

Lee Johnson III, Ph.D., CHES®, IMH-E® | Bio

Lee Johnson, III, Ph.D., CHES®, IMH-E®, as Vice President of Policy for the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI), serves as an advisor to the President/CEO. He leads NBCDI's preeminent advocacy and thought leadership initiatives, distinguished research and publications, and equity-advancing public policy and legislative agenda.

Before joining the NBCDI, Dr. Johnson served as Senior Policy Analyst for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) at ZERO TO THREE (ZTT)—the national leader in infant—toddler policy and program development. He managed an IECMH federal policy portfolio spearheading congressional, national, and state partnerships advocating for supportive childcare and early childhood mental health policies for the Nation's infants and toddlers. Earlier in his career, Dr. Johnson held appointments in the state of Alabama as director at the Department of Early Childhood Education and state director at First 5 Alabama®, Alabama's Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. There, he led in expanding early childhood mental health services and supports and boosting families' access to federal and state-funded home visiting programs.

At the Department, Dr. Johnson was responsible for convening the 40-member State Children's Policy Council¹. The council's purpose is to review the local needs assessments prepared by each county and make recommendations annually to the Governor and Legislature—recommendations that help raise the overall well-being of Alabama's children and respond to their unique needs across the state. Dr. Johnson was responsible for also serving as Alabama's Parent as Teachers State Lead. Through his contributions, the Parents as Teachers national office recognized the Department as having *the capacity and expertise* to safeguard a vital connection for services to children and families, along with support for state early childhood home visiting partners.

Dr. Johnson holds an Infant Mental Health Endorsement®, an internationally recognized credential for his commitment and contribution to infants, toddlers, and families. He is a Certified Health Education Specialist and a former NBCDI Policy Fellow (2019-2021). Dr. Johnson's NBCDI Policy Project, entitled *Supporting Resilience in Black Families: Advancing Racial Equity in Early Childhood Mental Health Policy*, recognizes the need for equitable policies and practices that empower Black families.

Dr. Johnson earned a B.S. in early childhood education, an M.A., and a Ph.D. in public health from The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, AL. His dissertation focused on the impact of early adverse experiences on the mental & physical health outcomes of Black boys & men and the power of relationships, solidifying his selection for the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Doctoral Scholars Dissertation Fellowship (2019-2020).

With a decade of experience in policy analysis, innovation, and advocacy in early childhood education and public health, Dr. Johnson utilizes his training and lived experience to support the global effort to support early learning and positive health outcomes for all children.

¹ Alabama Code § 26-24-30