



MPPI 2020 Advocacy Conference

Friday, October 2

4:00-6:00 pm ET *Advocacy 101*

Saturday, October 3

2:00-2:15 ET Welcome

2:15-3:30 ET *Research to Inform your Advocacy* with [Dr. Angeline Lillard](#)

The benefits of Montessori education extend well into adulthood and helping policy makers understand both the short-term and long-term advantages of Montessori is an important tool for advocates. Hear about two recent studies that bring to light the lasting impact of Montessori education.

3:30-3:50 ET Break

3:50-4:35 ET *Race, Policy, and Power: Dismantling Structural Racism* with [Dr. Valaida Wise](#)

Racial inequity can be viewed as a long historical process that has, in many ways, been created, supported and framed by public policy. Join the discussion as we review the historical role race, power and policy has played in shaping American economic and social institutions. We will explore the connections between systems of racial oppression and discuss ways in which we can bring racial justice into all areas of our work thus effecting fundamental changes in our Montessori schools, our communities and ultimately our country.

4:35-5:00 ET Break

5:00-6:00 ET Happy Hour

Join MPPI staff and other attendees for networking, conversation and fun!

Sunday, October 4

2:00-3:00 ET *Keynote Address: Solidifying our Villages: Ensuring Educational Excellence through Racial Equity Lens* [Dr. Iheoma Iruka](#)

Poverty, race, culture, religion, or zip code should not determine a child's trajectory, opportunity, and eventual life success. Addressing the opportunity gaps and the education

*Note all times are Eastern

debt that leads to disparities through a racial equity lens must go beyond gap-gazing at third grade test scores and blaming children and families, and many times schools. A sole focus on disparities without consideration of the root causes will continue to ensure the permanency of this gap. This keynote will focus on understanding and addressing inequities and biases in systems and programs with a goal towards equitable opportunities. Participants will reflect on their roles in ensuring that marginalized children especially are provided with equitable opportunities to meet their potential, especially during the early years.

3:00-3:20 ET Break

3:20-4:35 ET *Deepening our Bonds with Policy Makers*

Dalia Avello, Oregon Montessori Association, Diane Force, Pennsylvania Montessori Alliance, Vyju Kadambi, United Montessori Schools of Indiana, Martha Teien, Colorado Montessori Association

Relationship building is the key to success when it comes to lasting policy change, and we have many state advocacy organizations that have been putting their skills to practice over the last year. Join us for a panel exploring specific ways they have deepened those relationships and creatively used them to bring about positive change in their states.

4:35-4:55 ET Break

4:55-5:45 ET *Taking a Stand for Montessori: Preparing Effective Testimony*

Whether at a public hearing or in a legislative session, the time will come when offering compelling testimony will be a vital component of your advocacy work. Learn what to expect and how to maximize the effectiveness of your testimony.

5:45-6:00 ET Closing

Guest Speakers

Theoma Iruka



Theoma U. Iruka, Ph.D., is a Research Professor in the Department of Public Policy and Director of the Early Childhood Health and Racial Equity program at FPG Child Development Institute at UNC-CH after her 3-plus years as Chief Research Innovation Officer at HighScope Educational Research Foundation. Dr. Iruka is engaged in projects and initiatives focused on how evidence-informed policies, systems, and practices in early education can support the optimal development and experiences of children from low-income and ethnic minority households, such as through family engagement and support, quality rating and improvement systems, and early care and education systems and programs. She has been engaged in addressing how best to ensure excellence for young diverse learners, especially Black children, such as through development of a classroom observation measure, examination of non-traditional pedagogical approaches, public policies, and publications geared towards early education practitioners and policymakers.

Dr. Iruka has served or serves on numerous national boards and committee, including the Brady Education Foundation and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine committees on Supporting Parents of Young Children, and Applying Neurobiological and Socio-behavioral Sciences from Prenatal through Early Childhood Development: A Health Equity Approach.

Dr. Iruka has a B.A. in psychology from Temple University, M.A. in psychology from Boston University, and Ph.D. in applied developmental psychology from the University of Miami, Florida. She is a mother of two children – 7 year-old Aalani and 3 year-old Ares – who attend a Montessori in North Carolina.

Angeline Lillard



Angeline Lillard, Professor of Psychology at the University of Virginia, is an elected Fellow of the American Psychological Association and the Association for Psychological Science. She received her PhD in Psychology from Stanford University in 1991, and her research has been funded near-continuously since 1993 from federal and foundation sources. She is a recipient of the American Psychological Association's Boyd McCandless Award; her book, *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius* (Oxford University Press) received the Cognitive Development Society Book Award and is currently in its 3rd edition. Her primary research interests are Montessori education and children's play.

Dr. Valaida Wise



Dr. Valaida L. Wise (Val) is a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion consultant and a faculty member in the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Md. An educator of more than 25 years, Val has been a Montessori teacher and Montessori teacher trainer as well as the Head of 3 independent schools. As a faculty member at Johns Hopkins University, her research efforts focus on the successful implementation of an equity lens in schools and in the workplace. Val received her Bachelor's degree in developmental psychology from Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York; a Masters of Art in Teaching in Early Childhood Education with a specialty in Montessori Education from Trinity College, Washington D.C., and earned a doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from the George Washington University. Dr. Wise also holds an AMS Primary Montessori certification. She is a sought after public speaker with articles published in a variety of national journals.