

EVENT

A Special Webinar Honoring Dr. Francis Degen Horowitz

EVENT DETAILS

VIEW ON DEMAND

When?

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2026 12:30PM TO
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2026 1:30PM

Where?

Virtual

Webinar Panelists:

Dr. Suzanne Le Menestrel (SRCD), Dr. Jennifer Lansford (Duke University), Dr. Michael Cunningham (Tulane University), Dr. Margaret Beale Spencer (University of Chicago)

Cost?

Price: Free

Join SRCD for a special webinar honoring Dr. Frances Degen Horowitz, a trailblazing child psychologist, developmental scientist, and former SRCD President (1997-1999) whose legacy transformed the field. We'll celebrate her lifelong commitment to educational access, advocacy for women, philanthropy, and mentorship—and mark a historic moment as SRCD introduces the [Frances Degen Horowitz Early Career Scholars Fund](#), supporting the scholarship of tomorrow's leaders.

A panel of SRCD leaders and members, **Drs. Jennifer Lansford, Suzanne Le Menestrel, Margaret Beale Spencer, and Michael Cunningham**, will discuss how the funding of future scholars furthers the advancements made by Dr. Horowitz and benefits the field of developmental psychology.

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Webinar Panelists



Suzanne Le Menestrel, Ph.D., CAE, is the Executive Director at SRCD, advancing its strategic goals by leading scientific initiatives with staff and the Governing Council while overseeing peer-reviewed journals, grants, awards, fellowships, professional development, and scientific content for more than 4,000 members, and building U.S. and international collaborations.

Previously, she served as a Senior Program Officer at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, directing five consensus studies on child and family well-being, and was the founding national program leader for youth development research at 4-H National Headquarters, USDA, as well as a founder of the Journal of Youth Development.

A widely published scholar, Dr. Le Menestrel has served on numerous advisory groups and boards, including the American Camp Association and the Consortium of Social Science Associations, and volunteers as a mentor for the Dream Project. She holds a B.S. in psychology from St. Lawrence University, an M.S. and Ph.D. from Penn State, a nonprofit management executive certificate from Georgetown University, and is a certified association executive.



Jennifer E. Lansford, Ph.D., currently serves as President of SRCD. She is also the S. Malcolm Gillis Distinguished Research Professor of Public Policy and Director of the Center for Child and Family Policy in the Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University, North Carolina. Her research focuses on understanding how cultural contexts moderate the influence of parents on trajectories of social and behavioral development from childhood to adulthood.

Dr. Lansford leads the Parenting Across Cultures Project, an NICHD-funded ongoing prospective study of parents and their children from 13 cultural groups in 9 countries (China, Colombia, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Philippines, Sweden, Thailand, and the United States) that has investigated parenting and child development in diverse cultural contexts.



Benjamin H. Levi MD, Ph.D., FAAP is a philosopher and pediatrician at the Penn State College of Medicine. In addition to teaching bioethics and serving as a clinical ethics consultant, Dr. Levi does research on conceptual and applied aspects of decision-making. This includes developing programs to promote humanistic practice, online decision aids for advance care planning, and gamified online interventions that prepare people to protect at-risk children and promote their and their family's well-being (<https://ilookoutproject.org>).

He was also the founding Director of Penn State's Center for the Protection of Children and a practicing pediatrician for 25 years.



Michael Cunningham, Ph.D., holds the academic rank of Professor at Tulane University and he has a joint faculty appointment in the Departments of Psychology and Africana Studies. He also serves as the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Research in Tulane University's Office of Academic Affairs. Dr. Cunningham is a developmental psychologist with a program of research that focuses on racial, ethnic, psychosocial, and socioeconomic processes that affect psychological well-being, adjustment to chronic stressful events, and academic achievement among African American adolescents and their families.

He has received Tulane's highest teaching award and been designated as a Suzanne and Stephen Weiss Presidential Fellow. He completed his doctoral work at Emory University after completing an undergraduate

degree at Morehouse College. Dr. Cunningham also completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania. His professional service includes serving as Editor-in-chief for *Research in Human Development* (2018-2024). *He served as a Senior Editor for the American Educational Research Journal (2018-2022).*

He has served on several journal editorial boards such as the *Journal of Negro Education, and Child Development* of which he was an Associate Editor from 2007-2019. Most recently, he was selected as the recipient for the 2025 Norman Anderson Lifetime Achievement Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Award from the Federation for Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences (FABBS); and in 2025 he was elected to Fellow Status for the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).



Kathleen McCluskey, Ph.D., is Professor Emerita at the University of Kansas. She earned her Bachelor's degree from the Institute of Child Development at the University of Minnesota and M.A., and PhD from the Development of Human Development and Family Life. She was extremely fortunate to have Frances Degen Horowitz as her graduate mentor. Kathleen was on the Psychology faculty at West Virginia University for 7 years where she also served as department chair. After returning to KU in 1985, she served in a number of administrative positions including the chair of the Psychology department, associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Senior Vice Provost. She attributes her success in university administration to the skills she learned from Frances. She retired in 2014.



Margaret Beale Spencer, Ph.D., a developmental psychologist and leading scholar, achieved University of Chicago Distinguished Service Professorship emerita status in January 2023. A leading and productive scholar, she advances human development theory-driven approaches to research and practice, particularly helpful to individuals viewed as highly vulnerable, resilient, and, as well, those occupying spaces of under-acknowledged privilege.

In addition to coping and identity processes, her long-term, theory-driven research interests and program applications continue to emphasize strategies to foster thriving and resilience among children from diverse communities.

Spencer's phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory (P-VEST) offers an identity-focused cultural-ecological perspective. PVEST has been accepted as a unifying theory by the American Psychological Association Task Force. Currently in emerita status, she continues to make scholarly contributions that emphasize educational contexts, interrogate neighborhood policing encounters, and seek to reduce vulnerability and enhance youth resilience globally. Among the many sources of recognition and honor, Spencer has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the National Academy of Education, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and recognized by the American Psychological Society, the Society for Research in Child Development, and the American Psychological Society. Having received her M.A. at the University of Kansas, Spencer earned her doctorate in the Committee on Human Development at the University of Chicago and has been a member of the faculty since 2009.