

# WELCOME 2025

## CHILD WELFARE CONFERENCE

### *We Care*

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Fostering connections with  
**families, our community,  
and ourselves**

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**Maryland**

Department of Human Services

**BALTIMORE CITY**

Department of Social Services



# AGENDA / BREAKOUT ROOMS

## GROUPS 1-3

GROUP 1		GROUP 2		GROUP 3	
9:00am - 10:30 am	<b>MAIN Auditorium</b> <b>Director Stocksdale</b> <b>Deputy Director Mullings,</b> Welcome Opening Remarks <b>Dr. LaMarr</b> <b>Darnell Shields,</b> Keynote Speaker	9:00am - 10:30 am	<b>MAIN Auditorium</b> <b>Director Stocksdale</b> <b>Deputy Director Mullings,</b> Welcome Opening Remarks <b>Dr. LaMarr</b> <b>Darnell Shields,</b> Keynote Speaker	9:00am - 10:30 am	<b>MAIN Auditorium</b> <b>Director Stocksdale</b> <b>Deputy Director Mullings,</b> Welcome Opening Remarks <b>Dr. LaMarr</b> <b>Darnell Shields,</b> Keynote Speaker
10:45 am - 11:45 am	The Coach Approach Model for Enhanced Confidence and Empowerment and Improve Self-Care for Increased Performance	10:45 am - 11:45 am	Center for Restorative Change  Collectively approaching the work, moving with intentionality towards power building with families, communities, and ourselves.	10:45 am - 11:45 am	BCDSS Program Managers WE CARE: Fostering Connections with our families, our community, and ourselves
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Center for Restorative Change  Collectively approaching the work, moving with intentionality towards power building with families, communities, and ourselves.	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	BCDSS Program Managers WE CARE: Fostering Connections with our families, our community, and ourselves	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	The Coach Approach Model for Enhanced Confidence and Empowerment and Improve Self Care for Increased Performance
2:15 pm - 3:15 pm	BCDSS Program Managers WE CARE: Fostering Connections with our families, our community, and ourselves	2:15 pm - 3:15 pm	The Coach Approach Model for Enhanced Confidence and Empowerment and Improve Self Care for Increased Performance	2:15 pm - 3:15 pm	Center for Restorative Change  Collectively approaching the work, moving with intentionality towards power building with families, communities, and ourselves.
3:30 pm - 4:00 pm	<b>MAIN Auditorium</b> Closing	3:30 pm - 4:00 pm	<b>MAIN Auditorium</b> Closing	3:30 pm - 4:00 pm	<b>MAIN Auditorium</b> Closing

# DR. LAMARR SHIELDS

KEYNOTE  
SPEAKER



## 2025 CHILD WELFARE CONFERENCE

Dr. LaMarr Darnell Shields is a dynamic educator, speaker, and advocate dedicated to transforming lives across the globe! As a bilingual teacher and thought leader, he has graced the screens of CNN, ABC, CBS, and BET, using his voice to champion education, equity, and social change.

But beyond the stage and spotlight, Dr. Shields is a devoted husband and father, a fierce advocate for families, and a firm believer that strong families create strong communities. His work reflects that passion at every turn.

As the Executive Producer of *The Short Kuts Show*, he curates a stage where powerful stories spark dialogue and ignite change. He's also the creative force behind several impactful books, including:

- *What I Learned in the Midst of KAOS: The Making of an Ubuntu Teacher*
- *From Burnout to Breakthrough: How to Have a Better Work-Life Balance*
- *Don't Just Do Something, Sit There: 65 Days of Meditation to Transform Your Life*

At the helm of The Cambio Group as Chief Visionary Officer, Dr. Shields leads culture-shifting initiatives that fuel leadership, educational equity, and systemic change. A former professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Education, he understands what it takes to inspire, educate, and empower at every level.

Beyond academia, his passion for wellness and mindfulness is a guiding force in his work. As an avid hiker and meditator, he explores how nature can serve as a powerful tool for healing, reaction, and personal growth.

As co-founder of Mic and Hike, Dr. Shields is on a mission to redefine the outdoor experience by blending storytelling with the great outdoors. By encouraging people of color to embrace nature for wellness, connection, and self-discovery, he is breaking barriers and inspiring new traditions.

Whether he's mentoring educators, shaping young minds, or advocating for systemic change, Dr. Shields' work is deeply rooted in uplifting communities, championing families, and fostering lifelong transformation. His message is clear: **Heal. Grow. Thrive!**

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# JULIE EAST

HR Professional and  
Executive Coach



**GUEST  
SPEAKER**

## 2025 CHILD WELFARE CONFERENCE

Julie East is a seasoned HR professional and executive coach who's passionate about helping leaders unlock their potential and tackle challenges with confidence. Her career spans roles at Fortune 500 companies like Amazon and Gap Inc., as well as family-owned businesses, where she's honed her expertise in leadership, strategy, and people management. Julie is also a Certified Professional Diversity Coach and holds advanced certifications in instructional design and change management.

Beyond work, Julie's heart is in service. She leads retreats at her church, volunteers with organizations supporting the homeless, and serves on the board of a Baltimore nonprofit. At home in Northern Maryland, she enjoys life with her husband, two dogs, and stories from her daughter's travels across North America in a van.

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# ANNE (ANNIE) MARTIN

LCSW-C Social Worker



**SPEAKER**

## 2025 CHILD WELFARE CONFERENCE

Anne (Annie) Martin, LCSW-C has devoted her social work career to public child welfare, starting as a graduate of the Title IV-E Education for Public Child Welfare Program at the University of Maryland School of Social Work in 2016. Annie currently serves as a supervisor in Out-of-Home Placement (OHP)/Permanency at the Baltimore City Department of Social Services (BCDSS). Prior to joining BCDSS, Annie primarily worked at Baltimore County DSS in a variety of positions, including as a social worker in the program areas of OHP, Child Protective Services, Family Preservation, and Substance-Exposed Newborns. Annie describes herself as a “big picture” type of person; therefore, it was important to her to work in multiple program areas to better understand the child welfare system as a whole.

For the last 10 summers, Annie has volunteered as a counselor at Camp Connect, the annual weeklong overnight camp that reunifies siblings that have been separated by the Maryland foster care system. Annie has always enjoyed teaching and promoting the professional development of others and has served as a task supervisor for student interns on multiple occasions. Annie’s most recent professional accomplishment was becoming certified as a Coach Approach Coach Mentor in 2024. Annie is eager to use her coaching skills to promote self-care and professional development amongst her supervisees and colleagues.

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# ADRIENE ROBERTS

Unit Manager, Resource  
Homes Foster Parent  
Recruitment and Training



**SPEAKER**

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***“Making sure that we meet the needs of our front-line staff, so that they can meet the needs of our clients.”***

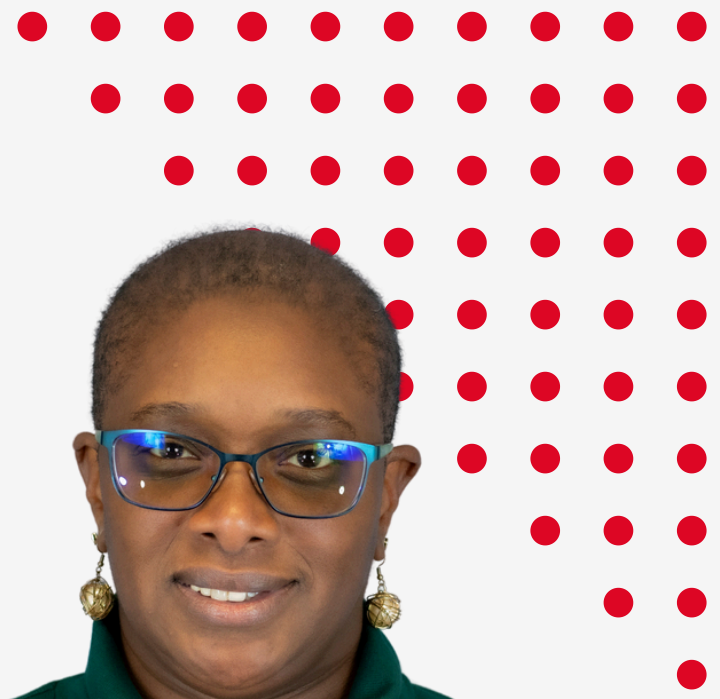
Adriene Roberts has 23 years of child welfare experience. Most of her career was as a front-line worker and supervisor in In-Home Services. She served as a CPS social worker for 6 years and served for 16 years as a Family Preservation social worker with the last 9 as a supervisor. In May 2023, she transitioned to Baltimore City Department of Social Services, Out-of-Home program.

Ms. Roberts was a member of the Coach Approach first cohort in October 2022. She graduated from the 2018 Leadership Development Initiative (LDI), where she learned the value of being a Servant Leader.

She was a 1991 graduate of the University of Connecticut with a BA Political Science and Sociology. She obtained her Master of Social Work from Boston University, with a focus on Human Service Management. Ms. Roberts has been a member of Delta Sigma Theta, Sorority Inc. for 26 years. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is an organization of college educated women focusing on Sisterhood, Scholarship, Service and Social Action.

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# LYNETTE VENSON LMSW

Supervisor/Team Administrator  
of the Out-of-Home

## SPEAKER

### 2025 CHILD WELFARE CONFERENCE

Lynette Venson, Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW), currently serves as a Supervisor/Team Administrator of the Out-of-Home: Custody and Guardianship/Adoption Unit with the Baltimore City Department of Social Services (BCDSS), a position she has held since January 2020. Lynette has been a dedicated member of BCDSS since June 2005, when she initially began her career as a caseworker specializing in Out-of-Home and intensive case management services.

Throughout her career, Lynette has actively pursued professional development, completing a range of training sessions to enhance her expertise. Notably, she recently graduated from the Coach Approach Partners/Coach Mentor Program. Lynette is committed to continuous learning and skill development to stay current in the dynamic field of social work.

In addition to her leadership role, Lynette has dedicated the past five years to mentoring and guiding student interns from her alma mater, Morgan State University, and the University of Maryland. Helping to cultivate the next generation of social work professionals. She is passionate about supporting others in reaching their full potential and fostering growth within her team and community.

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# LASHONDA

## GODWIN MSW, LCSW-C

Director, Family Connections  
Baltimore (FCB)



### SPEAKER

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LaShonda Godwin MSW, LCSW-C, (She/Her), is a licensed clinical social worker, practicing in Baltimore, Maryland. She is also a writer, educator, speaker and mentor in the field of social work. LaShonda began her social work journey in childhood, fostering her passion and inspiration for helping people to realize their potential and capacity for healing and wholeness. Always curious about the “root issues” that impact individuals, families and communities, LaShonda dedicates most of her time working to understand the effects of trauma and social injustices.

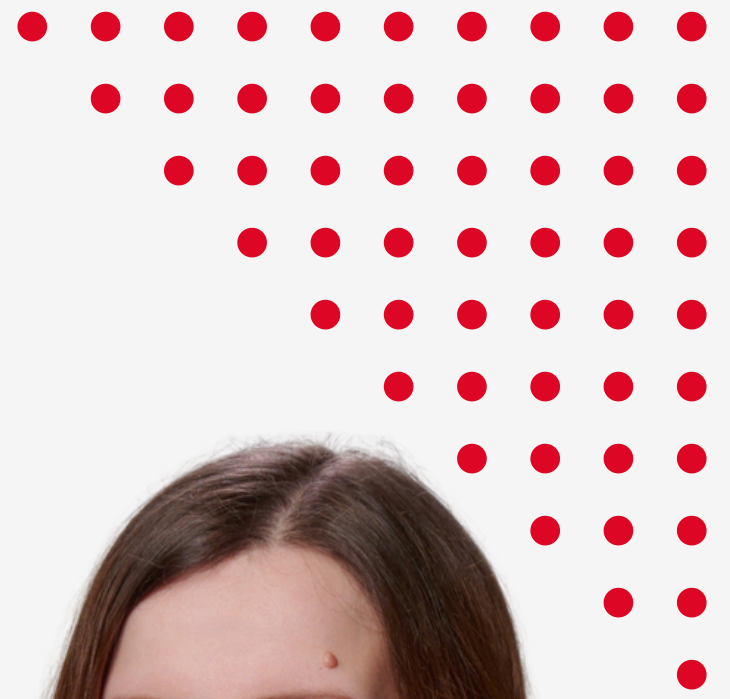
Over the last 20 years, LaShonda has engaged with individuals and families from all different backgrounds, experiencing mental health challenges, domestic violence/sexual assault, structural oppression and racial inequity. She is currently the Director at Family Connections Baltimore, where she leads and guides a team of intentional social workers who are committed to partnership with families as they engage in clinical, macro, and heart work. LaShonda also serves as a Faculty Clinical Instructor, supporting the growth and knowledge of future social workers. LaShonda shares her expertise and passion for educating others through workshops and conferences on the topics of mental health, trauma-responsive practice, and anti-oppression/liberatory-focused social work practice.

She attended Southern Connecticut State University where she received a Bachelor's of Science in Social Work and the University of Maryland School of Social Work, obtaining a Master of Social Work degree. She has been employed by the YWCA of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, Housing Commission of Anne Arundel County and most recently the National Center for Children and Families in Washington, DC prior to her current work at Family Connections Baltimore, The Center for Restorative Change, University of Maryland School of Social Work.

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# JESSICA LIBOWITZ MSW, LCSW

Social Worker, Family  
Connections Baltimore (FCB)



**SPEAKER**

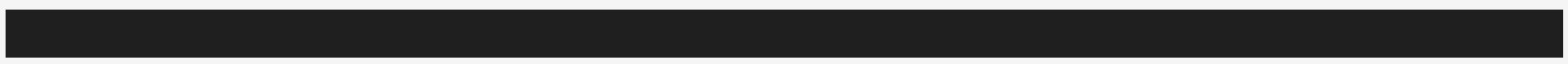
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Jessica Libowitz, MSW, LMSW, (She/They), is a Social Worker with Family Connections Baltimore (FCB), of the Center For Restorative Change (CRC). She has an MSW from UMB SSW, a LMSW from the MD Board of SW, and a BA from Dickinson College in Sociology and Women & Gender Studies. They have served families around processing grief and trauma, advocating for education equity, developing resources and programs, and building systems of support for the past 14 years. They are certified in the SHARP framework, Narrative Therapy, Master Resiliency Training, and Psychological First Aid.

Jessica specializes in serving families, as well as youth and LGBTQ+ individuals of all ages, who are experiencing poverty, grief, homelessness, discrimination, trauma, and/or inequality in Baltimore City and schools.

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# STACEY WILSON

MSW, LCSW-C

Lead "SHARP" Trainer,  
University of Maryland School  
of Social Work, The Center  
for Restorative Change



## SPEAKER

## 2025 CHILD WELFARE CONFERENCE

Stacey Wilson, MSW, LCSW-C, (She/Her), is employed by the University of Maryland School of Social Work, The Center for Restorative Change. As Lead "SHARP" trainer, she supports the development of SHARP training materials, facilitates training workshops, and helps execute the vision of expanding the framework.

Stacey is a Title IV-E alumni and currently works as a clinician at Family Connections Baltimore, a neglect prevention program helping strengthen Baltimore Families, where she utilizes the SHARP framework to embed anti-racist and anti-oppressive principles in mental health services, case management and financial support, and advocacy to reduce blame and shame and increase power sharing.

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# KYLE LONG

MSW, LCSW

Clinician, Family Connections  
Baltimore (FCB)



**SPEAKER**

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Kyle Long, MSW, LMSW, (He/They), has been a clinician at Family Connections Baltimore for over two years. They received their MSW from the University of Maryland, Baltimore. Kyle has completed a 9-month Narrative Therapy certificate program through Narrative Therapy Initiative, which has been used to support families in meaning-making and healing from traumatic experiences. Outside of their work, Kyle engages in advocacy around housing and homelessness in Baltimore City.

Kyle brings their experience and perspectives in advocacy to their clinical work with families, highlighting the systemic nature of challenges that families experience. Kyle hopes to support Family Connections by better integrating advocacy and power building into their clinical work with families.

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# ERIKA FORD

MSW, LCSW-C

Deputy Director, Family Connections Baltimore (FCB)



## SPEAKER

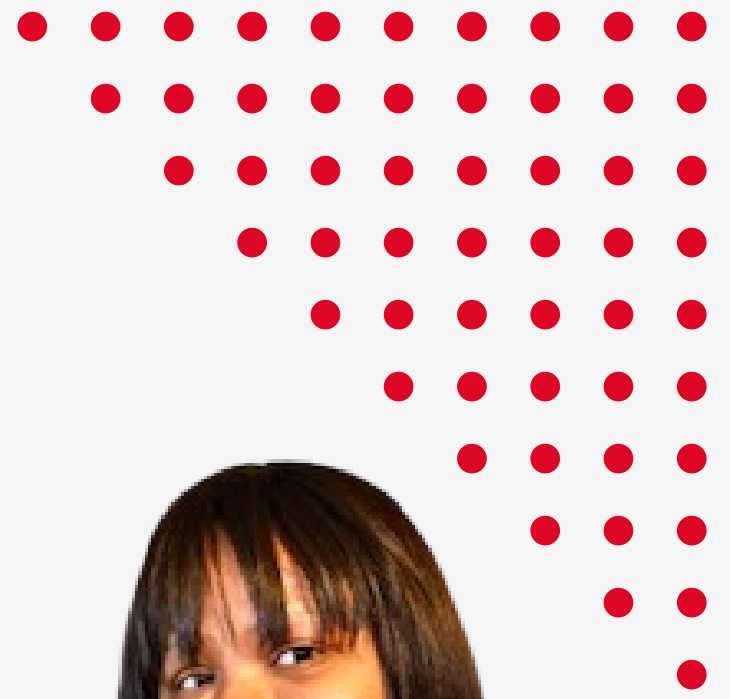
# 2025 CHILD WELFARE CONFERENCE

Erika Ford, MSW, LCSW-C, (She/Her), is a licensed clinical social worker in Baltimore, MD. Erika has experience within the educational, legal, and public and private child welfare systems. Through her work with children and families of various backgrounds, Erika has had the opportunity to walk with individuals through mental and physical health challenges, domestic violence/sexual assault, identity exploration, fertility challenges, and parenting in all of its forms. Erika is committed to understanding racial inequality and oppression and what it means to unapologetically disrupt both personally and professionally within a field so deeply rooted in white supremacy.

Erika is currently serving as Deputy Director at Family Connections Baltimore, where she provides program leadership while offering clinical supervision to staff and students as they grow in their own practice experience. Prior to working at Family Connections, Erika worked within public child welfare as a social worker with In Home Family Services and later in Resource Homes as a Recruitment and Retention Specialist for Foster/Adoptive Parents.

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# IMANI DAVIS

MSW, LCSW-C

Licensed Social Worker with Family Connections Baltimore (FCB)



## SPEAKER

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Imani Davis MSW, LMSW, (She/Her), is a licensed social worker with Family Connections Baltimore, at the Center for Restorative Change within the University of Maryland School of Social Work. At Family Connections Imani partners with families, holding space while they work to actualize visions and versions of themselves imagined. Imani is a Shriver Peacemaker Fellow and served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in rural Kenya.

Imani has worked for over two decades with marginalized communities at both the grassroots and canopy levels, both domestically and internationally. Imani is a practitioner of the SHARP framework and she enjoys practicing anti-racist social work. She is an alum at the University of Maryland School of Social Work in Baltimore, MD, and Warren Wilson College in Asheville, NC.

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# EDWINA DAVIS

Community Program Specialist



**SPEAKER**

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Edwina Davis, (They/Her) is a dedicated Community Program Specialist with a strong passion for social work and community development. Currently pursuing a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, Edwina is committed to utilizing their academic and professional knowledge to create positive social change. Edwina focuses on empowering under-represented populations and fostering supportive environments for growth and emotional well-being.

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