

# 2024 CAMPUS SCHOOL AT BOSTON COLLEGE CONFERENCE

Topic :

## Perspectives on Parenting Children with Extensive Support and Medical Needs

 Saturday, January 27, 2024

 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

 [RSVP for Conference Link](#)



Questions and Registration:

**Kara Hardiman**  
Campus School Social Worker  
[KM94@bc.edu](mailto:KM94@bc.edu)



WELCOME

**Stanton E.F. Wortham**

Dean, Lynch School of Education and Human Development- Boston College



SPEAKER

**Blyth Lord**

Courageous Parents Network - Founder and Director



SPEAKER

**Don Ricciato**

Boston College Lynch School of Education and Human Development



SPEAKER

**Annette Hines**

Special Needs Law Group - Founding Partner



PANEL MODERATOR

**Teresa Schirmer**

Associate Dean, Boston College School of Social Work

INTRODUCTION:

**Dean Stanton Wortham, Ph.D.**

9:00-9:05AM



Dean Wortham is an award-winning teacher, scholar, and documentary film producer, Stanton E. F. Wortham, Ph.D., is the Lynch School's inaugural Charles F. Donovan, S.J., Dean A. linguistic anthropologist and educational ethnographer with a particular expertise in how identities develop in human interactions, Wortham has conducted research spanning education, anthropology, linguistics, psychology, sociology, and philosophy. He is the author or editor of nine books and more than 80 articles and chapters that cover a range of topics including linguistic anthropology, discourse analysis, "learning identity," and education in the new Latino diaspora.

**YES and Darn Right! You are a Really Good Parent!**

9:05-9:45AM

Parenting is hard, period. And parenting a medically-complex child is especially difficult, with decisional fatigue, relentless need for advocacy with the health system, working with the medical team, competing demands from family members, work, and social isolation. Courageous Parents Network's Blyth Lord will share research and resources that orient, ground and validate you in the many ways that you are being a good parent to your child.

PRESENTER:

**Blyth Lord, M.Ed.**



Blyth Lord founded Courageous Parents Network in 2014, 13 years after the death of her daughter and nephew from infantile Tay-Sachs. Building on her career in television production and distance learning, she conceived of CPN as a way to bring the voices and lived experience of parents and clinicians to families actively caring for children with illness. She has worked with leaders in pediatric palliative care—doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners, social workers, patient advocacy groups, palliative and hospice care providers—as well as with families. She serves on the board of National Tay-Sachs and Allied Diseases Association, where she helps oversee NTSAD's family support services, and in CPN's liaison role to the American Academy of Pediatrics' Section on Hospice and Palliative Medicine. In 2021, Blyth received the Presidential Citation for Palliative Care Advocacy from AAHPM. Blyth received her BA in History from Yale College and a Masters in Education from Harvard University.

# Effective School/ Parent Collaboration for Students with Disabilities

9:50-10:30AM

Family involvement is critical for student success. This presentation will review strategies and practices that promote family engagement utilizing a collaborative approach, emphasizing school and home coordination of services. The importance of establishing multiple, ongoing communication options that share information on student needs, services, skills, and progress will be emphasized. The benefits of a family centric approach with parents as equal members of a transdisciplinary team will also be discussed

PRESENTER:

## **Don Ricciato, Ph.D.**



Don Ricciato is a part-time faculty member at the Lynch School of Education and Human Development within the division of Teaching, Curriculum, and Society, with a focus on special education, teaching undergraduate and graduate courses. Dr. Ricciato was the director of the Campus School at Boston College, a private, publicly funded, special education school located at the Lynch School of Education and Human Development. He has over 35 years of experience in service, training, and research focused on enhancing the quality of lives of individuals with extensive support needs, particularly severe multiple disabilities. Dr. Ricciato established the Boston College Supported Employment Program providing opportunities for adults to be employed within competitive work environments in various departments at the University. Dr. Ricciato is also a current member of the Board of Directors of May Institute, a national non-profit organization that provides educational, rehabilitative, and behavioral healthcare services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders, developmental disabilities, brain injury, mental illness, and behavioral health needs. He has a doctorate in Educational Administration with a focus on the education of students with extensive support needs, severe multiple disabilities, a master's degree in Special Education, and a bachelor's degree in Education. Dr. Ricciato possesses licensure in Massachusetts as an Administrator of Special Education and Superintendent of Schools.

# Disability Planning, Not So Easy Steps

10:35-11:15AM

Founder of Special Needs Law Group and Special Needs Family Services, Annette Hines brings personal experience to her work as the mother of two daughters, one of whom passed away from mitochondrial disease in November, 2013. This deep personal understanding of raising a child with disabilities fuels her passion for quality special needs planning. Annette knows firsthand just how complex and overwhelming the legal systems and processes are for parents of children with special needs. Amidst the grief of losing her beloved Elizabeth, Annette realized that life was giving her a "second chance" to use her extensive legal expertise to help families who are going through the same challenges she faced.

PRESENTER:

## **Annette Hines, Esq.**



Annette M. Hines is a founding partner of Special Needs Law Group of Massachusetts, PC, in Framingham, and founder of Special Needs Family Services, Inc. She has practiced in the areas of special needs law, elder law, and estate planning for more than twenty-five years. She received her B.A. from the University of Vermont, her M.B.A. from Suffolk University, and her J.D. from Howard University School of Law. Ms. Hines has been recognized as a “Distinguished Citizen” by The Arc of Massachusetts, cited for public service by the Massachusetts State Senate and House of Representatives, and named to the Massachusetts “Super Lawyers” list every year since 2014. She was president of the Massachusetts Association of Women Lawyers from 2008 to 2009, was selected for the 2016 Top Women of Law by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly and is a contributing member of many organizations that serve the disability community. Ms. Hines is sought after to speak on topics of disability trusts, planning and benefits. She authored the Amazon bestselling memoir *Butterflies and Second Chances* in 2018 and is the host of the popular podcast “Parenting Impossible: The Special Needs Survival Podcast”. In 2021, Ms. Hines was honored to be chosen by her peers to receive the Theresa Award for outstanding advocacy in the disability community. Most recently she was on the advisory board committee for the “1st edition of *Elder and Disability Law in Massachusetts*” published in September.



PANEL INTRODUCTION:

**TOM MILLER**



Tom Miller is the Interim Director of the Campus School. Previously, Tom was the Director of the Kevin O’Grady at the Northshore Education Consortium and prior to that he was the Director of Infant and Toddler and School Age Services at Perkins School for the Blind. In addition to being the Interim Director, Tom is also an Adjunct Faculty member and Practicum Supervisor in the Lynch School of Education and Human Development at Boston College. Tom has presented nationally and internationally developing programs and advocating for specialized services for learners with low incidence conditions and their families.

PANEL DISCUSSION MODERATOR:

**Teresa Schirmer, LICSW**

11:20AM-12PM



Teresa Touhey Schirmer is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker who has over 25 years of experience working with adolescents, adults and families. Throughout her career, she has worked with individuals who have struggled with addiction and major mental health issues in hospital settings and in the community. These experiences have provided a broad range of clinical expertise and has served as the foundation for her clinical practice. Teresa has a private therapy practice where she primarily focuses on Depression, Anxiety and Autism Spectrum Disorder with adolescents through a strengths based, and resilience focused approach. She has been an outspoken advocate and speaker for evidenced based interventions for children in school settings particularly those who have Dyslexia and Autism Spectrum Disorder. Teresa is currently an Associate Dean of Student Experience at the Boston College School of Social Work. She has taught a number of courses at Boston College; Basic Skills in Clinical Social Work, Diversity and Cross Cultural Issues and Adolescent Development as well as seminars for Field Instructors. Teresa earned her Bachelors of Arts from Boston College and her Masters in Social Work from Boston University.