Meet the Staff

Hanna Gebretensae, Director

Hanna Gebretensae joined Eliot Pearson the summer of 2013 as the new Director. Prior to that, she was the Director of Early Childhood Programs at Aspire Institute/Wheelock College. She has extensive experience in the field of early education and care including direct services, administration of programs, teacher education, training/technical assistance, mentoring, anti-bias curriculum/cultural competency and policy work across Massachusetts and nationally. Hanna has been a program director at Acorn Center for Early Education and Care, a bilingual Chinese/English center and a Mentor-Director for early childhood programs in Boston supporting accreditation and quality of programs in the city. She is a diversity trainer certified by Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and various programs and organizations. Hanna has held adjunct faculty positions at Lesley University, Wheelock College and the Urban College of Boston on a variety of early childhood topics. Prior to coming to the US, Hanna also managed early childhood program development and projects in East Africa and worked with UNICEF. Hanna received a bachelor’s degree in Human Development and Early Childhood Education from Lesley College; received her master’s in Educational Administration, Planning, and Policy from Harvard University; and a Doctoral degree in Educational Leadership with a concentration on Curriculum and Instruction from University of Phoenix. She also holds a certificate in Educating Children with Special Needs from the Golda Meir International Training College in Haifa, Israel and is a CAYL Fellow in Early Care and Education Policy.

Gabriela Herrera, Education Specialist

Gaby has been in the field of early childhood education for over nine years. She has held both classroom and administrative positions in different school settings. Her experience working in several countries and with diverse populations have helped her understand the value of culturally diverse practices and integrating it into her daily work. Gaby is passionate about enabling children to use their unique perspectives and talents to contribute to their community.
Leah Eyob, School Coordinator

Leah is excited to be a part of the Eliot-Pearson Children’s School administrative team. She attended George Mason University and studied English Literature. At Mason, she was particularly interested in how the history and cultures of immigrant populations were preserved through folklore and mythology. She worked at Apex, a company that worked with publishers, museums and archives to preserve their collections. She spearheaded a research project to find out how to help university generated materials meet new and comprehensive standards for accessibility. Leah has also worked with grant recipients to make user friendly free archives for historical newspapers. Before coming to Boston, Leah worked at Visiting Angels, a company that provides elder care. There she coordinated with families and medical professionals to provide empathic, safe, and customized home care services for the elderly. Leah has been privileged to work in environments that value demographic and experiential diversity. As a result, she knows how much richness and intelligence that diversity can bring to the learning experience. Leah comes from a large extended family that blessed her with lots of experience in childcare. She hopes to bring her passion for social justice, accessibility, storytelling to the school. In her free time, Leah enjoys experimenting in the kitchen, learning about other cultures through food and travel, and spending time with family and friends.

Marisa Doyle, Enrichment Program Coordinator

Before working at EPCS Marisa graduated from the University of Connecticut in 2021 with her BA in speech, language, and hearing sciences. She has worked extensively with children at the 4-H New London County Camp as a counselor, teaching assistant at Sacred Heart University’s Horizons Program, and one-to-one special rights assistant at John Mead Elementary School. Marisa started as EliotPearson’s staff assistant but is now the Enrichment Program Coordinator. She plans to attend Tufts University’s Public Health Program in the fall semester and concentrate on healthcare statistics and analytics. Throughout Marisa’s life dance has been her passion, especially tap dancing. While at UConn she was tap team coordinator and performed at multiple competitions across New England. Marisa's personal interests include exploring Boston, traveling, attending hockey & baseball games, and painting.
Lynne May Lim, School Specialist

Lynne May has been an early childhood educator for thirty years and has held head teacher and administrative positions at EPCS. She brings to our community her vast experience working with young children of diverse learning profiles and backgrounds, and her perspective on anti-bias education based on her professional and personal experiences as a cisgender woman, a parent, an immigrant to the USA, a teacher of young children, and as a person of the global majority. She is an advocate for inter-disciplinary, multi-modal, multisensory, and project-based emergent curriculum that seeks to activate children’s inherent curiosity and build upon their strengths and prior knowledge to make meaning of new experiences and solve all kinds of problems. Lynne May finds mentoring and coaching experienced and novice teachers as invigorating as playing with children. When not teaching, Lynne May enjoys spending time with family and friends, taking walks, and noticing her surroundings. Her interests include drawing, music, and using still and moving images to capture moments and tell stories. She holds a Master of Art in Teaching Early Childhood Education from National-Louis University in Illinois, and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of the Philippines.

John Levine, Rainbow Room Head Teacher

John graduated from Loyola University Maryland with Biopsychology an interdisciplinary degree in Biopsychology and a special education minor, and since then he has been involved in early childhood education. He has lived up and down the east coast between Baltimore, New York, and Boston, as well as a stint down under in Melbourne. When not in the classroom, John is often backpacking on a mountain somewhere or grilling in his backyard with friends. He loves teaching because it gives him the opportunity to support and learn alongside the children as they navigate through such a significant and formative part of their lives. He is excited to be a part of the amazing community at EPCS!
Deanna Lieberman Flug, Purple Room Head Teacher

One can usually find Deanna hiking mountains in New Hampshire or Vermont or reading a book in just about any corner she can find. She went to school at the University of Vermont where she studied Early Childhood Special Education and later went to Lesley University for her Master’s in Education. Her favorite book to read with children is Giraffes Can’t Dance by Giles Andreae.

Theresa Whitten, Green Room Head Teacher

Theresa is so excited to join the EPCS community. Working in early childhood has been a love of hers for a long time and she cannot wait to share all the new things she has planned with her class. Theresa has been teaching for seven years. She received her Masters in Early Childhood from Lesley University in May 2014. She was a Kindergarten Teacher for the Boston Public Schools for 6 years. Before before that, she taught at the Brookline and Randolph Public Schools. She enjoys dancing, singing, trying new foods, and staying active while riding a bike and or hiking. She has a mini golden doodle named Zoey and two cats that she and her husband adore. She has a fraternal twin brother and two younger siblings; family is very important to her. She believes that community is an important aspect in establishing anything new.
Matthew Slepin, Orange Room Head Teacher

Matt has lived in quite a few places and pursued a number of interests. He taught courses in the evolving concept of magic in medieval Europe at Northwestern University and wrangled dishes at a dude ranch in the Sangre de Cristos mountains of Colorado. He taught Elizabethan history on a living history museum that not only sailed around Great Britain, but right through Loch Ness (he didn't see any monsters though). For almost a decade, Matt worked in Maui, Hawaii on community development issues. He spent some time teaching in the Concord and Cambridge public school systems, as well as at the Cambridge Friends School, before landing at Eliot Pearson Children's School. His son says that he makes the best cinnamon rolls that he has ever eaten!

Jordin Luxemburg, Floater Teacher

My name is Jordin, and I have been at EPCS for five years; I am a float teacher. I have an M.A. in Developmental Disabilities from Teachers College, Columbia University. One of the best gems about my job is building relationships with all the children and seeing their growth throughout the year. I enjoy creating art, watching documentaries, exploring new places, traveling, and visiting friends and family in my spare time.
Tara Ellard, Purple Room Assistant Teacher

Tara attended Bates College and graduated this past spring. She studied Psychology and Music, with a passion for early childhood development. She has been working with children throughout her time at Bates College at summer camps and children’s centers. After spending one last summer on Cape Cod MA, Tara is excited to be moving to Boston and to be joining the Eliot Pearson community. In her free time, Tara loves going on outdoor adventures, including running, kayaking and hiking, and is excited to share this love for the outdoors with her fellow teachers and students.

Olivia Hobert, Green Room Assistant Teacher

Olivia is from Framingham, Mass, and has a B.A. in Psychology and Education from Mount Holyoke College as well as a M.A. in Child Study and Human Development from Tufts. During her time as a Master's student Olivia was an EP Fellow for two years, working first in the Purple Room and then in the Green Room. She is excited to be starting her third year at EPCS working as an Enrichment Teacher and is looking forward to a wonderful school year!
Ashley Rutledge, Orange Room Assistant Teacher

Ashley started her education career as a classroom teacher in Southington, Connecticut after graduating from Roger Williams University in 2020 with a degree in Elementary Education. Upon moving to the Boston area, she was interested in continuing her education career and is excited to join the EPCS community. When she's not in the classroom, Ashley can be found pursuing her photography, Irish dancing, and spending time with her family, friends, and two rabbits. She also plans to get her Master's in STEM education in the near future.

Anna Petti, Rainbow Room EP Fellow

Anna Petti is a first-year Master’s student at the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development. She recently graduated from Northeastern University with a B.S. in Linguistics, and she has previously worked as a TA at the John Winthrop School for Young Children and the Transportation Children’s Center. She loves working with kids and can’t wait to join the Rainbow Room this fall!
Nadia Silva, Rainbow Room EP Fellow

Nádia is an international student from Brazil with a B.A. in Psychology and current student of the Master's Program in Child Studies and Human Development. Nádia worked with typical and atypical children in a school context as an assistant teacher. In her free time she likes to travel, discover new restaurants and watch movies. She is excited to experience a new culture, learn about how these differences apply to the learning context and contribute to the development of the children of Eliot-Pearson Children's School while furthering her knowledge at Tufts.

Tomilola Idowu, Purple Room EP Fellow

Tomilola attended Babcock University, Nigeria in 2016 where she majored in Computer Science. As an undergraduate, she volunteered as a child tutor and has since been interested in the connection between education and development. She strongly believes that childhood is life in itself rather than a preparation for adulthood and should be treated as such. She has worked as a digital media strategist championing campaigns to end child marriage in Africa; educating the girl child and highlighting the essence of strong families, whilst also volunteering as a child educator, instructional leader, and program coordinator. Tomilola is excited to be a part of the Eliot-Pearson Children's School where she can merge her background in science and media with her interest in Child development to truly make an impact in her society. In her free time, she enjoys reading stories and writing.
Maria Paz Espin, Purple Room EP Fellow

Hi! My name is Maria Paz Espin, and I am a proud Chicago native. I am a first-generation college graduate from Dartmouth College, where I studied psychology and neuroscience. I’ve been working with kids since I was 14, and my love for them grew when my nephew and niece were born. I enjoy reading, watching movies, and yoga in my free time. I am ecstatic to care for and learn from all the children at the EPCS!

Trinity Carlos, EP Fellow

My name is Trinity Carlos. I love to read, go to amusement parks, and play volleyball. I have played volleyball for about 11 years now! I have a bachelors degree in psychology and am currently in my masters program at tufts university. I was born and raised in Worcester, Massachusetts but have lived in Florida, Kansas, and Ohio! I love spending time with children and learning new things everyday!
Brenna Schlechter, EP Fellow

My name is Brenna Schlechter. I will be joining the Eliot-Pearson Children’s School staff for the first time this year and I couldn’t be more excited for the adventures that await. I am from Hershey, PA and received my undergraduate degree from Franklin & Marshall College in Psychology and American Studies. Throughout my time as an undergraduate student, I participated as a member of the student board at our campus women’s center, worked as an RA, and volunteered in our school’s vivarium working with capuchin monkeys. In my free time, I love to travel, hike, swim, and bake. I am thrilled to join the Tufts community as I pursue my Master’s degree!

Tara Nichols, Orange Room EP Fellow

Tara graduated from Florida Gulf Coast University in 2022, where she studied Psychology and Sociology. She has experience researching student success and non-cognitive skills. She is currently starting her Master’s in Child Study and Human Development, with hopes of entering the clinical field post Master’s. In her spare time, you can find Tara watching movies, chasing a sunset, or playing tabletop games with friends.
Samuel Ojedeji, Orange Room EP Fellow
Samuel holds a Bachelor degree in English Education (B.A. Ed) and is currently a master’s student in the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development. He has worked as a teacher for close to half a decade. Out of school setting, he is a Parenting Educator and a Child Development Enthusiast who has led the successful organization of several events targeted at equipping parents and increasing their capacity to raise wholly developed children. Samuel is excited to join the Eliot-Pearson Children School community, hopes to sustain the traditional of excellence already established and looks forward to how his knowledge and studies at the Graduate School, Tufts University will positively influence his future role in raising children and impacting the society, particularly aiding adults to raise the next generation.

Mary Beady, Orange Room EP Fellow
Mary is a first-year Masters student at Tufts and is excited to be an E-P Fellow for this school year. She graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 2020, where she found her love of education while working at a preschool in Philadelphia. She has lived in Boston for the past three years, as an Americorps volunteer for one and an afterschool teacher in Brookline for two. For fun, Mary spends her free time playing soccer, baking, reading or hanging out with her friends. She is excited to be working in the Orange Room this year!

Kassandra Vegas, Floater EP Fellow- more information to be announced