

BUILDING OUR ADVOCACY NETWORKING: ANNOUNCING DEY'S WORKING GROUPS

by Denisha Jones

In my [first blog for 2020](#), I invited you to join us in making 2020 the Year of Early Childhood Education and shared information on ten events related to early childhood education. None of us knew that a global pandemic was on the horizon that would cancel most of the events or move them to a virtual space. For some of us, the switch to virtual allowed us to reach a bigger audience and stay connected after months of being socially distant. The 2nd Annual DEY Virtual Summer Institute had over 1000 people register, and hundreds attend over four days. Though many of us longed to be together in Washington, DC, we were grateful for the opportunity to talk and learn from a wide range of early childhood and public education advocates (you can find videos from the summer institute [here](#)).

As we planned the 2020 summer institute, we thought about how we can continue protecting childhood throughout the year. After hearing about the workgroups, our colleagues at [Children's Screen Time Action Network](#) created, we decided that this would be a great way to invite more of our supporters to join us in broadening our advocacy efforts. We envision the working groups as an opportunity for groups of individuals to advocate for an early childhood issue. We expect the advocacy to look different for each group, from producing a white paper or fact sheet to launching a campaign or promoting legislation related to the topic. We welcome a variety of outcomes that advance our collective efforts to protect childhood.

Based on the results of our institute follow-up survey, we identified three topics that will form our initial three working groups.

1. Anti-Racist Curriculum in Early Childhood Education
2. Play as an Evidenced-Based Curriculum
3. Federal and Local Policies that Promote Play and Access to Play-Based Childcare

The next step is to recruit people to join a working group and serve as co-chairs. Once we finalize the groups, the co-chairs will take the lead in scheduling meetings (once every 4-6 weeks) and working with group members to establish goals for the year. I will serve as a DEY liaison providing support to each working group. If life as we know it returns to a new (and better) normal, we hope to convene an in-person meeting of the working groups in the summer of 2021. If you're interested in joining a working group, please complete the form linked below by Wednesday, September 23rd. We plan to cap working groups to no more than 20 members.

[DEY Request to Join a Working Group](#)

With only a few months left in 2020, it remains imperative that we elevate the importance of early childhood education. This outcome of the presidential election will have a profound impact on our ability to ensure all children have a just and equitable childhood. Though we did not make 2020 the Year of Early Childhood Education, together, we can make the next ten years the Decade for Protecting Childhood!