

April 23rd, 8:30 am, Keynote Address – *“Diversity Approaches from Behind the Veil: Understanding vs Apprehension”*

Speaker: Dr Caree Cotwright, PhD, RDN, LD



Dr. Caree Jackson Cotwright, an assistant professor in the Department of Foods and Nutrition, is the director of the UGA Childhood Obesity Prevention Laboratory. Her research is focused on early childhood obesity prevention and creating healthy early care and education (ECE) environments. The overall goal of Dr. Cotwright's work is to reduce the risk of childhood obesity among children aged 0-5 years. She emphasizes the use of health equity strategies to empower communities of color to thrive by adopting healthy lifestyle choices. Her unique approach combines both policy and direct nutrition education intervention in the ECE setting. Dr. Cotwright has served as the Principal Investigator for two Robert Wood Johnson Foundation- Healthy Eating Research grants centered on decrease sugary beverage intake among young children and families. She also co-leads a USDA SNAP-Ed funded project, Healthy Child Care Georgia, to improve the wellness best practices in the ECE setting. Dr. Cotwright's work integrates community engaged research and service learning to improve health outcomes.

Dr. Cotwright previously worked as a Research Fellow at the CDC Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. During this time, she promoted First Lady Michelle Obama "Let's Move!" Child Care initiative. Dr. Cotwright's research interests include nutrition intervention, community-based participatory research, and health equity. Her passion is to create innovative interventions that use theater, media, and other arts-based approaches to combat obesity. Dr. Cotwright is the recipient of the 2020 Georgia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Distinguished Service by a Researcher Award, the 2019 UGA Service Learning Teaching Excellence Award, the Georgia Trend Magazine 40 Under 40 Award, the UGA 40 Under 40 Award, and the UGA College of Family and Consumer Sciences Pacesetter Award.

Dr. Cotwright was also a featured TED talk speaker at the 2016 TED X UGA event. She earned a PhD and MS in Foods and Nutrition from the University of Georgia. She is an esteemed graduate of Howard University, earning a BS in Biology. Dr. Cotwright is also a registered and licensed dietitian. Caree enjoys cooking, travel, and spending quality time with family and friends. She lives in Athens, GA, with her loving husband, Marty, and her sweet, adorable daughters, Camara, Camille, and Camryn.