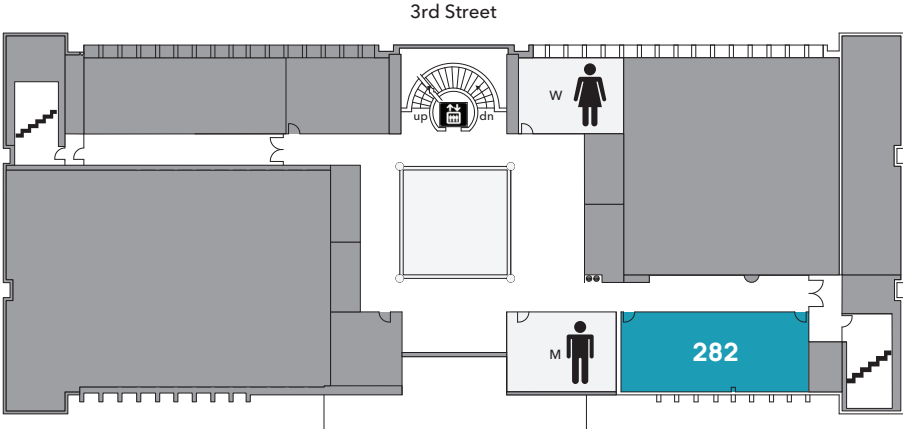
Breakout QUICK GUIDE

<i>Breakout</i>	<i>Facilitator(s)</i>	<i>Session</i>	<i>Room</i>
A Where We Begin: Harnessing Relationships	Darneshia Allen	1	150
B Two Vital Signs of Wellness	Alonzo Patterson, III MD Ashley Steveley	1	116
C Stronger Families Through Partnerships	Maura Whisenhunt, Kari Africa	1 2	120
D Not Just Books: Libraries Connect Visitors	Amber Cristofaro, Yasmine Lajimi	1 2	131
E Hope (Zone) in Action	Sean Freeman, Julia L. Price	1 2	119
F Separate and Unequal: Places Matter	Gayle Covington Fowler	1 2	133
G The Power of Together	Berta Velilla	1	171
H Introducing Learn to Earn Dayton's Data Dashboard	Emma Smales	1	127
I The Power of Storytelling	Kayla Hairston, Magen Wright	2	116
J Spreading HOPE: Healthy Outcomes	Melanie Estes, Mindy Nickles	2	172
K Updating the Science of Early Childhood Development	Jack Shonkoff, MD	2	150
L Centering Data for Student Success	Emma Smales	2	127
M Change is Hard! Connections in Transitions	Andrew Brzezinski	2	282
N Making Connections with Fathers	Michael Newsom, EdD, John Payne	2	171
O Public Health Readiness 101	Commissioner Jennifer Wentzel Kimberly Freeman, PhD	1	172

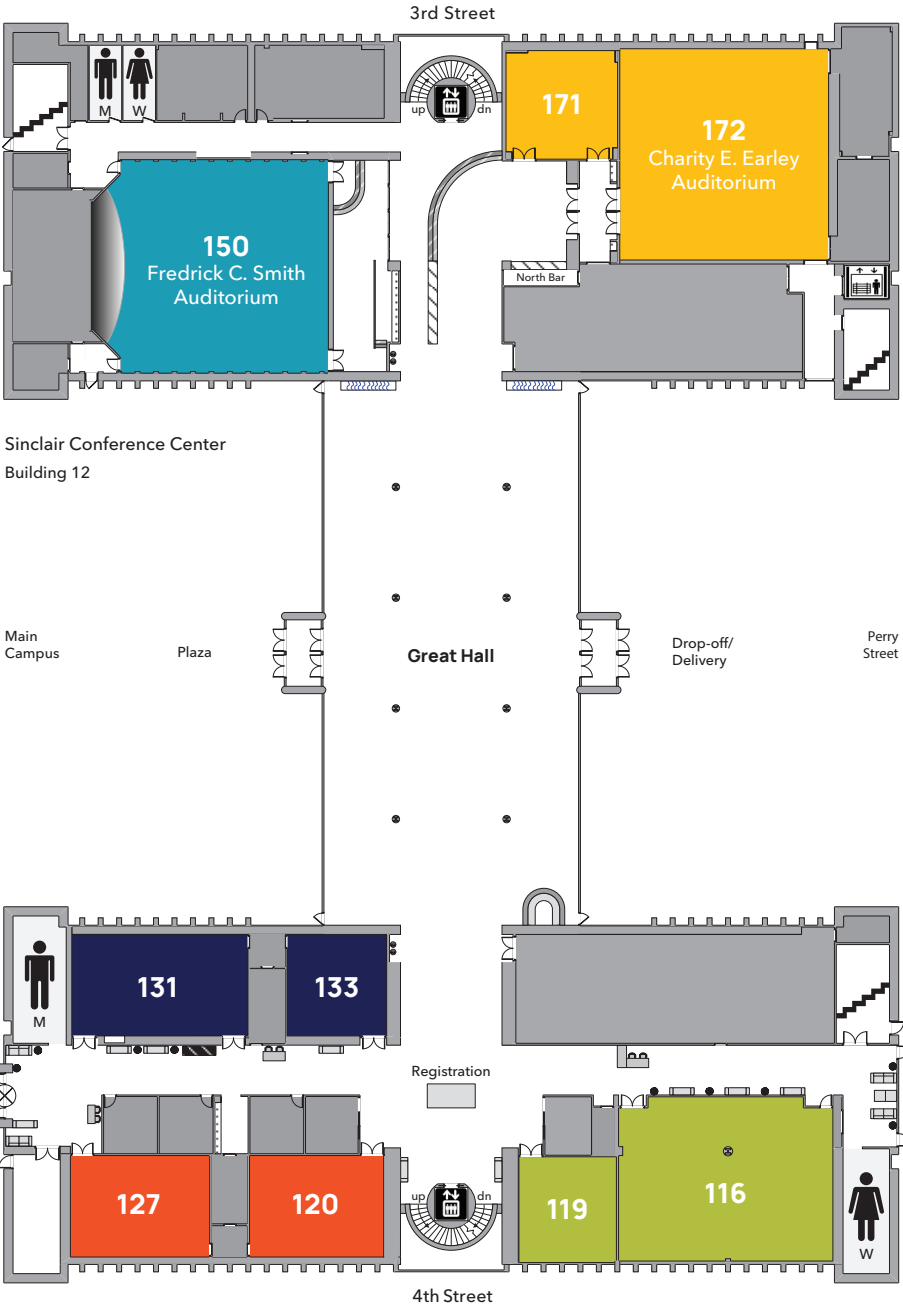
See Page 5 for additional information and speaker biographies.

Can only be accessed from 3rd Street side of Great Hall

Second Floor



First Floor



Breakout DESCRIPTIONS

A WHERE WE BEGIN: HARNESSING RELATIONSHIPS TO FOSTER COLLABORATION 1

Darneshia Allen, Manager of Training and Technical Assistance Integration, ZERO TO THREE Safe Babies



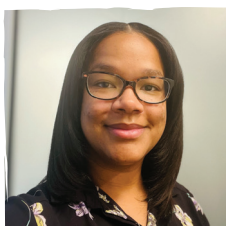
This session will capture the value of shared knowledge and experience in cross-sector work with young children and their families. Participants will engage in a simulation and discussions with an emphasis on strategic considerations for strengthening collaborations as well as insights that promote family engagement. Through this session, audience members will draw connections among ideas shared to enhance relationship-building at the family and community level, to increase quality and access across the spectrum of care and improve outcomes for young children and families.

Darneshia Allen has more than three decades of experience in supporting safety, nurturing strong foundations for healthy development and prioritizing the well-being of infants and toddlers affected by early adversity. She has worked closely with state and national organizations to support equitable and intensive engagement with families in early childhood systems in rural and urban communities.

B TWO VITAL SIGNS OF WELLNESS: HEALTH AND EDUCATION 1

Alonzo Patterson III, MD, Chief Medical Health Equity Officer, Dayton Children's Hospital

Ashley Steveley, MPH, Manager, Social Determinants of Health Programs, Dayton Children's



Dr. Alonzo Patterson, an experienced pediatrician in our region, and Ashley Steveley, who focuses on social determinants of health, will lead a discussion of programs that connect education and healthcare partners, to increase collaboration and better promote children's wellness through a culturally humble and trauma-informed lens.

Alonzo Patterson III, MD, has served children and families as a general pediatrician for over 30 years, mostly in West Dayton. He also serves as the Chief Medical Health Equity officer for Dayton Children's Hospital and is on several community boards.

After serving in local public health departments as a health educator and accreditation coordinator, Ashley Steveley came to Dayton Children's Hospital to lead several initiatives. As a public health professional, she works daily to improve the quality of life of the residents in the community she serves.

C STRONGER FAMILIES THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT 1 2

Maura Whisenhunt, District Recovery Therapist, Mad River Local Schools

Kari Africa, District Recovery Therapist, Mad River Local Schools



In this session, we will explore our efforts to establish meaningful partnerships to help families strengthen their therapeutic web, build resilience and foster connections within a supportive community.

Maura Whisenhunt is a licensed independent social worker and certified school social worker with more than 30 years of experience in social work, supervision and providing direct school-based services. She plays a pivotal role in advancing Mad River's Whole Child initiatives, focusing on identifying service gaps, fostering community partnerships and connecting students, staff and families with resources to support their well-being.

Kari Africa is a licensed independent social worker and certified school social worker with more than 19 years of experience in school settings. She specializes in social-emotional learning to support students, families and the broader community. She holds a master's degree in social work and is dedicated to promoting the holistic development of the whole child through strong relationships and collaborative efforts.

D NOT JUST BOOKS: LIBRARIES CONNECT VISITORS TO SERVICES, OPPORTUNITIES 1 2

Amber Cristofaro, Early Literacy Coordinator, Dayton Metro Library
Yasmine Lajimi, Community Wellness Specialist, Dayton Metro Library



Libraries have expanded their offerings beyond the traditional, providing access to essential resources for children, families and educators, all while strengthening community ties. Learn how the Dayton Metro Library can connect you and your students to community resources, special events, literacy programs and even food distribution and cooking and wellness programs!

Amber Cristofaro has worked for 30 years with the Dayton Metro Library. She focuses her work on community partnerships, family engagement

and whole-child pedagogical approaches to early literacy.

Yasmine Lajimi understands the dynamic needs of individuals and communities, and in her role at Dayton Metro Library, she supports the mission to help people become healthier citizens through services and classes.

Recommended resources

1. [Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives – How Your Friends’ Friends’ Friends Affect Everything You Feel, Think, and Do](#) by Nicholas A. Christakis and James H. Fowler.

This book delves into the science of social networks and how connections between individuals have a profound impact on behavior and well-being, including youth development.

2. Centers for Disease Control: [Social Determinants of Health](#)
3. [Libraries Overcome Barriers and Identify Opportunities for Service to Youth](#)

Resource 1



Resource 2



Resource 3



E HOPE (ZONE) IN ACTION: UNITING HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND FAMILY SUPPORT TO TRANSFORM NORTHWEST DAYTON 1 2

Sean Freeman, Hope Zone Project Manager, Omega CDC
Julia L. Price, Hope Zone Event Coordinator, Hope Zone Resident



Explore the Hope Zone’s strategies for place-based transformation. Learn how Omega Community Development Corporation (Omega CDC) connects health, education and community sectors through partnerships with Dayton Children’s Hospital, Mini University and others to streamline services for families.

Sean Freeman is a skilled project manager with expertise in operations, client coordination, business coaching and grant writing.

Julia L. Price was born in Tunica, Mississippi, and moved to Dayton. A community advocate since 1998, she now serves as a resident leader for Omega CDC.

F SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL: PLACES MATTER - WHERE CHILDREN PLAY, LIVE AND LEARN MAKES A DIFFERENCE 1 2

Gayle Covington Fowler, Family & Home Wellness Architect, The Genstitute



Participants will learn how the environments where children live, play and learn directly affect their development. We will identify environmental influences that support or impede children’s growth and explore strategies to improve environments for children to foster better development outcomes.

The Genstitute® is a coaching, speaking and training business, and **Gayle Covington Fowler’s** mission is to advance a legacy of hope to transform generations of individuals and families to live their best lives. Her goal is to inspire others to become champions for change. She delivers programs locally and nationally.

Recommended resource

- thegenstitute.com/healthyplaces

G THE POWER OF TOGETHER: UNLOCKING A SHARED VISION TO TRANSFORM EAST DAYTON **1**

Berta Velilla, CEO, Miami Valley Child Development Centers, along with representatives from Dayton Public Schools, the University of Dayton and East End Community Services



This workshop explores the transformative potential of working together to achieve a shared vision and shared goals. Using a real-world collaboration project in East Dayton, participants will learn how Miami Valley Child Development Centers, Mission of Mary, East End Community Services, Dayton Public Schools and the University of Dayton are leveraging resources and expertise to transform a neighborhood through collaboration.

Berta Velilla is President and CEO of Miami Valley Child Development Centers, the region's Head Start provider. It offers early learning opportunities and family support to over 2,000 children in southwest Ohio. She has more than 30 years of experience operating Head Start programs in various communities across Ohio.

H INTRODUCING LEARN TO EARN DAYTON'S INTERACTIVE DATA DASHBOARD **1**

Emma Smales, Director of Data and Impact, Learn to Earn Dayton



Get the first look at Learn to Earn Dayton's newly released data dashboard. This interactive, web-based resource allows all users to access relevant data for student outcomes across the cradle-to-career continuum and explore the impacts of community conditions (absenteeism, poverty, etc.) on student success. (Part 1 of 2)

Emma Smales joined Learn to Earn Dayton in 2022, having previously served as the Birth Outcomes Manager at Public Health - Dayton & Montgomery County and as Health Promotion Supervisor at the Clark County Combined Health District.

Recommended resource

- Immediate access to the dashboard and a copy of Learn to Earn's annual report with regional data will be provided.

I THE POWER OF STORYTELLING: FOSTERING SOCIAL RESILIENCE AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION IN THE CLASSROOM **2**

Kayla Hairston, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant and Master Trainer, Greene County Educational Service Center (GCESC) and **Magen Wright**, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant, GCESC



Storytelling is a powerful tool for fostering social-emotional resilience, personal empowerment and community connection. This session will equip participants with techniques to use storytelling in classrooms and other settings to strengthen relationships and promote a sense of belonging.

Kayla Hairston holds a master's degree in public health from Wright State University and focuses her efforts on ensuring that children and families receive the mental health support they need, starting from the earliest years of life. She volunteers as the Self-Care Subcommittee Co-chair for Montgomery County's Prevention Coalition.

Magen Wright holds a bachelor's degree in maternal child health and a master's in social work. She has experience working with families from various backgrounds, including military, deaf/hard of hearing, Kids of Deaf Adults (KODAs), foster care and families working towards reunification.

J SPREADING HOPE: HEALTHY OUTCOMES FROM POSITIVE EXPERIENCES 2

Melanie Estes, Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant, Greene County Educational Service Center (GCESC) and **Mindy Nickles**, Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant, GCESC



Using the Four Building Blocks of HOPE, Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences, participants will learn how positive childhood experiences (PCEs) help mitigate the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). These positive experiences are essential for driving healthy child development and can lessen the lifelong effects of ACEs.

Melanie Estes is the Program Director for the Community Health and Resilience Initiative, which focuses on children who have been exposed to trauma. She is a HOPE Champion and trainer of facilitators, working to mitigate Adverse Childhood Experiences through mental health prevention and promotion.

Mindy Nickles has been working with children and families for almost 20 years. She is a part-time certified Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral therapist for an outpatient mental health agency, providing intake and assessment and counseling services.

Recommended resource

- [HOPE – Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences](#)



K UPDATING THE SCIENCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD 2.0) TO INCREASE THE IMPACTS OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMS 2

Dr. Jack Shonkoff, Founding Director, Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University



Join our keynote speaker, Dr. Jack Shonkoff, for an interactive discussion about how the environments where our children live, work, play, and learn impact their ability to grow and develop. Discuss potential policies at a local and state level that consider the environment and the science of early childhood development.

Jack Shonkoff, MD, a pediatrician, is an expert on early childhood, service delivery and social policy. He was co-editor of the Handbook of Early Childhood Intervention, and chaired the National Research Council/Institute of Medicine Committee on Integrating the Science of

Early Childhood Development that produced the landmark report, “From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development.”

L CENTERING DATA FOR STUDENT SUCCESS 2

Emma Smales, Director of Data and Impact, Learn to Earn Dayton



Explore how Learn to Earn Dayton’s newly released data dashboard can help users more deeply understand student achievement, helping families, schools and community-based organizations work together to advance outcomes. This session will provide a deeper dive into how users can benefit from the dashboard. (Part 2 of 2)

Emma Smales joined Learn to Earn Dayton in 2022, having previously served as the Birth Outcomes Manager at Public Health – Dayton & Montgomery County and as Health Promotion Supervisor at the Clark County Combined Health District.

Recommended resource

- Immediate access to the dashboard and a copy of Learn to Earn’s annual report with regional data will be provided.

M CHANGE IS HARD! MAKING CONNECTIONS WITH FAMILIES AS THEY TRANSITION BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND CHILD CARE 2

Andrew Brzezinski, Strategic Director, Quality Programs, 4C for Children



Children benefit from stable learning environments. When it is time to transition between classrooms, schools or child care programs, it can be difficult. We will discuss tangible ways to help children and their families as they adjust to new environments.

Andrew Brzezinski joined 4C for Children in 2017 and is currently serving as a Strategic Director of Quality Programs.

N MAKING CONNECTIONS WITH FATHERS 2

Dr. Michael Newsom, Fatherhood Director, Montgomery County Office of Strategic Initiatives

John Payne, Men's Health Supervisor, Public Health - Dayton & Montgomery County



Learn how to connect with fathers and father-figures who are engaged in the lives of the children you teach and serve each day. Details about the programs and services available through the Montgomery County Fatherhood Initiative and Public Health - Dayton and Montgomery County's Every Parent Matters, will be discussed.

Michael Newsom, Ed.D, leads the Montgomery County Fatherhood Initiative (MCFI), which links fathers with vital services such as legal assistance,

employment and parenting classes. MCFI is active in local courts, school districts and social service organizations.

John Payne has been working with fathers and families since 2007, starting as a Behavioral Modification Case Manager with ResCare, Inc., and as a Case Manager with The National Youth Advocate Program (NYAP). He serves as a community advocate, role model, mentor and advocate for fathers/expectant fathers and teenage fathers.

Recommended resource

- [Montgomery County Fatherhood Initiative](#)



O PUBLIC HEALTH READINESS 101 1

Jennifer Wentzel, Health Commissioner, Public Health - Dayton & Montgomery County

Kimberley Freeman, DrPH, Director, Health Promotion, Public Health - Dayton & Montgomery County



Public Health Dayton & Montgomery County leadership will share programming and services families can access to thrive. Opportunities include child health and parenting classes, as well as, information on how we partner with our community to make Montgomery County a healthy, safe and thriving community.

Jennifer Wentzel was appointed Montgomery County Health Commissioner in December 2021. Prior to being selected, she served seven years as

Director of Environmental Health.

Dr. Kimberley Freeman has more than 20 years of public health experience in non-profits, local government and managed care. Throughout her career, she has focused on chronic disease prevention, maternal and child health, addressing health disparities and promoting health equity.

MVCDC'S

*Lincoln Hill
Early Learning Center
Ribbon-Cutting*

MARCH 11



mvcdc 
Miami Valley Child Development Centers

Please join us at 10 a.m. March 11, for the ribbon-cutting of Miami Valley Child Development Centers' new, 30,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art Lincoln Hill Early Learning Center, 200 Dover Street in East Dayton. The new center will feature collaborations with East End Community Services, Mission of Mary Cooperative, the University of Dayton's Hanley Sustainability Institute and the Fitz Center for Leadership, and introduce families to urban gardening, cooking and nutrition education and social services. Children in the program will learn science in the vegetable gardens.

The paper on your table today announcing the opening is printed on special paper that has been infused with native flower seeds. On the back, you can write a message to the children and families in the Lincoln Hill neighborhood. The seed paper and your good wishes will be planted in the Mission of Mary garden adjacent to the new center.

To register for the ribbon-cutting, scan the QR code.



THANK YOU *to the* READINESS SUMMIT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Tazeen Ahmed
*Alcohol, Drug Addiction
and Mental Health Services*

Ellen Belcher
Preschool Promise

Wesley O. Biles II
Learn to Earn Dayton

Jen Brauer
Preschool Promise

Amber Cristofaro
Dayton Metro Library

Shelly Davies
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Maleka James
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Montgomery County

Nicole Malveaux
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Cory Miller
Mad River Local Schools

Grace Schoessow
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