



# BUILDING YOUR KNOWLEDGE

## FILLING THE CHILD WELFARE TOOLKIT



### NJ Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect 2022 SKILL BUILDING CONFERENCE

**OCTOBER 21, 2022**  
9:30am — 3:30pm

**In-Person Location:**

NJ DCF Professional Center  
30 Van Dyke Ave  
New Brunswick, NJ

**Virtual Location:**

Zoom webinar sent via e-mail

As a child welfare professional, you're often called upon to wear many different hats. The challenges that families face, in New Jersey and around the country, are varied and various, and range from the material - housing insecurity, food instability, utility assistance and job readiness - to challenges around personal physical and emotional safety, substance use recovery, domestic violence issues and healing from complex and intergenerational trauma.

To effectively serve families, you need a full child welfare toolkit. Join us on Friday, October 21, to hear from some of the leaders in New Jersey's child welfare arena focusing on the many ways in which we can all support and protect children and families throughout the State. You'll learn new strategies and hear about the latest programs focused on broadening the service array, in order to meet families where they are, and providing the resources and supports they need to thrive. And you'll make new connections to propel your practice with children and families forward.

A skilled craftsperson is only as good as the tools at their disposal. Let's build on your knowledge and skills so that you can continue to be your best for the children and families who depend on you.

# AGENDA

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**9:30AM - OPEN: Mary Coogan**

**9:45AM – Prevention as an Intervention**

**PROJECT SELF SUFFICIENCY**

- Kyrsten Gieger, *Director of Home Visitation Career Services, Case Management*
- Haley McCracken, *Director of Family Success Center County Council for Young, Children/Early Childhood Specialist*
- Melanie Wawrzyniak, *Director of Central Intake Healthy Women Healthy Families*

**DCF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**

- Sanford Starr, *Assistant Commissioner*

**10:45AM – Break**

**11:00AM – The Importance of Infant Mental Health**

- Kaitlin Mulcahy, Ph.D., LPC, IMH-E\*, *Director Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health at Montclair State University*

**12:00PM – Lunch - Resource Table and Optional Discussion with DOW Staff (*Domestic Violence and Services Available through DCF Division on Women*)**

**1:00PM - Dispelling Myths and Removing the Stigma of Mental Health Treatment**

- Dr. Barbara Prempeh  
Owner, B. Resilient, LLC.

**2:00PM - Break**

**2:15PM - Problematic Sexual Behavior**

- Renee Roman, LMSW  
University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center

**3:15PM - CLOSING: DCF Commissioner Beyer**

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**Project Self-Sufficiency** is a non-profit organization located in Newton, New Jersey, which has assisted low-income families in Sussex, Warren, and Hunterdon counties along the path to economic self-sufficiency and family stability for more than 35 years. Services include career guidance and assessment, computer classes, high school diploma instruction, parenting workshops, childcare, legal assistance, and education, help with emergency basic needs such as clothing and food, health education, support groups, life skills classes, family activities, home visitation, and more. Mobile services are available on board a renovated RV, [PSS Journey](#), complete with computer lab, counseling space, and food pantry. The agency also operates the [Little Sprouts Early Learning Center](#), a state-of-the-art daycare and preschool facility for up to 83 youngsters, ages 6 weeks to 6 years. For more information, visit [www.projectselfsufficiency.org](http://www.projectselfsufficiency.org)

# GUEST SPEAKERS

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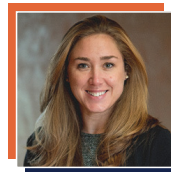
**Kyrsten Geiger**

*Director of Home Visitation  
Career Services and Case Management  
[pss@projectselfsufficiency.org](mailto:pss@projectselfsufficiency.org)*

*Bachelor's degree, Counseling, University of Scranton  
Master's degree, Rehabilitation Counseling, University of Scranton  
Length of Service at Project Self-Sufficiency, 10 years  
Originally from Dingman's Ferry, PA*

**Personal Statement**

I am drawn to this work by my desire to help parents be the best parents they can be through our three home visitation programs. By empowering parents, and sharing protective factors such as emotional support, social connection, and knowledge of parenting and child development, I can partner with families to help their children thrive.



**Haley McCracken**

*Director of Family Success Center  
County Council for Young  
Children/Early Childhood Specialist  
[pss@projectselfsufficiency.org](mailto:pss@projectselfsufficiency.org)*

*Bachelor's degree, Health Education & Physical Education,  
East Stroudsburg University  
Master's degree, Health Care Administration, King's College  
Length of Service at Project Self-Sufficiency, 10 years  
Originally from Denville, NJ*

**Personal Statement**

The draw and personal connection to this work stems from being raised by a single mother who worked two jobs to provide for her own mother as well as 4 children. Although my mother struggled, she had the tools and supports in place to help her maintain self-sufficiency. I am driven by the mission of Project Self-Sufficiency and the service that we provide families day in and day out. It is and always will be an honor to be a part of a strong home visitation team that has the same goal in mind: To continue to identify resources to support families in need and to provide concrete tips and tools to help families gain and maintain family stability and economic self-sufficiency.



**Melanie Wawrzyniak**

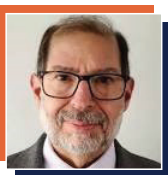
*Director of Central Intake  
Healthy Women Healthy Families  
[pss@projectselfsufficiency.org](mailto:pss@projectselfsufficiency.org)*

*Bachelor's degree, English, Rutgers University  
Length of Service at Project Self-Sufficiency, 8 years  
Originally from Newton, NJ*

**Personal Statement**

I am personally drawn to this work because it allows me to be the kind of person I want to be in my community and in the world. I love the work that we do at Project Self-Sufficiency, and particularly through the evidence-based home visitation programs, as well as the Central Intake Connecting NJ and Healthy Women Healthy Families programs, because these programs give me the ability and opportunity to be a part of something big, ambitious, and life-changing. I am able to have an impact on my community's story, and to experience, on a daily basis, moments of true human connection and meaning.

## GUEST SPEAKERS CONTINUED



### Sanford Starr

*DCF Assistant Commissioner*  
Division of Family and Community Partnerships  
[fcp@dcf.nj.gov](mailto:fcp@dcf.nj.gov)

Sanford Starr joined the New Jersey Department of Children and Families in March 2020 as Deputy Director in the Division of Family and Community Partnerships, as he and the Team seamlessly advanced critical services throughout the pandemic by supporting Early Childhood, Family Support and Nurse Home Visiting programs' shift to virtual assistance. He assumed the position of Assistant Commissioner for the Division in March 2021 along with an expanded range of services, including housing, family preservation, and reunification programs.

Sanford brings 40 years of experience to DCF. He previously served on the executive leadership teams of the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, where he provided oversight to the strategic planning and research areas of the department. He was key contributor in the application and award of over \$200 million dollars in federal discretionary grants for the state, and provided oversight for numerous federal discretionary grants that collectively established statewide drug trend monitoring and surveillance strategies, improved access and retention in treatment, expanded the use of evidence-based practices, and improved integrated care.

In addition to his over 24 years of state government experience, Sandy has worked in numerous clinical practices, management and leadership positions in community and hospital based behavioral health settings. Mr. Starr earned degrees in psychology and social work from The Ohio State University.



### Kaitlin Mulcahy, Ph.D., LPC, IMH-E

*Director*  
Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health  
at Montclair State University  
[mulcahyk@montclair.edu](mailto:mulcahyk@montclair.edu)

Dr. Kaitlin Mulcahy serves as the Director of the Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health at Montclair State University. She is informed by work experiences as an infant, early childhood, and family therapist within the sectors of child protection, early intervention, and community mental health. She received a doctorate in Family Science and Human Development from Montclair State University, a Masters degree in Counseling Psychology from Boston College, and a Masters degree in Pastoral Ministry also from Boston College. She completed post-Masters training in Infant-Parent Mental Health at UMass Boston, and Expressive Therapies and Play Therapy at Lesley University. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor, and is endorsed as an Infant Mental Health Clinical Mentor. Her research interests are in the impact of safety on relationships, a model of regulation-informed interactive play, and the provision and benefits of reflective supervision. Her systems interests surround centering relational and emotional wellness as the core and common ground for all infant and early childhood serving systems.



### Dr. Barbara Prempeh

*Owner*  
B. Resilient, LLC.  
[connect@bresilientllc.com](mailto:connect@bresilientllc.com)

Dr. Barbara Agyeman Prempeh, a native of Ghana, West Africa, is a Licensed Psychologist and Certified School Psychologist. Dr. Prempeh has a passion for educating others on the impact of trauma, and helping children, adolescents, and young adults develop resilience in the face of adversity. Dr. Prempeh is currently the Psychology Supervisor at Children's Specialized Hospital- Hamilton, and the owner of her private practice, B. Resilient, LLC. Dr. Prempeh also has ten years of experience in academia teaching undergraduate and graduate psychology courses. She currently serves as a Clinical Specialist at Montclair State University teaching graduate level courses, supervising psychoeducational evaluations, and coordinating practicum experiences for students, all within the School Psychology program.

Dr. Prempeh has conducted presentations at conferences and to organizations on numerous topics including, psychological disorders, trauma, juvenile justice, racial/cultural issues, resilience, and trauma-informed practices. She is the current President of the New Jersey chapter Association of Black Psychologists.



### Renee Roman, LMSW

*Consultant & Trainer*  
University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center  
[renee.roman@rocketmail.com](mailto:renee.roman@rocketmail.com)

Renee Roman is a practicing New York State Licensed Social Worker with over thirty years of experience. She is currently employed as a Consultant and Trainer. She attended Alfred University for her bachelor's degree and obtained her master's in social work from SUNY Albany with a concentration in children and families. Ms. Roman practiced for several years in Washington DC, Virginia and Maryland. She relocated to New York in 1995. Ms. Roman served as the Director of Clinical Services when the Child Advocacy Center, START Children's Center opened in November 1998. From 1999 until 2019 she served as the Executive Director of START. Aside from her clinical and administrative experience, Ms. Roman functioned as the primary Forensic Interviewer for the agency. She is one of the original authors of the New York State Forensic Interviewing Best Practice. She was a contributor to and co-author of the NCA approved updated Forensic Interviewing Best Practices curriculum. Ms. Roman also coauthored New York State Advanced Forensic Interviewing Best Practices. Ms. Roman has trained Forensic Interviewers since 2003. Ms. Roman is a Senior Trainer in Problematic Sexual Behavior – Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Adolescents (PSB-CBT-A) and a within agency trainer for this model. She consults with the military on PSB. She has presented locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally on topics related to her practice. Ms. Roman is an adjunct professor at SUNY Albany in the MSW Program. She is the Program Facilitator and trainer the Sexual Abuse Dynamic Training (SADIT) and Brief Interview Training for Foster Care and Prevention Workers with Fordham University.