

Deja L. Jones, Ph.D.

Urban Sociologist/Researcher

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EDUCATION

Saybrook University (*Pasadena, CA/online*) September 2023
Ph.D. Transformative Social Change

- CITI Collaborative Institutional Research Training Certification (2022)
- Research: Centering Black Children's Cultural Needs in Environmental Education Practices
 - The Public Health Crisis of Environmental Racism and Early Childhood Development

University of Pennsylvania (*Philadelphia, PA*) December 2017
UNICEF Certification in Social Norms & Social Change

Liberty University (*Lynchburg, VA*) May 2014
M.Ed. Teaching & Learning: Leadership and Administration

Rutgers University (*Newark, NJ*) May 2012
B.A. Journalism & Media Studies

CERTIFICATIONS AND LICENSING

New Jersey Department of Education September 2021
Substitute Teaching License

Cornell Civic Ecology Lab December 2021
Early Childhood Nature Education certification

Southwest Institute for Montessori Studies (*Mesa, AZ*) June 2021
AMI Primary (3–6-year-old) Lead Guide Diploma
Student Teaching: Hamilton Park Montessori (Jersey City, NJ)

RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

Founder & Head of School, HoneyPot Montessori, Inc. (Newark, NJ) June 2019- present

- Collaborate with co-founder/co-Head of School to develop and operate a 1-2 classroom Montessori school
- Working with up to 30 children and their families in the HoneyPot community using Montessori method
- Managing school marketing materials and internal and external communications
- Managing school finances and tuition
- Working with city and state departments to stay within licensing regulations
- Developing school program design and schedule
- Managing employee payroll and benefits
- Hiring vendors and contractors

Research Assistant, Straus Center for Young Children & Families (New York, NY) May 2022- Sept 2022

- Research Project: *A Mixed Methods Investigation of Disparities in New York City Preschool Program Ecologies, Equitable Referrals, and Inclusive Practices*
- Data Collection
 - Obtaining informed consent
 - Scheduling interviews, observations, and focus groups
 - Recording field notes and memos during interviews, observations, and focus groups
- Data management

- Recordkeeping and confidentiality of research materials
- Secure offline digital recording
- Tracking participation
- Data transcription
- Data analysis
 - Analyze visual and textual data for dissemination

Nutrition and Environmental Educator, FoodCorps, Inc. (Newark, NJ) July 2021- June 2022

- Teach children in Newark Public School district in grades K-8 about food and nutrition
- Collaborate with teachers and school administration to increase food and nutrition education in cross-curriculum
- Work with students to grow healthy food in school gardens.
- Expand and maintain already existing school gardens, greenhouses, and hoop houses
- Sourcing and promoting food from local farms for cafeteria taste tests
- Working with school food directors and staff to integrate healthier foods into breakfast, lunch, and snack programs
- USDA grant management and reporting
- Seeds for Change grant management and reporting
- Recruiting and training volunteers
- Organizing committees and running meetings, talking to press and public officials
- Data collection via surveys and analysis of programming impact

Summer CORE Site Director, Sadie Nash Leadership Project (Newark, NJ) June 2020-August 2020

- Manage logistics and operations of the summer institute
- Manage program budget and expenses
- Facilitate youth organizing workshops on social justice topics
- Train and supervise summer site staff
- Create program policy systems
- Social justice-based curriculum design

Founder/Director of Programming, Curate Your Life, LLC January 2017-December 2019

- Civic Engagement program design
- Curriculum Design/Program Planning
- Establishing community and school partnerships
- Life Skills/Character Development workshops
- Community Service initiatives

Summer Administrative Site Director, Sadie Nash Leadership Project (Newark, NJ) June 2019-August 2019

- Manage logistics and operations of the summer institute
- Manage program budget and expenses
- Coordinate special events
- Train and supervise summer staff
- Analyze evaluations and end of summer reports
- Create program policy systems (attendance policy, restorative justice policy, gender policy)
- Manage payroll of summer staff and guest speakers

Kindergarten Teacher, KIPP Seek Academy Charter School (Newark, NJ) October 2017-June 2019

- Phonics and Reading Mastery Instructor
- Literacy planner
- Eureka Math Instructor
- Work with K team members to revamp the phonics curriculum according to student data
- Facilitating small group and individual instruction according to student modifications
- Leadership Coordinator (2018-2019)

- Purchasing instructional supplies
- Event coordinating
- Budgeting
- Coordinating special events and projects
- Reports to Director of School Operations

MEMBERSHIP

Rutgers-Newark Black Organization of Students Alumni Association present

- Board secretary

Association Montessori Internationale present

North American Association of Environmental Education present

- Conference reviewer

Natural Start Alliance present

SAGE Publications Video present

- Editorial Board Member

PUBLIC SPEAKING EVENTS

Saybrook University 2023 Graduate Colloquium August 2023
Pasadena, CA

- Climate Justice: Healing Self, Community, and World: Black Children in Nature

SXSW EDU Mentor March 2023
Austin, TX

Natural Start Alliance Webinar September 2022

- Freedom Dreaming: Using Art and Storytelling to Reimagine Communities of Color in Nature Education

Natural Start Alliance Early Learning Conference 2022 July 2022
Cincinnati, OH

- Freedom Dreaming: Using Art and Storytelling to Reimagine Communities of Color in Nature Education

North American Association of Environmental Education Research Symposium October 2021

- Research Roundtable: Centering Black Children's Unique Cultural Experiences in Nature Education

Rutgers University Excellence in Student Affairs Conference December 2019
Piscataway, NJ

- Rutgers X TED Talk: Shifting Student Narratives to Increase Opportunities

Guest Lecturer at Rutgers-Newark Urban Teacher Education Program November 2019
Newark, NJ

- Origin Stories: History of Institutionalized Racism in American Education

Fellowship of Black Male Educator for Social Justice 3rd Annual EdFest2019 October 2019
Philadelphia, PA

- Is Your Content Culturally Biased: Dismantling White Supremacy Standards in Teacher's Prep Programming to Better Teach Black Children?

The Congressional Caucus on Black Women and Girls 3rd Annual Summit October 2019
Lawrenceville, NJ

- Self-empowerment panelist

Socially Responsible Community Forum, Rutgers University-Newark
Newark, NJ May 2019

- Gentrification in Newark
- Distribution of wealth and disparity in New Jersey
- Education policy and reform in New Jersey

HONOR AND AWARDS

Saybrook University Outstanding Scholar Award July 2023

Vela Education Entrepreneur Grantee June 2022

Abolitionist Teaching Network Early Educator Grantee December 2021

Rollo May Scholarship Recipient June 2021

Black Montessori Fund Grantee May 2021

2020 Butterfly Dreamz, Inc Community Changemaker Grantee August 2020

Saybrook University's Presidential Scholar August 2018-2022

2017 NJ 30 Under 30 Ubuntu Nominee November 2017
Category: Community Health and Wellness for Curate Your Life

PUBLICATIONS

Jones, D. L. (2020). *Dismantling respectability politics by teaching multicultural education*. Equity and Action News Journal. <https://indd.adobe.com/view/476cdeed-7e41-4050-bc1e-7a32ac53f9b7>

RESEARCH INTEREST

- Centering Black Children in Early Childhood Environmental and Sustainability Education
- Using Nature-based Learning as a Social and Emotional Skills Development Tool for Early Childhood Learners