

Over the last 50 years, First Up has made many significant, positive impacts on the Early Childhood Education ("ECE") sector in Southeastern Pennsylvania. We provide teachers and administrators with [best-in-class training](#), specialized for their needs, and offer [affordable technical assistance](#) to ensure that organizations run effectively. Our advocacy team has created a statewide grassroots advocacy network that has grown to more than 3,000 individuals and organizations working each day to influence public policy.

We also offer an extensive series of training sessions for parents of young children and below we highlight a few of the most requested:

- Tips for Parenting During Covid-19
- Anti-racism: Talking to Your Children About Race
- Calming Tantrums
- Mindfulness

Course Summaries

Tips for parenting during COVID-19: Balancing work, childcare and self-care, while helping children understand our new normal can be a daunting task. During this session we will share quick tips and resources to help families navigate through the rough terrain of COVID-19, while maintaining some sense of normalcy in a world of continuous uncertainty.

This session will include:

- What matters most to your child during this time
- Why your kid is not 'behind' right now
- How to parent in the middle of uncertainty
- How to regulate yourself and teach your child to self-regulate

Anti-Racism- Talking to Your Children About Race: Having a conversation about race can be very sensitive and many of us would prefer to avoid it altogether. As a result of the national & global unrest sparked by the public death of George Floyd, children are asking questions and they want answers. Join us as we engage in a discussion about how to talk to children about racism and social injustice, while acknowledging our own racial biases. In this session we will talk about acknowledging, accepting and respecting the differences and similarities in everyone.

This session will include:

- Defining racism and anti-racism for children
- When should you talk to your children about race and racism?
- Ways to promote anti-racism in/for children (and encouraging others to be anti-racist)
- Giving context to protests

Calming Tantrums: Commonly known as temper tantrums, many families have tried helplessly soothe, negotiate, and cope with children displaying behaviors such as kicking, hitting, screaming, biting, falling out and attempting to run away. The sheer exhaustion from the battle of wills is often met with feelings of defeat or inadequacy as a parent or caregiver. In this session will explore the connection between tantrums and development, discuss how to anticipate and address tantrums by identifying common triggers and preventions that are developmentally appropriate and share strategies to decrease the intensity, frequency and/or duration of tantrums

This session will include:

- Brain structure, development (basic discussion using the “barn” analogy)
- The “3 R’s” Regulate, Relate, Reason
- A brief introduction to “FLIP IT” as a strategy to help with self-regulation

Mindfulness: When we are able, as adults, to find peace without judgment, everyone wins, whether you work in healthcare, education, the arts or any other industry. Mindfulness helps you bring your attention - so that you are better able to increase intention. Research shows that we all have the ability to access mindfulness, because each person accesses it differently. Some people find their breath, some people dance it out -- when it comes to mindfulness, it's not a case of 'one size fits all'. Mindfulness offers equitable coping skills so that we can be the best for ourselves, and then for those around us. In this session participants will be invited to create and design a mindful toolkit solely for them, based on given suggestions. Examples of these tools are: breathing techniques, imagery & meditation, yoga and movement, mantras, tapping and overall mindful practices.

Instructor Bios

Jillian Best Adler



Jillian has three young children and is a child development expert working at First Up. She provides trainings for childcare and preschool teachers about racial justice and recognizing their core values and biases. Jillian’s video

explaining the racial unrest to her 5-year-old son Daniel went viral on her Facebook page and has been seen by more than 41,000 people so far.

Stephanie L. Simon, M.Ed.



Stephanie is an Early Childhood Educator with over 27 years in the field. She has served as a Teacher, Director, Program Coordinator, Programs Director, Professional Development Facilitator, and a Preschool Specialist. Stephanie holds a master's degree in Early Childhood Education and a Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education/ Elementary Education. She is also a certified PQAS Instructor that has presented at regional and state conferences. Stephanie believes all children should have access to high quality education, and that it is her life's work to provide impactful and sustainable support for the children and families she serves.

Alix Cozen



After 10 years of being a teacher in the classroom, Alix left to find a platform in which she would advocate for more students, practitioners and their families as well. Knowing the needs and necessities for healthy child development, she strives to facilitate trainings that focus on social and emotional learning and development as well as building, maintaining, and sustaining positive relationships. One of her favorite ways to do this is of course through mindfulness. Alix is a certified children's yoga instructor and happily lives in Center City with her two cats.

Latrelle Nicholson



Latrelle was an educator with over 25 years' experience. She spent 18 years teaching elementary school and 7 teaching preschool. It was always her dream to positively impact the lives of children. In recent years, it has been her desire to help teachers obtain and maintain their zeal for teaching through coaching. Latrelle has a passion for fighting racism and helping people gain awareness of their implicit biases – as well as shedding light on the impact racism has on children. Latrelle has degrees in education and a Master's in Psychology. She is happily married with two children.

James Nicholson, M.Ed.



While at Temple University to obtain a Master's Degree in Analytical Chemistry, James began substitute teaching and developed a passion for teaching children. He later graduated with a master's in early childhood education. James joined First Up where he is currently a Senior Early Learning Specialist and Project Manager. James is a father of two whose life's mission is to be a difference-maker in the lives of young people.