

EVENT

Transformational Research in Developmental Science: Navigating Shifting Contexts

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When?

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2025 1:00PM TO
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2025 2:00PM

Where?

Virtual

Webinar Presenters:

Mellissa Gordon, University of Delaware; Dr.
Ann Aviles, University of Delaware;

Cost?

Price: Free

EVENT DETAILS

Guided by traditional and critical frameworks that examine the impact of structural racism and racial inequality on the family, this webinar explores the influence of changing sociopolitical terrains on higher education. Empirical research will contextualize the importance of centering diversity and equity within

families and communities. The session draws attention to practical approaches to fostering inclusivity, advancing culturally responsive approaches, and building resilient partnerships. Participants will gain insight on strategies that contribute to inclusive practices that uplift students, families, and the broader communities that higher education serves.

Presenters:



Dr. Mellissa Gordon is an associate professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Sciences at the University of Delaware. Her research examines how at-risk families and their communities impact adolescent and young adult developmental outcomes. In particular, she explores the mechanisms underlying these relationships and investigates the complex interactions between families, communities, and youth that inform youth and young adult outcomes. Her work is situated at the intersection of several theoretical frameworks, including Ecological Theory and Critical Race Theory. As an immigrant and woman of color, she is especially sensitive to spaces that create, encourage, and continually foster diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Dr.
Mellissa
Gordon**



**Dr. Ann
Aviles**

Dr. Ann Aviles is an associate professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Sciences at the University of Delaware. Her research areas include examining policies, services and programs that impact the educational opportunities, material realities and mental health of youth of color experiencing homelessness/instability; Latina/o Education; education policy; education equity; critical/justice-based teacher preparation; school-community partnerships; critical race theory (CRT); Latina/o critical theory (LatCrit); and positive youth/community development. Dr. Aviles is the author of several publications, including her recent co-authored book, *Serving Students Who Are Homeless, A Resource Guide for Schools, Districts, Educational Leaders, and Community Partners* (Teachers College Press, 2025).



**Dr.
Wendy
Barrales**

Wendy Barrales, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at John Jay College, CUNY. Her research explores embodied theory, critical race feminism, and decolonial pedagogies in K-12 settings. Specifically, Dr. Barrales traces how her lived experience as the daughter of formerly undocumented Mexican immigrants and a first-generation college graduate shapes expertise and can inform social justice praxis. Dr. Barrales is the founder of the award-winning Women of Color Archive (WOCArchive), an intergenerational oral history arts-based project that documents, preserves, and amplifies the stories of women of color. A former public school teacher, she served as founding Advisor of Curriculum and Design and inaugural chair of Ethnic Studies at Brooklyn Emerging Leaders Academy (BELA), an all-girls STEM school. She continues to advance educational equity through NYC's Equity in Computer Science & AI and by leading political education workshops with the New York Collective of Radical Educators (NYCoRE).

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