

# SRCD Post-doctoral State Policy Fellowship: Overview

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**Program Overview:  
Post-doctoral State Policy Fellowship in Early Childhood being  
Piloted By the Society for Research in Child Development  
in Collaboration with the University-Based Child and Family Policy Consortium**

**Background: SRCD's Federal Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program**

In 1978, the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) initiated a Federal Policy Fellowship Program. The fellowship provides an immersion experience in policy through placements either in U.S. Congress or Executive Branch agencies for developmental scientists with doctoral degrees in order to bring their research expertise and knowledge about children, youth, and families to federal policymaking and policy implementation.

The fellowship experience provides a unique opportunity for developmental scientists to understand what research questions are important and salient to policymakers, how to use research to design and strengthen programs and policies for children and families, and how to achieve effective communication between researchers and policymakers. Interviews with fellowship alumni indicate that SRCD Policy Fellowships are “seminal” and “transformative” experiences.

Alumni go on to pursue careers that bridge research and policy, taking on increasingly senior positions within academe, government, research organizations, foundations, and in applied work. Alumni describe designing research projects to inform public policy; teaching and mentoring students in ways that link research and policy; and applying communication skills that they developed as fellows to convey research findings more effectively in order to inform policy development and program implementation. They report continuing to communicate with policymakers regarding child and family policy, and having their research expertise called upon with requests to serve in an advisory capacity for those implementing and evaluating policies and programs.

**New Opportunity: Piloting of a State Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program in Early Childhood**

SRCD is pleased to announce that it will be piloting a new Post-doctoral State Policy Fellowship Program in Early Childhood in 2017-2018. SRCD's Committee for Policy and Communications will be working closely in the planning and implementation of this new opportunity with the leadership of the University-Based Child and Family Policy Consortium as part of a newly formalized collaborative relationship between SRCD and the Consortium, a group of about 30 university-based programs focusing on child and family policy research.

In the 2017-2018 academic year (from September 1, 2017 through August 31, 2018), SRCD will be supporting full time positions for two Post-doctoral State Policy Fellows with placements in state Executive Branch agency offices that focus on early childhood. Candidates with expertise in family engagement, early math skills, or the development of dual language learners in early childhood will be prioritized, but placement activities may focus on early childhood policy more broadly. Fellows will not be asked to design a project in advance. Candidates should have completed their doctorate within the past two years, must be a U.S. citizen and must be members of SRCD.

The goal of this post-doctoral fellowship will be to provide developmental scientists with firsthand experience in state policymaking, program implementation, and program evaluation, while also providing state early childhood Executive Branch agencies with greater access to research and child development expertise. Fellows can be involved in bridging research and policy through a variety of responsibilities depending on the specific placement. This may involve, for example, helping to inform the design of a new program or working to strengthen an existing program; or assisting in the design, conduct or analysis of a program evaluation.

In addition to a placement supervisor within the Executive Branch agency, fellows will receive support from an academic mentor (either a professor or a senior researcher from a university center or research organization) located in the same state as the placement agency and who has a background or interest in policy-related research. SRCD expects the Post-doctoral State Policy Fellowship in Early Childhood to provide both the fellow and academic mentor opportunities to gain further experience and insights into the ways in which research can be used to inform policymaking and implementation at the state level.

Fellows will be required to submit to SRCD brief monthly and end of year summaries of activities. Fellows will also be required to develop an end of year report in a format suitable for a policy brief or academic publication (with review and approval by the state agency prior to release or submission for publication, taking into account guidelines regarding confidentiality of data and other information included in the report). SRCD will be seeking close communication with the state Executive Branch mentor, the academic mentor, and the fellow during this pilot year to help in the further development of a Post-doctoral State Policy Fellowship Program.

Fellows will be provided with professional support from the SRCD Office for Policy and Communications (OPC) in Washington, D.C. State Post-doctoral Policy Fellows will participate in an orientation to child and family policy in Washington D.C. at the beginning of the fellowship year. In addition, fellows will participate remotely in monthly fellowship seminars and be supported in the development of professional development plans to set goals for the fellowship year and for building on the fellowship in further career steps. Fellows will receive a stipend aligned with federal GS levels (GS Grade 12, Step 1), an allocation to purchase health insurance, and funding for professional development expenses (such as travel to research meetings). Academic mentors will receive an honorarium of \$5,000 for the year.

The first step in the application process will be a letter of intent submitted jointly by the potential candidate and academic mentor. Letters of intent are due by December 23, 2016. The joint letter of intent submitted together by the candidate and academic mentor should not exceed three pages. Letters of intent should be submitted by email to [policyfellowships@srcd.org](mailto:policyfellowships@srcd.org). A Selection Committee will invite full applications from a subset, which will then be due February 15, 2017. Further details about this program, including application guidelines, are available [here](#) on the SRCD website.

***State Executive Branch agency staff focusing on early childhood issues are encouraged to reach out to research colleagues about this opportunity for collaborative placement and mentoring of a post-doctoral fellow.***