



State of Latine Children Summit:

An Evolution of Approach, Advocacy, and Inclusivity

October 12, 2023 | 11:00 AM ET | 10:00AM CT | 8:00AM PT

[Agenda](#)

[Register Here](#)



Dalinda Gonzalez- Alcantar – President & CEO, Boys & Girls Club McAllen

Dalinda Gonzalez-Alcantar is a mom, wife, and social entrepreneur currently serving her community as CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of McAllen serving over 8,000 K-12 children and teens through after school programming, summer camp, and athletics. More recently Gonzalez-Alcantar launched Alablanca Apparel, an e-commerce clothing line inspired by humanity on the South Texas border. Her technology startup, eJucomm, was acquired by San Francisco based CampusOrb, a victory for women and Hispanics.

Gonzalez-Alcantar was born and raised in McAllen, TX and has over 10 years of teaching Experience most recently serving at Robert Vela High School. She received her Bachelor's of Fine Arts in Communication Design from Texas State University, San Marcos and her Masters in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Texas Pan American. Gonzalez-Alcantar began her work in educational policy as an intern with Senator Edddie Lucio in his Austin office. Her innovative approaches to affecting family communication in schools has led Gonzalez-Alcantar to receive numerous awards and recognitions including the McAllen Chamber of Commerce Innovation Grant, The United States Small Business Administration's Innovation Through Technology Business of the Year for the Rio Grande Valley, Parenting Magazine's Mom Congress Texas Delegate, among other honors. On an international stage, Gonzalez-Alcantar spoke at Austin's SXSW conference & festival where she shared her experiences and research on the topic, "Minority Report: Engaging Kids of Color in Tech." In 2019 Gonzalez-Alcantar was appointed to The Boys & Girls Club of America's National Intergovernmental Affairs committee, Texas State University's Development Council, and more recently Gonzalez-Alcantar was appointed to BGCA's President's Advisory Council, a national council aimed at fulfilling BGCA's mission. More recently in 2020, Dalinda was named the National Southwest Executive of the Year representing seven states for her nationwide leadership in the youth development space during the pandemic.

Gonzalez-Alcantar is the proud mother of Elijah and Madalin and wife to fellow educator, Marco Alcantar. Her main focus is on her family and community and attributes her success to her supportive children and husband while giving God the glory in all she does. Together the Alcantar's serve their community through Baptist Temple in McAllen, TX where Gonzalez-Alcantar serves on the finance committee. You can follow her on Twitter and Instagram at @soy_dalinda.



Leila Mzali - Director, Center for Social Measurement and Evaluation, CHILDREN AT RISK

Leila Mzali (M.Ed.), is a qualitative researcher and program evaluations specialist who has collaborated on the design, implementation, and evaluation of nonprofit programs for children across 3 continents and 4 countries. She came to nonprofit work through the field of international development with a focus on innovative curriculum development designed to cultivate youth civic engagement. Following the completion of her M.Ed., she spent several years in Nashville, Tennessee working in early childhood education and extended learning, before turning her focus to research and

evaluations work. She currently serves as the Director of the Center of Social Measurement and Evaluation for Children At Risk.



Mark Hugo Lopez - Director of Race and Ethnicity Research, Pew Research Center

Mark Hugo Lopez is director of race and ethnicity research at Pew Research Center, where he leads the planning of the Center's research agenda focused on chronicling the diverse, ever-changing racial and ethnic landscape of the United States. He is an expert on issues of racial and ethnic identity, Latino politics and culture, the U.S. Hispanic and Asian American populations, global and domestic immigration, and the U.S. demographic landscape. Lopez was previously the Center's director of Global Migration and Demography, and of

Hispanic research. Lopez is the co-editor of "Adjusting to a World in Motion: Trends in Global Migration and Migration Policy." He is a co-author of "The Future of the First Amendment" and has contributed chapters to several books about voting and young Latinos.

Prior to joining Pew Research Center, Lopez served as a research assistant professor at the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy and as research director of the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE). Lopez received his doctorate in economics from Princeton University. He is an author of reports about the [Hispanic electorate](#), [Hispanic identity](#), and [immigration](#). Lopez frequently appears in national and international media in both Spanish and English.



Lindsey Wilkerson – Director of Health and Special Projects, CHILDREN AT RISK

Lindsey is the Director of Health and Special Projects at CHILDREN AT RISK. She holds a BA in international studies, graduating summa cum laude, and an MIA from the Bush School at Texas A&M University, focusing on Women, Peace, and Security, Human Rights, and Conflict and Development. Lindsey is a dedicated advocate for gender equality, human rights, and social justice. Her expertise lies in translating complex issues into actionable strategies at various levels of government and effectively communicating the intersectionality between

various social and global challenges. Her background includes work at the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies, volunteering at the Texas A&M Immigrant Rights Law Clinic documenting human rights violations in detention centers and serving as a board member of the Houston Area Women's Center Young Leaders. Lindsey is a dynamic leader committed to creating a more equitable society for Texas children through her work in health and immigration at CHILDREN AT RISK.



Dr. Norma Olvera – President, Hispanic Health Coalition

Norma Olvera, Ph.D., is a Professor in the Psychological, Health, and Learning Sciences Department at the University of Houston. Dr. Olvera is a USDA E. Kika de la Garza Fellow, The Obesity Society Fellow, and Director of the Latino Health Disparities Lab. Dr. Olvera is currently the President of the Hispanic Health Coalition.

The mission of the Hispanic Health. Coalition is to promote the health of the Hispanic population through research, education, and advocacy. Consistent with its mission, for 17 years the Hispanic Health Coalition has offered the *Get up*

Get Moving which is an annual community fitness festival that offers vaccinations, screening, nutrition and fitness activities along with providing healthcare resources to Hispanic families in the Eastend neighborhood. In 2013, Dr. Olvera launched the Latino Health Summit that brings together health professionals, researchers, and academics to discuss Hispanic mental and physical health issues. In 2005 Dr. Olvera funded the BOUNCE Healthy Lifestyle programs to promote healthy eating, self-esteem and positive body image, and exercise among Hispanic and African American children and adolescents. More recently, Dr. Olvera developed the Lace Up and Mindfulness program, which combines fitness yoga, meditation, and mindful eating. This program resulted in a reduction of anxiety.

Overall, Dr. Olvera's research has focused on identifying specific maternal, cultural, and environmental influences on pediatric obesity, body image, disordered eating behaviors, anxiety, and physical activity in Latino and African American families. Dr. Olvera has 25 years of teaching experience and published over 70 manuscripts in high impact factor journals in the health field (e.g., *Appetite*, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, and *Obesity*,) and has over 3,300 google citations. Dr. Olvera has worked tirelessly to address physical and mental health issues of Latino youth and their parents.



Dr. Alejandra Fernandez – Assistant Professor- UH Health Houston

Dr. Alejandra Fernandez's research generally focuses on the health of Hispanic adolescents and their families. Her research is centered around improving family functioning between Hispanic adolescents and their family members in order to prevent and reduce adverse health outcomes, including substance use behaviors, sexual risk behaviors, adverse mental health outcomes, and obesity-related outcomes. The mechanism primarily used in Dr. Fernandez's research to

improve health outcomes is the development and testing of family-based interventions. Dr. Fernandez received her Ph.D. in Health Behavior and Health Education from the University of Texas at Austin and completed a post-doctoral associate position at the University of Miami.



Gabriella Barbosa – Managing Director of Policy, The Children's Partnership

Gabriella Barbosa is the Managing Director of Policy at The Children's Partnership, where she leads the development and implementation of a multi-issue area advocacy agenda focused on improving the health and well-being of children through public policy, research, and community engagement.

During the past decade, Gabriella has used various advocacy strategies to achieve a more just and equitable society for children. She previously served as the Public Policy Director for a

local elected official and a non-profit advocacy organization, where she developed and utilized a policy-making approach that shifts power to community members as the drivers of systemic change for themselves, their families, and their communities. Gabriella began her legal career as an Equal Justice Works Fellow in the Children's Rights Project at Public Counsel, where she designed and implemented an advocacy project focused on improving the academic outcomes of immigrant students and students from immigrant families using direct legal representation, impact litigation, policy advocacy, and community education. Gabriella was also previously a public-school teacher in South Los Angeles. She is a proud daughter of immigrants. Gabriella received a B.A. in Political Science and Human Rights from Columbia University and a law degree from Columbia Law School.



Linda Corchado – Director of the Children's Immigration Network, CHILDREN AT RISK

Linda Corchado is Director of CHILDREN AT RISK's Children's Immigration Network. Linda is a graduate of Swarthmore College where she studied Political Science and minored in Latin American Literature. Linda lived in New York City where she attended law school at Cardozo and then moved back to El Paso where she spent many years working in immigration advocacy around such issues as separation of families, unaccompanied minors and working to reform the immigration court system. Linda's passion for immigration issues comes from personal experience in that both of her parents were born in Mexico and Spanish was her first language.



Gini Pupo-Walker – Executive Director, Ed Trust – Tennessee

Gini Pupo-Walker has worked in education for over twenty-five years. She currently serves as the Executive Director for the Education Trust - Tennessee, where she works with partners across Tennessee who seek to increase educational opportunity and achievement for historically underserved students. She previously worked at Conexión Américas as the Senior Director of Education Policy and Programs, where she oversaw their education policy division as well as their P-12 and post-secondary programs for students in Nashville and across the state. Gini also served as the Executive Director of Family and Community Partnerships for Metro Nashville Public Schools, and as a teacher at the high school and college level for over 10 years, in Seattle, San Diego and Nashville.

Gini was elected to the school board for Metro Nashville Public Schools, and served from 2018-2022, representing District 8 in west Nashville. She has a B.A. in Spanish and an M.A. in History from Indiana University, and an M.A. in Education Administration from Tennessee State University.

Gini is a 2012 graduate of Leadership Nashville, and a 2018 graduate of Leadership Tennessee. Gini is married to Eddie Wright-Rios, a professor of Latin American history at Vanderbilt University, and is the proud mother of two grown children who live in Panama and Chattanooga.



Paige Duggins-Clay, J.D. – Chief Legal Analyst, IDRA

Paige Duggins-Clay, J.D., is IDRA's Chief Legal Analyst. She coordinates IDRA's legal research and strategy, expert testimony, and amicus curiae advocacy to elevate the voices of students and coalition partners. Her work builds on IDRA's 50-year legacy of support to families, educators and their attorneys seeking education justice through the courts. Ms. Duggins-Clay also leads IDRA's policy advocacy related to school discipline and policing in Texas.

Prior to joining IDRA, Ms. Duggins-Clay worked as an associate at Husch Blackwell LLP, where she handled litigation, investigations, training, and compliance on behalf of education institutions, with a focus on equity and organizational response to misconduct. In 2019, she was named a "Top 20 Up and Coming Lawyer" by the Austin Black Business Journal.

Ms. Duggins-Clay also served as a law clerk for Texas Supreme Court Justice Jeff Boyd and intern for federal district court Judge Lee Yeakel. As a law fellow for the Texas Civil Rights Project, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, she supported the organizations' litigation and policy advocacy. As a legislative aide, she advised Texas Senators Judith Zaffirini and Wendy Davis on school finance and school-to-prison pipeline issues.

Ms. Duggins-Clay has a law degree from the University of Texas School of Law, where she was the inaugural G. Rollie White Public Service Scholar. She also earned a certificate in Restorative Justice Leadership and Facilitation from the Center of San Diego Center for Restorative Justice and a certification in human rights, conflict management, and community development from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in South Africa. She has a bachelor's degree in education and English and a minor in race and ethnic studies from Southwestern University.



José Eduardo Sánchez – Co-founder, Tecolotl

José Eduardo (he/him) is co-founder of Tecolotl and has over twelve years of experience collaborating with communities to create, transform, and reclaim public space, both as a community organizer and as a socially engaged artist. He has led multilingual public engagement strategy and implementation for planning and design projects across Houston and Harris County. José Eduardo fuses his extensive experience leading organizing and advocacy campaigns with his expertise in language justice and popular education frameworks to create innovative and community-centered

engagement processes. He also specializes in the creation of multilingual spaces and works with local, national, and international organizations as an interpreter, translator, trainer, and language justice consultant. José Eduardo is a 2023 Artist-in-Residence at Stove Works and 2020 Socially Engaged Art Fellow at Project Row Houses / KGMCA. He's originally from Guanajuato, MX and a proud member of Houston's Northline and East Aldine neighborhoods.



Marcelle Purdy – Actor, Producer & Director

Marcelle is a Latine, first-generation American, and bilingual native-Texan actor, producer and director who has worked in the industry for over 10 years. Her work includes film, television, 40+ commercials, theater, voiceover, spokesperson, hosting, and print. Her passion for storytelling and advocating for Latine representation keep her continuously growing and searching for stories that can accurately represent the world we live in. You can see some of her work on Queen of the South, AMC's The Son and the CW's Walker.



Edward Castillo – Founder & Owner, Figure It Out Agency

Learn more about his work here: <https://figureitoutagency.com/>



Natalie Sánchez-Lopez – Executive Director & CEO, Latino Texas Policy Center

I am a native Tejana, born and raised in San Antonio and I am a proud hija of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Dominican ancestry.

After completing my Master in Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government in 2008 I continued living in Boston, where for over the last 15 years I worked in grassroots organizing and advocacy as well as holding positions in local, and state government working on varying ways to increase the political and economic development of Latinos and all

communities of color. Several of my years also included working throughout the Middle East and South Asia on developing multi-national and multi-stakeholder consensus building focused on poverty alleviation and improving education access and attainment.

I returned home to San Antonio in the heart of the COVID-19 Pandemic to find the world turned upside down. Yet, despite the pain, anxiety, and collective trauma we all experienced and are still experiencing - I found so many of you who continued to stay committed to improving nuestra gente and fighting the good fight wherever and however possible. It is because of your commitment to one another that I found how I can contribute to my comunidad.

I am proud to serve as the Founding Executive Director and CEO of The Latino Texas Policy Center (LTPC). We are a newly established, statewide organization based in San Antonio whose primary objective is to increase the policy-making power of Latinos.



Zeke Peña – Cartoonist & Storyteller

Zeke Peña is a Xicano storyteller and cartoonist from El Paso, TX. His work is a mash-up of political cartoon, border rasquache and Hip-Hop culture that addresses identity, politics, ecology and social justice. He recently illustrated the NY Times Bestselling book *Miles Morales Suspended: A Spider-Man Novel* by Jason Reynolds. He has received several awards for his book illustrations in *My Papi Has a Motorcycle* (Kokila, 2019) and *Photographic: The Life of Graciela Iturbide* (Getty Publications, 2017). He studied at UT El Paso and El Paso Community College from 2002-2003. He received a degree in Art History from the UT Austin and is self-taught in the studio. Zeke is currently writing

and developing stories he will illustrate about the Chihuahuan desert he grew up in.