

# Sara Rizik-Baer

Deputy Director, Tandem, Partners in Early Learning

## 2018 Surge Fellow

**S**ara Rizik-Baer believes that lovingly shared, high-quality children's literature fosters critical thinking and the lifelong pursuit of knowledge. Her advocacy for the power of book-sharing and conversation to strengthen families and provide critical foundations for learning is fueled by warm memories of kitchen table discussions and bedtime stories as a child growing up in a working-class Los Angeles neighborhood.

Sara currently serves as Deputy Director of Tandem, Partners in Early Learning, a Bay Area non-profit dedicated to the pursuit of an equitable and just society where all children enter school ready to succeed. Sara's holistic view of the urban education landscape is informed by the multiple roles she has assumed in the field over the past decade as a professional development provider, literacy coach, and bilingual classroom teacher.



As a child of immigrant families of Dominican and German-Jewish descent, Sara is a fierce advocate for increased diversity of children's books that offer children the opportunity to see their lived experience reflected while providing an opportunity to gain insight into the lives of others. Sara is proud to work with her organization to bring these stories to a wide audience who deserves to see themselves represented in dynamic, positive ways.

Sara began her career in education by working with a cooperative in Nicaragua to build an English Language Learning program. Falling in love with education, Sara was a founding teacher of East Oakland Pride Elementary and was a main collaborator in the building of a 2nd grade bilingual program. She then went on to teach 12th grade. Being one of the few high school-level Ethnic Studies teachers in the state, she developed an original curriculum that used film and Socratic discussions to build historical knowledge, empathy, and critical thinking.

Sara maintains strong ties with her community and is active in the Oakland Literacy Coalition, West Contra Costa Literacy Coalition, Oakland Starting Smart and Strong, and the Alameda County Early Learning Network. Sara has presented at multiple conferences, including the California Council of Parent Participation Nursery Schools Convention, Raising A Reader San Mateo Educator Conference, and West Contra Costa Unified School District's Early Literacy Academy.

Sara holds a Master's of Language and Literacy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a BA in Comparative Literature and Hispanic Studies from Oberlin College.