MEGHAN C. ORMAN, Ph.D.

Director, Auburn University Early Learning Center
Department of Human Development and Family Science
College of Human Sciences | Auburn University
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ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

2026–Present | Director, Auburn University Early Learning Center
Auburn University Department of Human Development and Family Science

- Provide academic and administrative leadership for a NAEYC-accredited university laboratory preschool serving young children and families.
- Oversee educational programming, personnel, operations, and continuous quality improvement.
- Support undergraduate experiential learning, interdisciplinary research, and partnerships among university faculty, students, educators, families, and community organizations.
- Advance reflective, developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive, and research-informed early childhood practice.
- Develop opportunities for collaborative research, professional learning, and community engagement that connect the university with the broader early childhood community.

2025–2026 | Jackie Bezos Researcher in Residence
Bezos Family Foundation

- Develop foundation-wide strategy for the Advancing Research portfolio, with a focus on community-engaged research, translational science, and strengthening pathways for diverse scholars to thrive in research careers.
- Design frameworks for engaged research and program evaluation to inform philanthropic investments and research-practice partnerships.
- Provide evidence-informed advising on child and youth development, early childhood education, educator well-being, and workforce development initiatives.
- Design and facilitate cross-sector convenings on artificial intelligence in education, including initiatives focused on AI & Equity in Early Childhood and Generative AI and Scholarly Development.
- Lead initiative and partnership development supporting Indigenous early-career scholars in education and human development.
- Create and facilitate interactive workshops that strengthen research literacy, reflective inquiry, and evidence use among foundation leaders, program officers, and staff.

2024–2025 | Postdoctoral Associate, Health Behaviors Lab
Cornell University Division of Nutrition Sciences

- Conducted mixed-methods and participatory research examining the relational, organizational, and structural conditions shaping early childhood educator well-being, social support, and workforce retention as part of the StayWell ECE initiative.

- Contributed to evaluation design, stakeholder collaboration, and translational dissemination efforts supporting statewide early childhood and educator well-being initiatives.
- Developed and evaluated culturally responsive, technology-enhanced mHealth interventions supporting the health and well-being of children and families in rural and low-income communities.
- Supervised and mentored nine graduate and undergraduate researchers across multiple projects, supporting research design, qualitative and quantitative analysis, manuscript development, dissemination, and career development.
- Participated in Cornell Cooperative Extension and broader CALS community engagement efforts related to family and community development.

2022–2023 | Fulbright-National Science Foundation Arctic Research Fellow
University of Iceland

- Led an international interdisciplinary research team examining early childhood development, sustainability education, and culturally grounded approaches to environmental and nature-based learning in Icelandic preschools.
- Designed and validated a culturally responsive self-report scale measuring young children's nature connection, strengthening expertise in psychometrics, scale development, and cross-cultural mixed-methods research.
- Collaborated with preschool educators, school leaders, and university partners on research design, participatory data collection, and interpretation of findings.
- Supervised and mentored nine undergraduate and graduate students in education and psychology through thesis research, data collection, analysis, academic writing, and conference presentations.
- Disseminated research findings in Iceland and internationally through invited talks, keynote presentations, and academic and practitioner conferences.

2019–2024 | Office of Child Development Research Assistant
University of Pittsburgh

- Co-led the community strand of the 3Rs (Reading, Racial Equity, and Relationships) Initiative, a longitudinal, community-engaged research partnership addressing racial inequities in literacy outcomes for Black children and families.
- Co-designed and evaluated equity-focused professional learning initiatives supporting educators, schools, and community organizations within literacy and youth-serving ecosystems.
- Conducted mixed-methods evaluation of school- and community-based 3Rs initiatives, including longitudinal analyses of changes in participants' 3Rs mindsets over time.
- Co-developed a culturally responsive and psychometrically validated measure of adults' 3Rs mindsets using community-based participatory approaches.
- Led a landscape analysis of culturally responsive and nature-based early childhood programs and developed strategic recommendations addressing gaps in local early learning ecosystems.

2020–2022 | Education Research & Evaluation Scholar
Pennsylvania Department of Education

- Led a statewide geospatial and quantitative analysis examining relationships among public libraries, broadband access, educational attainment, poverty, and racial and economic inequities across Pennsylvania communities.
- Designed and conducted ecological and spatial analyses integrating Census, educational, and public infrastructure data to identify disparities in community resource access and outcomes.
- Collaborated with Pennsylvania Department of Education leadership, including the Deputy Secretary and Office of Research and Evaluation, to translate findings into actionable policy and resource allocation recommendations.
- Produced a comprehensive public research report and geospatial data visualizations used to inform statewide conversations related to broadband expansion, educational equity, and community resource access in historically underserved communities.

EDUCATION

2024	**University of Pittsburgh School of Education**
	Ph.D. Applied Developmental Psychology
2011	**University of North Florida Department of Philosophy**
	M.A. Practical Philosophy and Applied Ethics
2007	**Binghamton University Department of Philosophy**
	B.A. Philosophy, Politics, and Law

PUBLICATIONS & RESEARCH REPORTS

Published and In-Press Manuscripts

Orman, M.C., Wanless, S.B., Norðdahl, K., & Birgisdóttir, F. (in press October 2026). Towards a framework of early nature connection: A qualitative exploration with Icelandic preschool children. *International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education*.

Orman, M.C., Reyes, LI., Gilbert, C., Freimuth, E., Meyerson, Z., Carmona, B.A., and Bellows, L.L. (2026). Social Support and strain amongst early childhood educators: Insights from experiences in the workplace. *Early Childhood Education.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-026-02166-z

Orman, M.C., Wanless, S.B., Birgisdóttir, F., & Norðdahl, K. (2026). Enjoyment, empathy, and environmental behavior: A study of young children's nature connection in Iceland. *Journal of Cognition and Development*, 1-26. https://doi.org/10.1080/15248372.2025.2506044

Wanless, S.B., **Orman, M.C.,** Moye, S.M., & Spear, C.F. (2025). A community-partnered process for construct and measure development: The 3Rs – Reading, Racial Equity, & Relationships. *American Journal of Community Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.70010

Orman, M.C. & Wanless, S.B. (2024). Edging toward democracy: The roles of informal learning organizations in a literacy ecosystem. *Afterschool Matters*, 38, 8-18. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1437925.pdf.

Manuscripts Under Review

Carmona, B., Reyes, L., **Orman, M.C.,** and Bellows, L.L. (under review). A path analysis examination of factors affecting early childhood educators' burnout and turnover. *BMC Public Health.*

Manuscripts in Preparation

Orman, M.C., Friedland, R., Carmona, B.A, and Bellows, L.L. (in preparation). Supports and challenges to early childhood educators' well-being: Insights from photovoice.

Research Reports

Orman, M.C. (2026). Strengthening Native Early Career Scholar Pathways: A Landscape Analysis of the Research Ecosystem [white paper and funding prospectus]. *Prepared for the Bezos Family Foundation.*

Bellows, L.L., Carmona, B., **Orman, M.C.,** Reyes, L.I., Deng, L., Freeland, R., … (2026). Supporting the early childhood education workforce: Health, wellbeing, and what we can do about it [Findings from the StayWell ECE project in New York State]. *Cornell University Health Behaviors Lab.* Link to report: StayWell ECE Project Report

Orman, M.C. & Wanless, S.B. (2022). Investigating the relationship between public libraries and community indicators in Pennsylvania. *Pennsylvania Department of Education*. Link to report: PA - Investigating the Relationship Between Public Libraries and Community Indicators in Pennsylvania - Full Report.

Orman, M.C., Geibel, S., Wanless, S.B., Moye, S. (2021). Mapping the Organizations in Allegheny County's Literacy Ecosystem. *University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development*. Link to report: ocd.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/Pittsburgh_Study_3Rs_Community_Report.pdf

GRANTS & RESEARCH FUNDING

Developing nature connection and environmentally sustainable behaviors in early childhood
PI: **Orman, M.C.**
(2022-2023), $18,000
Fulbright-National Science Foundation Arctic Research Award, Iceland

Exploring and measuring nature connection in early childhood
Co-PI's: **Orman, M.C.** & Wanless, S.B.
(2022-2023), $3,000
University of Pittsburgh School of Education Faculty/Student Grant

Investigating the relationship between public libraries and community indicators in Pennsylvania
Co-PI's: **Orman, M.C.** & Wanless, S.B.
(2020-2022), $8,500
Pennsylvania Department of Education Research Scholars Award

Igniting racial equity in Allegheny County's out-of-school literacy ecosystem
PI: **Orman, M.C.**
(2020-2021), $5,000

Remake Learning Ignite Grant

Organizational roles in Allegheny County's literacy ecosystem: A mixed-methods network analysis
Co-PI's: **Orman, M.C.** & Wanless, S.B.
(2022-2023), $3,000
University of Pittsburgh School of Education Faculty/Student Grant

UNIVERSITY TEACHING & MENTORSHIP

Overview: Instructor of record for 47 undergraduate and two master's-level courses. Teaching emphasizes Universal Design for Learning, equity-focused course design, active student engagement, and experiential and community-engaged learning. Experienced in both face-to-face and online asynchronous instruction, with expertise in Blackboard and Canvas learning management systems. Integrates educational technology, including generative AI, to thoughtfully support — not replace — teaching, learning, and scholarly development.

Teaching Fellow, *University of Pittsburgh Department of Health and Human Development*
2023-2024

- HHD 2317: ADP Professional Seminar 2 (master's course) (Spring 2024)
- HHD 2766: Community-based Practice Learning 2 (master's course) (Spring 2024)
- HHD 1043: Child/Youth Practice 2 (Spring 2024)
- HHD 1002: Development – Conception Through Early Childhood (Fall 2023)
- HHD 1041: Child/Youth Practice 1 (Fall 2023)

Guest Lecturer*, University of Iceland School of Education*
2022-2023

- Research and Development in Science Education (master's course)
- Sustainability Education in Early Childhood Classrooms (master's course)

Adjunct Professor, *University of North Florida Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies*
2011-2020

- PHI 2010: Introduction to Philosophy (Fall 2016 – Fall 2020; 17 sections)
- PHI 2630: Contemporary Ethical Issues (Summer 2011 – Summer 2020; 27 sections)

INVITED TALKS & KEYNOTES

Orman, M.C. (2024, July 23). *Diversifying environmental psychology research and methods* [Panel moderator]. APA Division 34 Society for Population, Environmental, and Conservation Psychology Webinar Series, virtual. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmdbuAEUNtU

Orman, M.C. (2024, June 6). *Nature connection: A mindset to inspire sustainability learning* [Keynote speech]. Nordic Research Symposium on Science Education, Reykjavik, Iceland.

Orman, M.C. (2023, June 28). *The role of nature connection in education* [Keynote speech]. GeoCamp, Reykjanes, Iceland.

Orman, M.C. (2023, June 8). *Methodological perspectives on young children's nature connectedness* [Invited research talk for the Department of Psychology]. The University of Tromsø, Tromsø, Norway.

Orman, M.C. (2023, April 15*). The role of nature connection in childhood education* [Keynote speech]. Conference on Education in Natural Sciences, Selfoss, Iceland.

Orman, M.C. (2023, February 8). *Researching nature connection in young Icelandic child*ren [Invited research talk, open to the public]. Hólar University, virtual.

Orman, M.C. (2020, November 16). *Engaged scholarship 101: Graduate students* [Panelist]. University of Pittsburgh's Engaged Scholarship Development Initiative Open Workshop Series, virtual.

Orman, M.C. (2017*). Notes from the hive: How honey bees can help us better prepare our home environments.* Montessori Family Life Webinar, virtual.

Orman, M.C. (2016). *A Montessori-beehive experience: On the importance of the prepared environment* [Commencement speech]. Center for Montessori Teacher Education, Huntersville, SC, US.

PEER-REVIEWED RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Orman, M.C., Reyes, L.I., Carmona, B.A., Freimuth, E., Gilbert, C., Meyerson, Z., & Bellows, L.L. (2025, May 1). *Exploring systems of social support to enhance early childhood educator health and well-being [Poster presentation].* Society for Research on Child Development Biennial Meeting, Minneapolis, MN, US.

Freimuth, E., **Orman, M.C.,** Carmona, B.A., Meyerson, Z., & Bellows, L.L. (2025, May 1). *StayWell ECE: Examining social support experienced by early childhood educators to identify viable intervention opportunities.* Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research Poster Symposium, Ithaca, NY, US.

Orman, M.C., Carmona, B.A., Freimuth, E., Meyerson, Z., and Bellows, L.L. (2024, December 18). *StayWell ECE: Exploring the intersection of social support and health in the early childhood education workforce*. Cornell University Maternal Child Nutrition Poster Symposium, Ithaca, NY, US.

Carmona, B.A., **Orman, M.C**., Friedland, R., Tecum, B., Xie, R., Bellows, L.L. (2024). *Intervention strategies to improve the health and wellbeing of New York early childhood cducators.* Cornell University Maternal Child Nutrition Poster Symposium, Ithaca, NY, US.

Oke, S., Mikami, S., **Orman, M.C.,** Liang, D., Bellows, L.L. (2024, December 18). *Applying a user-centered approach to develop a mobile app for parents of preschoolers*. Cornell University Maternal Child Nutrition Poster Symposium, Ithaca, NY, US.

Orman, M.C. (2024, November 5). *Roots of connection: Establishing a psychological framework of early nature connection.* North American Association of Environmental Education Annual Research Symposium, Pittsburgh, PA, US.

Orman, M.C., Wanless, S.B., Birgisdóttir, F. & Norðdahl, K. (2024, September 26). *Early childhood nature connection: A qualitative study with Icelandic preschool children.* APA Division 34: Society for Environmental, Population, and Conservation Psychology 2024 Conference, virtual.

Nishida, M., Erlendsdóttir, G., Rauterberg, R. J., **Orman, M.C.,** Sæmundsdóttir, J., Möller, Á.M.,Trililani, C., Valdimarsdóttir, S., and Wozniczka, A. K. (2024, April 12). *Challenges unite us: Developing doctoral students' polyvocal writing community.* American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, US.

Orman, M.C. (2023, November 11). *Methodological perspectives on early childhood nature connectedness.* International Association of Applied Psychology Early Career Marathon, virtual.

Orman, M.C., Wanless, S.B., Birgisdóttir, F. & Norðdahl, K. (2023, October 20). *Testing a novel measure of young children's nature connectedness with an Icelandic sample.* APA Division 34: Society for Environmental, Population, and Conservation Psychology 2023 Conference, virtual.

Orman, M.C., Wanless, S.B. (2023, August 4). *Nature connectedness among children of preschool age: Exploring measures and associated factors* [Poster presentation]. 2023 American Psychological Association Convention, Washington, DC, US.

Orman, M.C., Wanless, S.B., Birgisdóttir, F. & Norðdahl, K. (2023, June 23). *Exploring nature connectedness among Icelandic children of preschool age.* International Conference on Environmental Psychology, Aarhus, Denmark.

Orman, M.C., Wanless, S.B. (2023, April 28). *Nature connectedness among children of preschool age: An Icelandic perspective.* Natural Start Alliance Graduate Student Roundtable, virtual.

Rosché, C., **Orman, M.C.,** Gregory, W., Banik, T., Ásgeirsdóttir, Á., Kristjánsdóttir, S., Linde, P.W., & Hansen, K. (2022, October 14). *Fulbright in the Arctic: Meet the scientists*. Arctic Circle Assembly, Reykjavik, Iceland.

Orman, M.C., Geibel, S., & Wanless, S.B. (2021, October 18-22). *Mapping organizations in Allegheny County's literacy ecosystem* [Poster presentation]. Vital Village 2021 Virtual National Community Leadership Summit, virtual.

Orman, M.C., Geibel, S., & Wanless, S.B. (2021, July 5-10). *An ecosystem analysis of organizations in a literacy ecosystem* [Poster presentation]. Networks 2021 Virtual Conference.

Monk, E. & **Orman, M.C.** (2021, June 6-9). *Mapping your civic ecosystem* [Workshop]. Public Health Improvement Training Virtual Conference.

Orman, M.C. & Wanless, S.B. (2021, June 2-4). *Using geospatial analysis to explore spatial racism in reading outcomes* [Poster presentation]. Society for Prevention Research Virtual 29th Annual Meeting.

Orman, M.C. (2021, April 22). *Engaging organizations to support children's literacy development across contexts* [Research talk]. Jeremy Johnson Landen Memorial Graduate Student Award Ceremony, University of Pittsburgh.

Orman, M.C., Geibel, S., & Wanless, S.B. (2020, October 26-27). *Role models: Exploring organizational positions in the literacy ecosystem* [Poster presentation]. Vital Village 2020 Virtual National Community Leadership Summit.

Nicholson, J., Villamor, M., Zgjani, D., Burke-Lefever, J., & **Orman, M.C.** (2020). *Going from man-toman to zone defense: The impact of child-parent ratio on parenting stress* [Poster presentation], Society for Research on Human Development 2020 Conference, (Conference canceled).

AWARDS & HONORS

Outstanding Alumni PhD Dissertation Award. (2025). *Exploring and measuring nature connection in early childhood*. University of Pittsburgh School of Education.

Chancellor's Advisory Council on Sustainability Student Champion Award. (2024). University of Pittsburgh.

Fulbright/National Science Foundation Arctic Research Award. (2022-2023). *Developing nature connection and environmentally sustainable behaviors in early childhood*. United States Institute of International Education and National Science Foundation.

International Conference on Environmental Psychology Student Award. (2023). *Exploring nature connectedness among Icelandic children of preschool age.* International Association of Applied Psychology.

Office of Child Development Student Fellow. (2019-2023). University of Pittsburgh.

Early Career Preventionists Network Student Paper Award Honorable Mention. (2021). *Using geospatial analysis to explore spatial racism in reading outcomes*. Society for Prevention Research Virtual 29th Annual Meeting.

Jeremy Johnson Landen Memorial Graduate Student Paper Award. (2021). *Engaging community organizations to support children's literacy development across contexts.* University of Pittsburgh.

ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

International & National

2026	Organizer and facilitator, Bezos Family Foundation Generative AI & Scholarly Judgment in Postdoctoral Training convening (July 28–29)
2026	Selection Committee, The Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIFAR) Azrieli Global Scholars Program
2026	Selection Committee, APA Division 7 Developmental Psychology Conference
2026	Reviewer, National Research Conference on Early Childhood 2026 (NRCEC 2026)
2025	Co-host, AI & Equity in Early Childhood Convening (joint convening with Bezos Family Foundation and Spencer Foundation)
2024-	Member, Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research and Evaluation Network Early Childhood Work Group
2023-2024	Elected Member-at-Large, APA Division 34: Society for Environmental, Population, and Conservation Psychology Student Committee
2022-2024	Member, The Transnational Dialogues: Research in Early Childhood Education for Sustainability Member
2022-2024	Project Advisor, Youth for Arctic Nature, Hólar University, Iceland

University

2023-2024	Chair Search Committee Doctoral Student Representative, Department of Health and Human Development, University of Pittsburgh School of Education
2022-2024	Founder and Chair, Department of Health and Human Development Ph.D. Lab, University of Pittsburgh School of Education
2020-2021	Service Chair, Council of Graduate Students in Education, University of Pittsburgh School of Education
2019-2020	Events Committee Co-Chair, Council of Graduate Students in Education, University of Pittsburgh School of Education

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

2024-2025	Family & Community Development Program Advisory Committee, Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County, Ithaca, NY
2023-2024	Education Advisory Committee*,* Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Pittsburgh, PA
2022-2024	Co-Chair, Pollinator Habitat Advisory Committee, University of Pittsburgh Chancellor’s Advisory Council on Sustainability

2020-2024	Doctoral Student Liaison, University of Pittsburgh Chancellor's Advisory Council on Sustainability
2016-2024	Master Beekeeper Volunteer*,* University of Florida Master Beekeeper Program, Gainesville, FL
2016-2019	Founder/CEO, Honey Bee A Keeper Education

EARLY CHILDHOOD & OTHER PRACTITIONER EXPERIENCE

2018-2019	**Assistant Teacher Primary Classroom (ages 3-6), Montessori Tides School & The Discovery School** Collaborated with teaching teams to maintain Montessori prepared environments aligned with accreditation standards and supported children's early literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional development through Montessori pedagogy.
2015-2018	**Lead Toddler Teacher, Montessori Tides School** Designed and facilitated Montessori toddler curriculum emphasizing culturally responsive and relationship-centered learning, nature-based education, and family engagement. Supervised and mentored assistant teachers in classroom management and Montessori practice.
2014-2015	**Afterschool Children's Garden Coordinator, Atlantic Beach Elementary** Developed and led garden-based experiential learning programs focused on environmental education, sustainability, and ethical engagement with the natural world.
2013-2014	**K-12 Substitute Teacher, Duval County Public Schools** Taught across diverse K–12 classroom settings and subject areas within one of the largest public school districts in the United States.
2011-2012	**Multi-Language Program Lead Teacher, Suratpittaya School, Thailand** Implemented a project-based English-language curriculum for middle school students within a multilingual public-school setting in Thailand.

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS & TRAINING

2026	Design for Social Impact (Strategy Design), Stanford d.school
2026	Early Education & Care Director Certification (Massachusetts EEC)
2025-2026	Learning Experience Design, University of Michigan
2025	Building a Better World with Community Engaged Learning, eCornell
2025	AI in Education: Leveraging ChatGPT for Teaching, University of Pennsylvania [Link to credential]

2025	Academic Mentorship Training Program, Cornell University
2024-2025	Equitable Community Change Certificate, eCornell
2024	Postdoctoral Leadership Training, Cornell University
2022-2023	Achievement in Pedagogy Badge, University of Pittsburgh [Link to credential]
2021	Translational Research Summer Institute, Cornell University
2020	Center for Computational Analysis of Social and Organizational Systems Summer Institute, Carnegie Mellon University
2015-2016	American Montessori Society Infant/Toddler Credential, Center for Montessori Teacher Education
2012-2013	Teaching Online Tool Essentials Certificate, University of North Florida
2021	144 Hour TESOL Certification, LanguageCorps Asia