

Robin Hernandez-Mekonnen, MSW, PhD

3333 Comly Road, Unit #12
Philadelphia, PA 19154
267.987.4689 (cell)
rmekonne@sp2.upenn.edu
rmekonnen@aol.com

EDUCATION

University of Pennsylvania
School of Social Policy & Practice
PhD, Social Welfare
Filed : April 2012

Philadelphia, PA

Dissertation entitled "Placement Disruptions in Foster Care: An Analysis of System Level Factors on Stability," Chair, Richard Gelles, PhD. Committee: David Rubin MD., Carol Wilson- Spigner, DSW

University of Pennsylvania
MSW, 2002

Philadelphia, PA

University of Wisconsin
BA, Cultural Anthropology, 1995

Madison, WI

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- 2012 – present** **University of Pennsylvania**
School of Social Policy & Practice
Project Director
Housing Opportunities for People With AIDS (HOPWA)
- 2011- present** **University of Pennsylvania**
Center for Public Health Initiatives
Project Director
Disparities: Screening of Infant-Child Development among Mexican Immigrant Families. *Funded by RWJ Foundation, Health & Society Scholars Program Research and Education Fund*
- 2010- 2012** **Penn State University**
School of Psychology, Social Cognition Research Lab
Project Coordinator
A Study of Parenting (ASOP), *funded by NICHD*
- 2006-2010** **Children's Hospital of Philadelphia**
The Research Institute, PolicyLab
Project Director
The Children's Stability and Well Being Study (CSAW)
Funded by NICHD, William Penn and Stoneleigh

- 2005-2006** **Supreme Court of Pennsylvania**
Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts
 Department of Policy and Research, Philadelphia, PA
Project Specialist
 An Evaluation of Statewide Practices in Child Custody Disputes
- 2001-2005** **The Field Center for Children’s Policy, Practice and Research**
 University of Pennsylvania, Law School
Principal Investigator
 Evaluation of the University of Pennsylvania Interdisciplinary Child Advocacy
 Clinic (ICAC), Philadelphia
Research Assistant
 Philadelphia Department of Human Services, Front-End Reform Project:
 Consultant Evaluation of Policies, Development Procedural Manual
- 2002-2006** **Center for Research on Youth and Social Policy**
 University of Pennsylvania
Research Assistant
 Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition: Evaluation of Work-Stream
Research Assistant
Expert Report by Dr. Richard Gelles for Children’s Rights Inc.:
 Charlie and Nadine H. v. McGreevey and the New Jersey
 Department of Youth and Family Services (DYFS)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2011- present** ***Instructor, University of Southern California, School of Social Work (VAC)***
 Social Work 562-Research Methods
- 2011 (fall)** ***MSW Field Instructor, Temple University School of Social Administration,***
 Philadelphia, PA
- 2011 (spring)** ***Instructor, Temple University School of Social Administration,***
 Social Administration 5006- Social Welfare Policy and Service II
- 2007 (fall)** ***Instructor, Rutgers University, Camden, NJ***
 Social Work Policy and Practice I
- 2006 (spring)** ***Instructor, University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice,***
 Social Work 611- Contemporary Social Policies
- 2006 (spring)** ***Instructor, Temple University School of Social Administration***
 Social Administration 421- Social Research and Data Analysis II
- 2006 (spring)** ***Instructor, Temple University School of Social Administration***
Social Administration 391-Evaluating Programs & Practice in Social Work
- 2005 (fall)** ***TA, University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice***
Social Work 706-Policies for Children and Their Families
(Instructor: Richard Gelles, PhD)

PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

- 2010- present** **City of Philadelphia, Department of Human Services**
Qualitative Service Reviewer (QSR)
Conduct quality assurance case reviews utilizing standardized protocol on randomly selected child welfare cases during monthly review process. Case stakeholders are interviewed for experiential feedback related to case plans and inclusion. Improvement strategies and direct feedback reported to Commissioner.
- 2002- 2011** **Assessment and Treatment Alternatives, Philadelphia, PA**
Mobile Therapist
Provided intensive therapeutic interventions (CBT) to children and family in non-traditional settings and developed treatment plan recommendations for services in the least restrictive environment.
- 2009** **Utah Department of Human Services**
Division of Children and Family Services, Ogden, Utah
State Qualitative Case Reviewer
Conducted Qualitative Case Review utilizing standardized state protocol in quality assurance review in Northern Region on randomly selected child welfare cases during annual review process.
- 1998-2001** **Episcopal Community Services, Philadelphia, PA**
Senior SCOH Case Manager
Supervised and coordinated home based parenting and life skills paraprofessionals, and supported strategies to continue to provide comprehensive family-based social work services to children and families involved in CPS.
- Agency Liaison*
Served as agency liaison to Philadelphia Department of Human Services and Temple University Philadelphia Outcomes Measures Project. Trained staff members on instrument utilization and outcome measures tracking, routine data collection and transmission.
- Workshop Facilitator*
Designed, implemented and facilitated weekly workshops at homeless shelter tailored to meet contractual/program requirements for families, women and teens facing extreme psychosocial stressors. Additionally designed standardized, co-facilitated and evaluated workshops designed to provide parenting skills and child maltreatment prevention for Philadelphia Department of Human Services referred families.
- Services to Children in their Own Homes(SCOH) Social Worker*
Provided comprehensive in home family based services to children and families with allegations of maltreatment and at risk for removal into out of home care
- 1997-1998** **Assessment and Treatment Alternatives, Philadelphia, PA**
Therapeutic Support Staff
Provided one on one Mental Health intervention and support to child with MH and MR diagnoses to provide age appropriate psychosocial growth, utilizing CBT.

- 1996-1997** **The Salvation Army**, Philadelphia, PA
Residential Counselor
 Supervised and counseled dependent and delinquent youth at County CPS emergency shelter placement
- 1993-1996** **Dane County Juvenile Court**, Madison, WI
Juvenile Court Counselor
 Oversaw daily activities of residents at emergency placement facility for adolescents awaiting violation hearings or placement

OTHER PROFESSIONAL/VOULUNTEER ACTIVITIES

- 2009- 2010** **Department of Human Services (DHS)**
Education Work Group, Philadelphia, PA
Consultant, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
 Participate in a cross systems collaborative, time limited multidisciplinary work group charged with the integration of federal policy mandates into local jurisdictional policy and protocol and development of DHS Education Support Center.
- 2008-present** **Capitolo Recreation Center**
Capitolo Youth Soccer League, Philadelphia, PA
Founder/Director
 Organize and train Latin American youth ages 3-14 in basic soccer skills at inner-city recreation center. Incorporate family members via volunteering and recognition ceremonies. Bilingual coordination of programming and tournaments. Develop community outreach forums for working with local pro soccer teams and Philadelphia Department of Recreation to expand and promote soccer within the inner city and among Latin American immigrant community. Community outreach to support integration and acceptance. Negotiate annual seasonal permits with City of Philadelphia. Acquire and manage annual \$6000 Activities Fund Grant budget.
- 2003-2006** **Juvenile Justice Center of Philadelphia**
Court Appointed Special Advocate Program (CASA), Philadelphia, PA
CASA Volunteer
 Advocate on behalf of the needs of children in the Philadelphia Family Court System.
- 2000-2001** **University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy & Practice**
Student Representative, Student Council, Part-time Student Association.
 Research Sequence Committee.
- 1992-1993** **Dane County Fair Housing Council**, Madison, WI
Housing Discrimination Investigator
 Conducted investigations of rental screening practices of properties according to discrimination complaints. Assumed various socioeconomic identities during interviews as assigned. Documented interview content and prepared testimony for court hearings.

PUBLICATIONS/ RESEARCH REPORTS

- Hernandez-Mekonnen, R.** & Bennett, I. (2012). Barriers to developmental screening of children in Mexican Immigrant populations. Unpublished manuscript (in process), University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- Noonan, K., Matone, M., Zlotnik, S. **Hernandez-Mekonnen, R.**, Rubin, D., & Mollen, C., (2012). : Cross-System Barriers to Educational Success for Children in Foster Care: The Front Line Perspective. *Children and Youth Services Review*. 34:2, 403-408
- Noonan, K. Rubin, D., **Mekonnen, R.** & Zlotnik, S. (2009). Securing child safety, well-being, and permanency through placement stability for children in foster care. *PolicyLab at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute*. (1)
- Mekonnen, R.**, Noonan, K., & Rubin, D. Achieving better health care outcomes for children in foster care. *Pediatric Clinics of North America*. 2009; 56(2)
- Rubin, D., O'Reilly, A., Downes, K., **Mekonnen, R.**, Localio, Luan, X. (2008). The impact of kinship care on behavioral well-being for children in out-of-home care. *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 162:3.
- Mekonnen, R.**, & Dichter, M., (2011). An evaluation of an interdisciplinary child advocacy clinic. Unpublished manuscript. University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- Kinnevy, S. C., Dichter, M., **Mekonnen, R.**, and Tiger, M. (2003, March). Inclusion of Youth with Disabilities in Youth Programs: A Needs Assessment in Philadelphia. Prepared for *the U.S. Department of Labor, Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition and The Philadelphia Youth Network*. Center for the Study of Youth Policy, School of Social Work, University of Pennsylvania.

PRESENTATIONS

- Matone, M, Mollen, C., Zlotnik, S., **Mekonnen, R.**, O'Reilly, A., & Rubin, D. (2012, January) Children's Stability & Well-Being Study: Assessing Barriers to Educational Success. Poster Presentation. *2012 Society for Social Work Research Conference, Washington DC*.
- Matone, M, Mollen, C., Zlotnik, S., **Mekonnen, R.**, O'Reilly, A., & Rubin, D. (2011, August) Children's Stability & Well-Being Study: Assessing Barriers to Educational Success. Poster Presentation. *2011 National Child Welfare Evaluation Summit, Children's Bureau, Washington DC*.
- Azar, S. & **Mekonnen, R.**, (2011, August). Intellectual Disabilities and Neglectful Parenting: Preliminary Findings on the Role of Cognition in Parenting. Poster Presentation. *2011 National Child Welfare Evaluation Summit, Children's Bureau, Washington DC*.
- Mekonnen, R. (2011, July). Dismantling Placement Instability Step by Step: The Philadelphia Case. Research Presentation. *APSAC's 19th Annual Colloquium, Philadelphia, PA*
- Azar, S., **Mekonnen, R.**, & Stevenson, M. (2011, July). Child neglect: A test of social information processing model of etiology. Presentation. *APSAC's 19th Annual Colloquium, Philadelphia, PA*
- Mekonnen, R. (2011, May). Helping Hands: Intergenerational Resource and Information Conference for Caregivers. Invited Panelist by Pennsylvania Senator Anthony H. Williams.

- Mekonnen, R. (2009, November). Conceptualizing cross system collaborative research in child welfare. Poster presentation. *Council on Social Work Education, Annual Program Meeting*. San Antonio, Texas
- Mekonnen, R. (2009, February). The Children's Stability and Well Being Study: Intermediary Findings. *The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia*, Subcommittee for Child Health: Task Force on Children in Out of Home Care
- Mekonnen, R. (2008, May). National Forum on Children Families and the Courts: Planning for the Future: Plenary Session, "*The Unhealthy Truth about Children in Foster Care*". Invited Panelist by Pennsylvania Secretary of Health, Calvin B. Johnson.
- Mekonnen, R. (2008 February). The Children's Stability and Well Being Study: Preliminary Findings. *The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia*, Foster care provider agency meetings.
- Mekonnen, R. (2007, December). Nutrition Resources for At-risk Youth and their Families. Invited guest lecturer, *University of Pennsylvania, School of Medicine*, Philadelphia, PA.
- Mekonnen, R. (2007, February). The Case of Child Welfare: Advocacy & Lobbying: Government Intervention into Family Life. Invited guest lecturer, Contemporary Social Policies. *University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy and Practice* Philadelphia, PA.
- Mekonnen, R. (2005, October). Foster Care: The Adoption and Safe Families Act. Invited guest lecturer, Human Behavior in the Social Environment. *University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy and Practice* Philadelphia, PA.
- Mekonnen, R. (2005, October). Policies for children and families. Invited guest lecturer, Social Welfare Policies. *Rutgers University, School of Social Work*, Camden, NJ.
- Mekonnen, R. & Dichter, M. (2004, September). An Interdisciplinary Approach to Legal Representation for Children: A Collaborative Project between Law, Medicine, and Social Work. *Child Welfare League of America Mid-Atlantic Region Training Conference*. Philadelphia, PA.
- Mekonnen, R., & Dichter, M. (2004, August). Interdisciplinary Approach to Legal Representation for Children: An Evaluation of the University of Pennsylvania Interdisciplinary Child Advocacy Clinic (ICAC). Poster presentation. *American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children 12th Annual Colloquium*. Hollywood, CA.
- Kinnevy, S., Dichter, M., **Mekonnen, R.**, and Tiger, M. (2003, March). Inclusion of Youth with Disabilities in Philadelphia Youth Programs: A Needs Assessment. Presentation to *U.S. Department of Labor, Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition, and Philadelphia Youth Network*. Philadelphia, PA.
- Mekonnen, R. (2003, June). Overlap in System Failure: Dependency, Delinquency and the Revictimization of Maltreated Children. An invited panel workshop presentation. *The Law and Society Association 2003 Annual Meeting*, Pittsburgh, PA.
- Mekonnen, R. (2002, June). The Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act: History, Evolution and Applications of Federal Law. Invited guest lecture, *University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Work*, Policies for Children and their Families, Philadelphia, PA.

Mekonnen, R. and Kinnevy, S. (2002, September). Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice: Overlap in Systems Failure. *7th Annual International Conference on Family Violence*, San Diego, CA.

Mekonnen, R. (2000- 2001). Understanding Loss and Grief; Sex and Sexuality in Children; Resiliency: Overcoming Obstacles; Teamwork in Family Systems; Strategies for Goal Achievement: Using the Family as a Resource. Episcopal Community Services, Philadelphia, PA, Parent Education, Foster & Kinship Training Workshops.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

The Council on Social Work Education, Member, 2009

The Society for Social Work and Research, Member, 2007 to present

Child Welfare League of America, Member, 1999 to present

American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, Member, 2001 to present

National Association of Social Workers, Pennsylvania Chapter, Member, 2000 to present

SKILLS

Fluent in Spanish; oral, written

Proficient in French; oral, written