

Tips and Tricks for Applying to the SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowship

November 18, 2025

1-2 PM ET

Moderator



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Designed with leading policy and academic experts, the Child Policy Hub gives SRCD members unprecedented new ways to improve evidence-based policy:

- learn in policy trainings
- network with policymakers directly
- hear from esteemed scholars
- answer questions policymakers are asking in real-time.



Scan the QR code to visit Child Policy Hub's webpage



Goals of the Fellowship

1. Increase **evidence-based policymaking** impacting children and families.
2. Grow the number of **trained researchers** with policy skills.
3. Build a **network of experts** who can bridge developmental science, state policymaking, and practice.

Why apply?



"I would urge anyone who is interested in this fellowship to apply for it! ... Entering the policy and government world as a fellow, rather than a full-time employee, will allow you to truly focus on your own career goals and skills, as it is built into the fellowship."

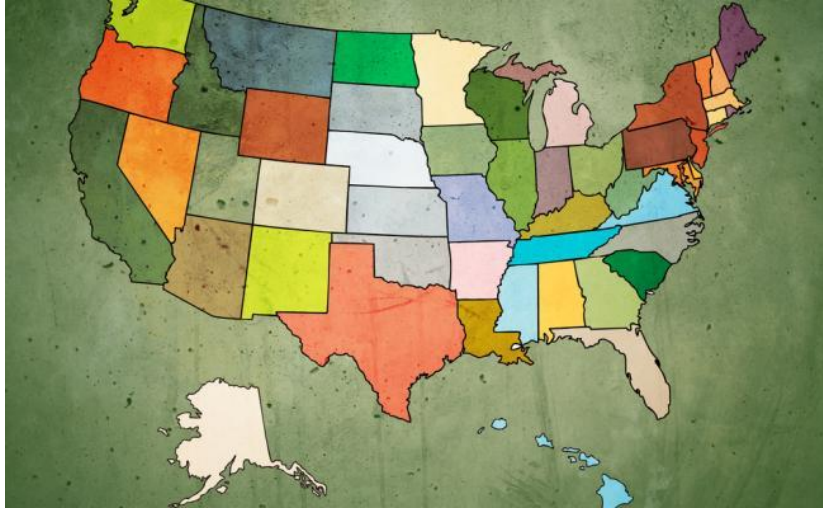
Jessie Bridgewater, SRCD Federal Policy Fellow (2023-2025)

With almost 250 alumni over our 30+ years of success, our alumni are some of the most influential researchers in developmental science, senior staff at federal and state agencies, and philanthropic leaders.

In 2023 and 2024:

✓ **100%** of fellows said they would recommend this program to others

Placements



State agencies

Work in a state capitol on the implementation side of policy, assisting in the design, implementation or analysis for program evaluation that reach young children and families.



U.S. Congress

Be in the room where it happens. Work in the fast-paced Capitol Hill, on multiple projects. Use your expertise to assess legislation's impact on young children, advise on policy, draft memos, and more.

Fellowship Support



Be financially supported to grow your career. Generous stipend, along with allowances for moving expenses, health insurance, and professional development



Significant networking with other fellows



Trainings and monthly webinars



Career expo and networking to find and consider alternative paths



Individualized professional development planning and monthly mentorship

What do fellows learn?



"It was the most fun year of my life..."

The [Congressional] office was looking to me to speak to the child development work. It was a very empowering experience to be involved in the policymaking process that way."

Alaina Flannigan, Congressional Fellow (2017-2018)

- ✓ How policy is developed and implemented at different levels of government.
- ✓ The role of research in the policy process.
- ✓ Skills to work with policymakers and enhance the use of research in policy.
- ✓ Options for building a career that connects research and policy.

Finding a State Placement



As an applicant, you must find an interested state agency **before** applying



Society for Research in Child Development

1909 K Street, NW, Suite 320 • Washington, DC 20006 USA
Tel: 202-800-0677 • Web: www.srkd.org • X: [@SRCDtweets](https://twitter.com/SRCDtweets)

STATE AGENCY FAQs

The Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) is seeking placement agencies for its **State Policy Fellowship Program**. This fellowship sponsors postdoctoral researchers with expertise in early childhood development, who spend one to two years in a state agency working on child and family policy.

What is the State Policy Fellowship Program?

Experienced child development researchers spend 1-2 years in state agencies. SRCD supports them with professional development and mentorship, and they support states to create evidence-based child and family policy.

The fellowship aims to improve the connection between research and policy in child and family policy by:

- Increasing evidence-based policymaking on policy issues impacting children and families.
- Growing the number of trained researchers with policy skills.
- Building a network of experts who can bridge developmental science, state policymaking, and practice.

Building on more than 30 years of success with its Executive Branch and Congressional policy fellows, in 2017 SRCD began placing developmental scientists in state executive branch agencies. To date, SRCD has posted state fellows in 21 states in all regions of the country. Among the alumni of the federal fellowship are some of the most influential researchers in early childhood, senior staff at federal and



To find a State Agency, use these tools on our website:

- **List of Agency Contacts** – state agencies who are interested in hosting a fellow
- **Education Commission on the States** list of early childhood agencies – every possible state agency
- **Informational Flier** – a downloadable PDF you can use when approaching an agency

Tips on reaching out to a state

In your email:

- Keep it short and concise! Lengthy emails might be ignored.
- Introduce yourself and the fellowship briefly in about 2-3 sentences.
 - Don't reinvent the wheel! Copy/paste information from SRCD website/flier)
 - Emphasize that there is no cost to the agency
- Request a 30-minute time to talk.
- Attach:
 - The State Agency FAQ document on our website
 - Your CV

Link to Flier:



Tips on reaching out to a state

Before a call:

- Be prepared to talk about how your strengths and experience can help the agency
- Ask about what projects they have – and be open to ideas that are outside of your comfort zone!
- Have the Letter of Support criteria (on our How to Apply page) ready, so agencies know what they must do to support your application



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List of Agency Contacts

 **EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE STATES**
Your education policy team.

50-State Comparison specific division, office or unit

November 2020
Listed below are the primary entities and the specific divisions, offices and units that oversee early care and education programs and services. To view other data points click [here](#).

Find the complete Education Commission on the States list below

STATE	EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION COMPONENTS	NAME OF THE PRIMARY OVERSIGHT ENTITY (PARENT AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION)	DIVISION, OFFICE OR UNIT	WEBSITE
Alabama				
	Child Care Development Fund	Alabama Department of Human Resources		LINK
	Head Start Collaboration Office	Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education		LINK
	State Funded Pre-Kindergarten	Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education		LINK
	Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting	Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education		LINK
	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C	Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services		LINK
STATE	EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION COMPONENTS	NAME OF THE PRIMARY OVERSIGHT ENTITY (PARENT AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION)	DIVISION, OFFICE OR UNIT	WEBSITE
	Preschool Development Grants	Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education		LINK
	Kindergarten-3rd Grade	Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education	P-3 Initiative	LINK
	Quality Rating Improvement System	Alabama Department of Human Resources		LINK
	State Longitudinal Data System	State does not have a SLDs		N/A
Alaska				
	Child Care Development Fund	Alaska Department of Health and Social Services	Division of Public Assistance, Child Care Program Office	LINK
	Head Start Collaboration Office	Alaska Department of Education and Early Development	Head Start Collaboration Office	LINK
	State Funded Pre-Kindergarten	Alaska Department of Education and Early Development		LINK
	Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting	Alaska Department of Health and Social Services	Office of Children's Services	LINK
	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C	Alaska Department of Health and Social Services	Senior and Disabilities Services	LINK
	Preschool Development Grants	Alaska Department of Education and Early Development		LINK
	Kindergarten-3rd Grade	Alaska Department of Education and Early Development		LINK
	Quality Rating Improvement System	Learn & Grow		LINK



Want More Options to Find a State?

We will accept other states too, so don't limit yourself if your state isn't on our list. Use this list of all early childhood state agencies to start a conversation in your state:

[ALL U.S. STATE EARLY CHILDHOOD AGENCIES](#)

[TIPS AND TRICKS WEBINAR \(NOVEMBER 2025\)](#)

Find more info on our webpage [here!](#)

List of Agency Contacts

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	Quality Rating Improvement System	Learn & Grow		120

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Find more info on our webpage [here!](#)

Application Tips & Tricks

Who should apply?

You will be most successful if you are:

- Eager to learn
- Have an appreciation for as well as a commitment to including and engaging people from different perspectives and backgrounds
- Are passionate about bringing evidence into the policy space.

We highly encourage fellowship applications from scholars of color, scholars from underrepresented cultural and ethnic backgrounds, scholars from low-income backgrounds, first-generation college graduates, scholars with disabilities, and scholars from the LGBTQIA+ community.



Who is eligible?

- **Members** of SRCD.
- **Doctoral-level degree** (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D., M.D.) relevant to child development by August 31, 2026.
- **Citizenship** – must be a US citizen for U.S. Congress placement (due to rules of the institution). For state agencies, citizenship varies; applicants must confirm with state agencies before applying. No work visas will be sponsored for any placement type.
- **Expertise** - Congressional and state placements must be focused on young children ages birth through 8 and their families.

What We Are Looking For

- There are 8 core skills that we assess in your application
- More information on the application can be found on our website



**Scroll down almost to the bottom
to find the skills evaluated section!**

Tips & Tricks

- Clearly show you understand the goals of the fellowship
 - Review all relevant policy fellowship webpages
 - Read “Spotlight on the SRCD Policy Fellow” features on srcd.org
 - Reach out to former SRCD Policy Fellows
- Tell us why you are interested and what, specifically, you hope to gain from the experience
- Show us how you are open to working on topics and issues outside of your area of expertise
- Be honest in the skills survey – we are not expecting you to have all listed skills or experience

Tips & Tricks

- Do not be afraid to apply if you have no policy experience!
- Reach out for help – especially (but not only) if you are looking for a state agency placement!
- The Fellowship is for people that look like you, whomever you are. You may be early career, mid-career, from a dominant or minoritized group. A diverse group of fellows excel in this program.

Panel of Former Fellows

Meet the Panelist!



Dr. Alaina Flannigan
Congressional Fellow
(2017-2018)
Joint Economic Committee



Dr. Lara Markovitz
State Agency Fellow
(2022-2024)
Michigan Department of Health &
Human Services

Audience Q&A

Applications due January 6, 2026

Application link and more info:

- Application materials and guidance
- Info on alumni and alumni network



<https://www.srcd.org/child-policy-hub/srcd-us-policy-fellowship-program>

Application Timeline

- Applications Open - **October 27, 2025**
- Applications Close - **January 6, 2026**
- Candidates notified for interview – **Around February 6-11, 2026**
- Interviews – **Around February 25 – February 26, 2026**
- Fellowship offers - **Second or third week of March 2026**



Thank you!