



## SRCD Special Topic and Summit Meetings Guidelines Approved by SRCD Governing Council 12-11-24

### Overview

The Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) has a long tradition of offering special topic meetings in the off years of its Biennial Meeting. Special topic meetings provide the opportunity for a more intimate convening and focused examination of a specific topic of interest to the developmental science field. **Special topic meetings** typically can range in size from 200 to about 500 attendees. They also typically have a smaller number of presentation formats and more unopposed sessions than a Biennial Meeting. Because of their smaller size, these meetings can be held in various locations and venues, both within the United States and internationally. There is also the flexibility to pilot new presentation formats and incorporate networking, professional development, cultural, and social responsibility activities, such as service projects.

In 2023, the Governing Council approved a new meeting format, known as a **Summit**, which is distinguished by its larger size (250+), broader scope, emphasis on interdisciplinary scholarship, and focus on bridging research, policy, and practice. In 2024, SRCD held its first Summit on antiracist developmental science acknowledging that this is a topic of broad interest and scope. Because of the success of the Summit, SRCD plans to continue its tradition of holding more narrowly focused, smaller-scale Special Topic Meetings and Summits.

SRCD strongly encourages organizers to include at least one policy session in the invited program for any relevant meeting. SRCD membership has requested more policy content in SRCD events in recent strategic planning engagements, and we hope their inclusion will make special topic meetings appealing to a wider group of attendees. SRCD strongly suggests that policy content topics should center on policymakers outside the academy. SRCD's GC has adopted a new strategic approach to our policy work that values opportunities for scholars and policymakers to build relationships, in part by starting with the policymakers' questions and needs.

It is intended that the organizers and SRCD staff will collaborate closely to ensure that these meetings are organized, budgeted, funded, communicated, marketed, and implemented successfully and impactfully and align with SRCD's mission and strategic vision, commitment to diversity and inclusion, and meetings and events [code of conduct](#).

In this guide, we provide more details about how the topics are selected, as well as the responsibilities of the organizers, SRCD staff, and SRCD Governing Council and Finance Committee. SRCD aims for two proposals (One "traditional" smaller special topic meeting; one Summit) to be selected by the fall of even years for implementation in two years (e.g., chosen in 2026 for implementation in 2028). One meeting will be held in the spring of the even-numbered



year and one meeting in the fall of that same year; exact timing will depend on location, venue, and other competing events being conducted by other partner societies.

## Selection of Special Topic Meetings

### Call for Submissions

SRCD staff will conduct an annual survey of its members to identify the most popular topic ideas. Topical areas should be consistent with the goals of SRCD's [strategic plan](#), especially our goal to build an integrative developmental science. These meetings can have topical and/or methodological foci.

### Scoring and Review

The top 3-5 topic ideas for traditional special topic meetings will be included in a formal "call for proposals" that SRCD staff will issue in the fall or early winter of even-numbered years (e.g., October 2024). Proposals will require a 1,000-word statement describing the approach to addressing the topic, biographical sketches, CVs or resumes of the proposed organizers, and the development plan for raising the minimum requirement of \$50,000.

The proposal will be scored on the following criteria:

- The relationship of the topic to SRCD's strategic plan (25% of the total score).
- The relevance of the topic to SRCD membership and the advancement of the developmental science field (25% of the total score).
- How the meeting will incorporate SRCD's commitment to [diversity and inclusion](#) and advance SRCD's [anti-racism principles](#) (25% of the total score)
- Qualifications (experience, relevant expertise) and diversity (e.g., First generation college student, LGBTQ+ status, geographic, career stage, race/ethnicity) of the organizers and planning committee (if applicable) (25% of the total score)

SRCD will put out a call for reviewers, and proposals will be reviewed and scored by an ad hoc committee of reviewers selected by the Director of Science Affairs. In the event of a tie, the top proposal will be selected by the SRCD President, Executive Director, and Director of Science Affairs.

### Financial Considerations

With the rising costs of events, SRCD has set a target of \$50,000 in sponsorships/grants in order to host an event, allowing us to keep the registration rates affordable and accessible for early career attendees. Special Topic Organizers should address their plan in their initial proposal.



## Planning the Special Topic Meeting

Planning for Special Topic meetings will need to begin 12 months prior to the event. More time is needed for international events.

Once a special topic proposal is accepted, the following information about the meeting will be requested from the organizers. This information will be used to create a detailed custom timeline for both organizers and SRCD staff to review:

- Preferred location recommendations
- Local contact and information for the person(s) selected to be a co-organizer. This contact will have on-the-ground contacts to support the event and provide cultural context, for example, in an international location.
- Space recommendations regarding specific functions, such as general session, invited session, symposia, poster room. Please note we may not be able to accommodate these based on the contracted space.
- Technical or A/V requirements (e.g., # of sessions requiring projectors, anticipated number of posters per session)
- Formats to be allowed during submission (e.g., symposia, round tables, individual papers, workshops). Lengths of these formats can run 60, 75, or 90 minutes.
- Please note if there are any policy or regulatory-related items, the Policy Department should be included in this discussion to help identify and embrace the role of policymakers in the session design.
- Preferred month(s) for the meeting (in the spring or fall of even-numbered years). July/August are more likely to be difficult as academics are not always available. Late November and December contain multiple holidays. The Meetings and Events Department will work with the organizers to secure dates with minimal conflicts, including global religious and government holidays.

## Selection of Summit Topic and Organizers

### Selecting the Summit Topic

An annual Professional Development survey will be sent to members to ask them to indicate Summit topics that are most of interest. The Governing Council, or Executive Committee, will select the topic that aligns with the mission and goals of SRCD.

### Selecting the Summit Organizers

The SRCD leadership (SRCD Senior Leadership and Executive Committee) will gather a list of names of those with expertise in the final topic through a variety of channels (Commons, Membership database, Committee and Caucus recommendations). A group of scholars (3-5) will be selected by the GC in alignment with SRCD's commitment to diversity and inclusion in all its forms.



## Financial Considerations

With the rising costs of events, SRCD has set a target of \$50,000 in sponsorships/grants in order to host an event, allowing us to keep the registration rates affordable and accessible for early career attendees. For the Summit, SRCD staff will work with the organizers and the Development Committee to secure this support.

## Planning the Summit

Planning for Summits will need to begin at least 18 months prior to the event. Once the organizers have been selected, the following information about the meeting will be requested from the organizers. This information will be used to create a detailed custom timeline for both organizers and SRCD staff to review:

- Preferred location recommendations
- Local contact and information for the person(s) selected to be a co-organizer. This contact will have on-the-ground contacts to support the event and provide cultural context, for example, in an international location.
- Space recommendations regarding specific functions, such as general session, invited session, symposia, poster room. Please note we may not be able to accommodate these based on the contracted space.
- Technical or A/V requirements (e.g., # of sessions requiring projectors, anticipated number of posters per session)
- Formats to be allowed during submission (e.g., symposia, round tables, individual papers, workshops). Lengths of these formats can run 60, 75, or 90 minutes.
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## Organizer Roles and Responsibilities

SRCD Special Topic Meeting and Summit organizers will provide an invaluable service to the research community by creating an opportunity for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners with shared interests to convene and engage. Special Topic Meetings are routinely cited as the most meaningful opportunities for engagement that attendees experience throughout the year.



Throughout this experience, organizers will work with multiple SRCD departments at various stages who will support the planning and fundraising for this event. **SRCD staff** are responsible for executing all aspects of the meeting in line with the GC's mandates. SRCD staff will provide ideas to the organizers, particularly on their areas of expertise and SRCD areas of strategic importance and are also responsible for all logistical aspects of the meeting.

**Organizers** are responsible for the meeting's vision, helping to raise required funds to support the meeting, establishing the Call for Submission criteria, and selecting review chairs for the Call for Submissions. Every event that SRCD supports has certain costs that must be covered, which are not always covered by registration only. Planning for these sessions includes identifying the keynote speakers, creating the session plans, participating in and collaborating on planning calls for each session, and helping to answer invited speakers' topical questions.

Meetings with higher costs will require commensurately higher fundraising targets and will be pre-determined in collaboration with SRCD senior staff. Consideration of new funders is encouraged.

Table 1 outlines roles and responsibilities of staff and organizers. The SRCD staff use internal project management software to ensure we constantly work on specific deadlines. A highlight of all the significant benchmarks will be provided in a timetable prepared by the SRCD Team in consultation with the meeting organizers once the dates and location of the meeting have been finalized.

**Table 1. Overview of Roles and Responsibilities for Special Topic and Summit Meeting Planning**

Responsible Party	Roles and Responsibilities
<b>SRCD Science Affairs Department</b>	Responsible for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="586 1276 1328 1373">(1) supporting the vision of the content and will work with the organizers to identify speakers, reviewers, and/or formats that might be the most intellectually impactful.</li><li data-bbox="586 1373 1372 1604">(2) supporting fundraising beyond the initial funds required of the co-organizers. The Science Affairs Department will administer all funding requests with recommendations from co-organizers—specifically, the completion of applications and all administrative tasks related to the funding opportunity. Co-organizers can be co-PIs with SRCD staff.</li><li data-bbox="586 1604 1344 1675">(3) overseeing the promotion and selection of travel award recipients.</li><li data-bbox="586 1675 1321 1774">(4) coordinating with the Communications and Marketing staff on post-meeting surveys and creation and dissemination of post-meeting products, if applicable.</li></ol>
<b>SRCD Policy Department</b>	Responsible for informing and helping to organize any policy or regulatory-related content, presenters, or sessions.



<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Roles and Responsibilities</b>
<b>SRCD Meetings and Events Department</b>	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) developing the project timetable including providing key deadlines and regular budget reviews with the organizers and other teams for all aspects of the meeting.</li><li>(2) developing and sending a Request for Proposals (RFP) to find the ideal location for the type and size of meeting requested.</li><li>(3) creating and adhering to a budget based on the planned activities and anticipated costs of holding the event. The GC expects that Special Topic meetings and Summits will be budget neutral and expenses will not exceed the agreed upon budget; registration costs and grants and sponsorships must cover all expenses.</li><li>(4) collaborating with the organizers on session lengths, size of meeting spaces, and logistics. These logistics will be determined early in the site selection and planning process.</li><li>(5) making all onsite arrangements (i.e., hotel and meeting facilities, signage, room setup, catering). They will also set up signage, staff the registration desk, oversee food and beverage setup, and troubleshoot logistical issues. The Meetings and Events staff will be the only point of contact with the meeting venue. All communications about meeting logistics at the venue will go through the Meetings and Events staff. The main registration area is where organizers, SRCD staff, and hired personnel should go when there is an issue or need for help while onsite.</li><li>(6) facilitating submissions, submission peer reviewing, decision notifications, and registration in collaboration with the Science Affairs Department and in consultation with the organizers. The Meetings and Events team will set up the panel reviewing system online and facilitate the addition of reviewers assigned to each panel. Organizers will guide and support the panel chairs and reviewers throughout the submission and review process, as needed.</li><li>(7) responding to technical questions about submitting or reviewing, management issues regarding submissions, and procedural questions.</li><li>(8) issuing and tracking responses to invitations to the invited program speakers and helping to coordinate planning calls for those invited program speakers. All</li></ol>



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Responsible Party	Roles and Responsibilities
	<p>correspondence will include the organizers to ensure consistency with all requests for information.</p>
<p><b>SRCD Communications and Marketing Team</b></p>	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) disseminating information about the meeting through email blasts, the SRCD website, and all social media platforms. This includes creating an SRCD event page with information on submissions, schedules, sponsorship opportunities, invited programs, hotel/lodging, travel awards, etc.</li> <li>(2) collaborating with organizers to prepare social media toolkits so that organizers can help with marketing.</li> <li>(3) Creating a brand, logos, and hashtags that reflect SRCD branding guidelines (i.e., color and size for all platforms). All dissemination should brand the meeting as an SRCD Special Topic Meeting or Summit event, unless otherwise noted.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Meeting Organizers*</b></p> <p>*All organizers of a special topic meeting or summit must be current members of SRCD.</p>	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) determining the overall meeting structure, theme(s), and format of presentations in collaboration with the SRCD Meetings and Events department and Science Affairs Department.</li> <li>(2) providing content subject matter experts and sharing contact information with the Meetings and Events Team so the outreach for their invited program participation can start.</li> <li>(3) collaborating with the Policy Department to identify policymakers who are not a part of the academic community but are relevant to the SRCD's overall mission and the meeting topic to create policy-focused sessions (see above). Management and review of these sessions will be in collaboration with the SRCD Policy Department. Formats in the past have included symposia, round tables, individual papers, and workshops. Lengths of these formats can run 60, 75, or 90 minutes.</li> <li>(4) developing review criteria for evaluating submissions. The Meeting and Events Department can share models from previous meetings as a starting point. Additionally, the Science Affairs Department will provide input on content, and the Policy Department will provide input on policy-specific content. Submissions are typically reviewed through separate review panels. The organizers determine the number and topics to encompass the range of submission topics. Historically,</li> </ol>



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<p>*All organizers of a special topic meeting or summit must be current members of SRCD.</p>	<p>special topics meetings and summits have averaged around five panels, but this is entirely at the organizers' discretion and will depend on the range of topic areas likely to be represented at the meeting.</p> <p>(5) identifying a chair for each of the review panels. Organizers are welcome to serve as review panel chairs if they prefer to retain control of this process. The organizers may also identify reviewers to assign to each panel or grant panel chairs autonomous authority to appoint reviewers. The number of reviewers should be based on the submissions assigned to each panel. The Science Affairs staff can assist in identifying candidate reviewers as desired.</p> <p>(6) making decisions regarding the appropriateness of submission if inquiries arise; issues related to the adherence to submissions guidelines and rules; and professional issues raised by panel chairs.</p> <p>(7) working with SRCD Science Affairs and Meetings and Events staff to determine which submissions will be accepted for presentation at the meeting. Organizers will instruct the SRCD staff whether they would like to implement across-the-board thresholds based on mean ratings, whether they would like to control the proportion of submissions accepted across panels, or some other set of cut-off criteria. The SRCD Staff will advise on the number of available slots for submissions based on the contracted space and the timeslots allotted to the submitted program. The organizers may override any across-the-board decision-making metrics to balance the program content.</p> <p>(8) determining the schedule in consultation with the SRCD Meetings and Events department. Together, they will map out the start and end times of presentation slots, and schedule invited speakers, poster sessions, and receptions. The Meetings and Events Department will prepare a draft schedule of accepted submissions to avoid presenter schedule conflicts and minimize topical overlaps. Organizers will be consulted on the draft schedule, and the Meetings and Events staff will implement the requested scheduling revisions and conduct a final review to minimize presenter scheduling conflicts.</p> <p>(9) adhering to the budget for the meeting which will be created by the Meetings and Events Team to capture all associated costs for the event. This budget will include % of time for each SRCD staff position that needs to be involved as well as the titles for each position. The</p>





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	budget will include reimbursement for up to three (3) organizers. Additional organizers will be reimbursed for meeting registration only. (10) helping to raise additional funds to support additions to the budget, in collaboration with the Development Committee and SRCD staff, such as an increase in invited speakers and travel awards.
<b>SRCD Executive Director and GC Finance Committee</b>	The SRCD Executive Director or GC Finance Committee must approve budget updates and changes. SRCD staff (Meetings & Events Department) will determine the final registration fees. The budget will be monitored regularly to ensure that it remains balanced.

## Evaluation

SRCD is committed to continuous improvement of our meetings and events to ensure inclusion, accessibility, and timeliness of the topic. For this reason, we aim to gather data about our events and encourage participants to complete the evaluation data as soon as possible while the event is still fresh in their minds. Surveys will be sent out by the SRCD no later than 1 week after the event.

Surveys are designed and disseminated using SRCD's Enterprise Survey Monkey account and allow for anonymity and accessibility for all users. The results are shared with the organizers, program committee, sponsors, and Governing Council.