

Over the last several decades, we have learned a great deal about how people learn and develop from research in neuroscience, the developmental and learning sciences, and fields like anthropology, sociology, and social psychology. Recent syntheses of this research and its [implications for educational practice](#), have pointed to important transformations in teaching practice needed to ensure that children experience the secure relationships, skillful teaching, and personalized supports that will enable healthy development and successful lives, including for those who have experienced adverse conditions.

The needed transformations – from assembly line school designs, standardized teaching practices, norm-referenced testing, and exclusionary discipline to supportive communities that enable personalized attention to the development of human potential – will require well-prepared educators to firmly take root. To accomplish this goal, educators not only need deep knowledge of how children develop and learn, but skills to transform that knowledge into supportive schoolwide practices in organizations that were not typically designed to develop children holistically or to build on their cultural experiences and prior knowledge to create success for all of them.

Particularly in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, transformative efforts are called for in [meeting the social and emotional needs of children](#) and implementing trauma- and healing-informed practice across states and districts. Strong educator preparation, which increases teacher efficacy and retention, is needed now more than ever to help teachers build these skills and meet this moment. Given the documented impact of educators on student learning, comprehensively prepared teachers are the key to implementing a whole child education system now and into the future.

In this presentation, you will hear more about what whole child looks like in both teacher preparation practice and policy, and learn how states and teacher prep programs are building systems that put whole child education at the center.