



The Early Advantage 2

Building Systems That Work for Young Children

RESEARCHER BIOGRAPHIES

Sharon Lynn Kagan: Editor, *The Early Advantage 2*

Kagan is the Virginia and Leonard Marx Professor of Early Childhood and Family Policy and Co-director of the National Center for Children and Families (NCCF) at Teachers College, Columbia University and professor adjunct at the Child Study Center at Yale University. Recognized internationally and nationally for her work, Kagan has authored hundreds of articles, more than 20 books and has advised foundations, organizations, states and over 90 countries on their early childhood policies. Recipient of international and national honorary doctoral degrees, Kagan is past-president of the National Association of the Education of Young Children and a past-president of Family Support America. She is a member of the National Academy of Education and a Fellow of the American Educational Research Association. She is the only woman in the history of American education to receive its three most prestigious awards: the Distinguished Service Award from the Council of Chief State School Officers, the James Bryant Conant Award for Lifetime Service to Education from the Education Commission of the States and the Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education.

Kristiina Kumpulainen: Principal Investigator, Finland

Kumpulainen is a professor of education, specializing in preschool and early primary education at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Helsinki. She also acts as a vice dean for research and a scientific director of the Playful Learning Center at her faculty. Prior to her present position, she worked as the director of information and evaluation services at the Finnish National Agency for Education. The author of more than 100 articles and 10 books, Kumpulainen's research interests focus on young children's learning, development and well-being in their social ecologies, dialogic learning, agency and identity, multiliteracies and professional development of teachers. She is the recipient of numerous research and development grants. A leader in shaping the conceptual thinking of the future of Finnish education policy and practice, she is a regular keynote speaker at national and international conferences and venues.

Eva Landsberg: Co-editor, *The Early Advantage 2*

Landsberg is a research assistant at the National Center for Children and Families (NCCF) at Teachers College, Columbia University. Prior to joining NCCF, she analyzed early childhood education policy as an intern at the Children's Defense Fund in Washington, DC, focusing on the intersection of poverty and early education. As a 2015 Courture Fellow, she also worked as a teaching assistant in an early education center. She received her B.A. in History from Yale University where she will pursue her PhD.

Nirmala Rao: Principal Investigator, Hong Kong

Rao is the Serena HC Yang Professor in Early Childhood Development and Education, Faculty of Education, at the University of Hong Kong. A developmental and chartered educational psychologist by training, she has been recognized internationally for her research on early childhood development and education in Asian cultural contexts. She has participated in international meetings as an expert, written advocacy materials and undertaken consultancies for UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank and more. Rao has been published widely and has authored more than 100 international peer-referred journal articles, books and research reports. She has been the recipient of numerous research grants from governments and international non-governmental organizations. She also serves on the editorial board for several journals and is currently an associate editor of *Child Development*. Rao was a member of the steering committee for the 2017 *Lancet* Series on Early Childhood Development. In addition, she has held significant administrative leadership roles at the University of Hong Kong within the faculty and as dean of the Graduate School.

Kathy Sylva: Principal Investigator, England

Sylva is an honorary research fellow and professor of educational psychology at the University of Oxford. Her research interests fall into two themes. She has conducted several large-scale studies on the effects of early education and care on children's development, acting as a lead researcher on the Effective Pre-school and Primary Education Study (EPPE/EPPSE), which followed 3,000 children from preschool entry to the end of compulsory schooling. She co-led the national Evaluation of Children's Centres in England, another large-scale study of the effects of early childhood services on development. Her second interest is in programs aimed at enhancing parents' capacity to support their children's learning and behavior. Sylva has published several books and hundreds of papers and technical reports on early education and care, early literacy and support for families. She was specialist advisor to the UK Parliamentary Committee on Education from 2000-2009, the Scottish Parliament Education Committee in 2007, the UK Review of the early childhood curriculum in 2011, the National Expert Panel on "Standards for Early Years Teachers" in 2012 and the House of Lords Enquiry into "Affordable Childcare" in 2015. She was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 2008 and in 2014 won the British Education Research Association's Nisbett Award for outstanding contribution to educational research.