

## Deja L. Jones, Ph.D.

Urban Sociologist/Researcher

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### EDUCATION

**Saybrook University** (*Pasadena, CA/online*) December 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

**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

**Founding Head of School & Programs**, Honeypot Montessori, Inc. (Newark, NJ) June 2019- present

- 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

**Curriculum Developer and Facilitator**, Schools That Can (Newark, NJ) September 2023-June 2024

- Develop curriculum that builds on the education to employment pathways suitable for middle grades and high school students.
- Expand Schools That Can's reach in Newark scaling our units and through strategic partnerships with Newark Public Schools's CTE department and national partner Jobs for America's Graduates program.
- Support curriculum development and data collection at other Schools That Can Locations (Chicago, Pittsburgh, New York City)
- Serve as a workshop facilitator in Newark partner schools

**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

<b>Wildflower New York Charter Schools</b>	2023-present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board Treasurer</li> </ul>	
<b>Nonprofit Professionals of Color Collective</b>	2019-present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Assistant to the Executive Director</li> </ul>	
<b>Rutgers-Newark Black Organization of Students Alumni Association</b>	2023-present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board Secretary</li> </ul>	
<b>Association Montessori Internationale</b>	2021-present
<b>North American Association of Environmental Education</b>	2019-present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conference reviewer</li> </ul>	
<b>Natural Start Alliance</b>	2021-present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-Founder, Black Educator Network</li> </ul>	
<b>SAGE Publications Video</b>	2022-2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Editorial Board Member</li> </ul>	

## PUBLIC SPEAKING EVENTS

<b>Natural Start Alliance Conference 2024</b> <i>Portland, Oregon</i>	July 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop: From Environmental Racism to Environmental Justice</li> </ul>	
<b>Natural Start Alliance Conference 2024</b> <i>Portland, Oregon</i>	July 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop: Rewriting the Narrative: Centering Non-White Children in Environmental Education Curricula</li> </ul>	
<b>Natural Start Black Educator Network Kick Off</b> <i>Portland, Oregon</i>	July 2024
<b>We Are ONE: National Gathering for Environmentalist of Color</b> <i>Atlanta, Georgia</i>	June 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop: Sticks &amp; Stones and Roots &amp; Bones: Centering Black Children's Nature Experiences in Land Use Policy Agendas</li> </ul>	
<b>Visions of Racial Justice &amp; Childhood: Inequalities, Identities, Politics, Relationalities, and Representations hosted by Rutgers-Camden and Mellon Foundation</b> <i>Camden, New Jersey</i>	June 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Panelist: "How They Play: Narratives of Black Children's Engagement with Nature"</li> </ul>	

<b>New Jersey Department of Education and New Jersey School-Age Childcare Coalition</b> <i>Hamilton, New Jersey</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hood Safari, Urban Fauna: Engaging Urban Youth with Urban Wildlife in Out of School Learning</li> </ul>	April 2024
<b>Natural Start Alliance Webinar</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-creating Outdoor Spaces for Black Children and What They Want</li> </ul>	November 2023
<b>Brown University Climate Action Youth Network Roundtable</b> <i>Virtual</i> Curriculum Panelist	September 2023
<b>Exploring Emancipatory Educational Ecosystems</b> <i>Virtual</i> Book Talk Moderator with Dr. Lauren M. Wells	August 2023
<b>Saybrook University 2023 Graduate Colloquium</b> <i>Pasadena, CA</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate Justice: Healing Self, Community, and World: Black Children in Nature</li> </ul>	August 2023
<b>NaturalStart Alliance Graduate Research Roundtable</b>	April 2023
<b>SXSW EDU Mentor</b> <i>Austin, TX</i>	March 2023
<b>Natural Start Alliance Webinar</b> <i>Virtual</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freedom Dreaming: Using Art and Storytelling to Reimagine Communities of Color in Nature Education</li> </ul>	September 2022
<b>Natural Start Alliance Early Learning Conference 2022</b> <i>Cincinnati, OH</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freedom Dreaming: Using Art and Storytelling to Reimagine Communities of Color in Nature Education</li> </ul>	July 2022
<b>North American Association of Environmental Education Research Symposium</b> <i>Virtual</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research Roundtable: Centering Black Children's Unique Cultural Experiences in Nature Education</li> </ul>	October 2021
<b>Rutgers University Excellence in Student Affairs Conference</b> <i>Piscataway, NJ</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rutgers X TED Talk: Shifting Student Narratives to Increase Opportunities</li> </ul>	December 2019
<b>Guest Lecturer at Rutgers-Newark Urban Teacher Education Program</b> <i>Newark, NJ</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Origin Stories: History of Institutionalized Racism in American Education</li> </ul>	November 2019
<b>Fellowship of Black Male Educator for Social Justice 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual EdFest2019</b> <i>Philadelphia, PA</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is Your Content Culturally Biased: Dismantling White Supremacy Standards in Teacher's Prep Programming to Better Teach Black Children?</li> </ul>	October 2019
<b>The Congressional Caucus on Black Women and Girls 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Summit</b> <i>Lawrenceville, NJ</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-empowerment panelist</li> </ul>	October 2019
<b>Socially Responsible Community Forum, Rutgers University-Newark</b>	May 2019

Newark, NJ

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

## HONOR AND AWARDS

<b>Newark Art Start Grant</b>	June 2024
<b>Black Wildflower Fund Teacher Council Award</b>	February 2024
<b>Saybrook University Outstanding Scholar Award</b>	July 2023
<b>Vela Education Entrepreneur Grantee</b>	June 2022
<b>Abolitionist Teaching Network Early Educator Grantee</b>	December 2021
<b>Rollo May Scholarship Recipient</b>	June 2021
<b>Black Montessori Fund Grantee</b>	May 2021
<b>2020 Butterfly Dreamz, Inc Community Changemaker Grantee</b>	August 2020
<b>Saybrook University's Presidential Scholar</b>	August 2018-2022
<b>2017 NJ 30 Under 30 Ubuntu Nominee</b> <i>Category: Community Health and Wellness for Curate Your Life</i>	November 2017

## 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>

Jones, D. L. (2023). *Sticks & Stones and Roots & Bones: A Narrative Inquiry Study on Black Children's Cultural Engagement in Nature (30989774)* [Doctoral dissertation]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Jones, D. L. (2024). *Hood Safari, Urban Fauna: A Guide to Urban Critters and Crawlers*.

## 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