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Policy Update: February 2020

SRCD's *Policy Update* monitors policy developments in Washington, D.C., including federal priorities for developmental science, and legislation and programs relevant to child development. It also contains information on conferences and training opportunities, new reports, and requests for comments. *Policy Update* also highlights the work and experiences of SRCD Policy Fellows in the column *Spotlight on the SRCD Policy Fellow*.

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SRCD Child and Family Policy News

Spotlights on SRCD U.S. State Policy Fellows

Nneka Ibekwe, M.S.W., Ed.M., is a former SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellow who was placed in the Office of Early Learning, Delaware Department of Education. Read about her work last year analyzing Delaware's

kindergarten readiness data and how it has led to her dissertation work.

Rachel Katz, Ph.D. is a former SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellow who was placed in the Division of Early Intervention, Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Read about her work last year on the State Systemic Improvement Plan, a multi-year process to drive innovation in the use of evidence-based practice in the delivery of services to children with disabilities and developmental delays.

Are you interested in learning about the contributions that other former SRCD State Policy Fellows have made at their placements? Visit the SRCD website to read abstracts describing their work.

Legislative Branch Updates

Highlights

House Joint Subcommittee Hearing on America's Maternal and Infant Health Crisis

On January 28, the Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee and the Workforce Protections Subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and Labor held a joint hearing, "Expecting More: Addressing America's Maternal and Infant Health Crisis." Rep. Frederica Wilson (D-FL), Chair of the Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee, opened the hearing by discussing the urgent need to address the United States' maternal mortality rate and provide consistent, quality, affordable health insurance to the approximately 11 percent of reproductive age people who did not have health insurance in 2017. Rep. Wilson emphasized the disparate impact of pregnancy-related complications on women of color (i.e., Black and Native mothers). Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI), Ranking Member of the Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee, then spoke, recognizing the need for a thorough review of the problem.

Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC), Chair of the Workforce Protections Subcommittee, followed, acknowledging that there are strategies in place that have proven to work in reducing the maternal and infant health crisis' impact on racial and ethnic minorities. Rep. Mark Walker (R-NC), Ranking Member of the Workforce Protections Subcommittee, then spoke, recognizing the lack of clarity on the cause of the high infant and maternal mortality rate in the United States, the important role that public policy has to play, and the need for a careful evaluation of the issue. The witnesses discussed a variety of issues, such as the need to ensure both mom and baby have access to comprehensive and affordable health care before, during, and after

birth; the importance of breastmilk in children's lifelong health and wellness; persistent barriers that impede women's ability to breastfeed in community and employment settings; and the critical need to address racial inequities in maternal health and acknowledge the ways in which policies regarding social determinants of health are causing maternal morbidity and mortality. Witnesses included: Stacey Stewart, President and CEO, March of Dimes; Nikia Sankofa, Executive Director, United States Breastfeeding Committee; and Joia Crear Perry, M.D., President, National Birth Equity Collaborative. Watch the full hearing and read witness testimony.

House Committee Hearing on America's Child Care Crisis

On February 6, the Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and Labor held a hearing, "Solving America's Child Care Crisis: Supporting Parents, Children, and the Economy." Subcommittee Chair Gregorio Kilili Sablan (D-MP) opened the hearing by stating, "The cost of child care in America has gone up 2,000 percent in the last 40 years…[and] the average cost of full-time child care is now $16,000 per year." He noted, "Our economy loses $57 billion each year because American workers miss time at work or leave the workforce when they cannot find or afford child care." He ended his remarks by mentioning the *Child Care for Working Families Act*, which would "support families by capping how much they pay for child care and invests in the child care workforce." Ranking Member Rick Allen (D-GA) followed with his opening remarks, stating "We agree that high quality child care is a critical support for working families, but overlap, duplication, and fragmentation among programs remains an issue and demands a thoughtful and complete examination from Congress rather than the piecemeal approach taken in years past."

A panel of witnesses then discussed a variety of topics, including: the lack of accessible and affordable high-quality early care and education (ECE) programs for families across the U.S.; inadequate funding--despite recent increases in public funding for ECE--that limits the ability to reach all eligible children; workforce conditions (e.g., low pay, limited benefits) that make recruiting and retaining highly-skilled workers for the ECE workforce more difficult, which in turn affects the quality of care and developmental outcomes for children; ECE providers' efforts to remain solvent when operating expenses often exceed what parents can afford to pay in tuition; the need to increase child care subsidy reimbursement rates so they cover the true cost of providing high-quality care; the need for Congress to prioritize low-income families, families with infants and toddlers, families living in rural areas, and caregivers working non-standard hours; and the need for Congress to examine programs that already work (e.g., Preschool Development Grants, Early Head Start) and involve all sectors across the country to determine the best approach to reform the child care system.

Witnesses included: Taryn Morrissey, Ph.D., Dean's Scholar Associate Professor, School of Public Affairs, American University; Nancy Harvey, Child Care Provider, Lil Nancy's Primary Schoolhouse; Angélica María González, Parent and Law Clerk, MomsRising/ Lane Powell; and Linda Smith, Director, Early Childhood Initiative, Bipartisan Policy Center. Watch the full hearing and read witness testimony.

Additional Hearings of Interest

House Committee Hearing on Paid Family and Medical Leave

On January 28, the House Committee on Ways and Means held a hearing on "Legislative Proposals for Paid Family and Medical Leave." Witnesses included: Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT); Rep. Ann Wagner (R-MO); Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY); Joan Lunden, Journalist, Author, and former host of *Good Morning America*; Kemi Role, Director of Work Equity, National Employment Law Project; Sharon Terman, Director of Work and Family Policy, Legal Aid at Work; Hadley Heath Manning, Director of Policy at Independent Women's Forum and Independent Women's Voice; Rebecca Hamilton, Co-CEO, W.S. Badger; and Vicki Shabo, Senior Fellow, Paid Leave Policy and Strategy, New America. Watch the full hearing and read witness testimony.

House Committee on Oversight and Reform Series: A Threat to America's Children

The House Committee on Oversight and Reform organized a series of hearings on the impact of the Trump Administration's proposed regulations as they relate to children. The two-day series took place on February 5 and 6, was held by four subcommittees (i.e., Civil Rights and Civil Liberties; Economic and Consumer Policy; Environment; and Government Operations) and covered child poverty, food insecurity, health and safety, and housing. Information about the series is below:

- On February 5, the Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Subcommittee held a hearing, "A Threat to America's Children: The Trump Administration's Proposal to Gut Fair Housing Accountability." Watch the full recording and read witness testimony. On the same day, the Government Operations Subcommittee held a hearing, "A Threat to America's Children: The Trump Administration's Proposed Changes to the Poverty Line Calculation." Watch the full recording and read witness testimony.

- On February 6, the Economic and Consumer Policy Subcommittee held a hearing, "A Threat to America's Children: The Trump Administration's Proposed Changes to Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program." Watch the full recording and read witness testimony. On the same day, the Environment Subcommittee held a hearing, "A Threat to

America's Children: The Trump Administration's Proposal to Undermine Protections from Mercury Air Toxics Standards." Watch the full recording and read witness testimony.

Executive Branch Updates

Highlights

President's Budget Request Released for Fiscal Year 2021

On February 10, the White House released the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 President's Budget request to Congress. The President's Budget lays out the administration's priorities for federal programs and suggested spending levels. The release of the President's Budget request is the first step in the federal budget process. The budget request will be used as the starting point by Congress and federal agencies as they move forward with the appropriations process for FY 2021.

As previously reported in the August 2019 Policy Update, President Trump signed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019 to raise the discretionary spending caps for FY 2020 and 2021 and to suspend the debt limit until July 31, 2021. Notably, this agreement would increase non-defense top-line funding for FY 2021. However, the FY 2021 President's Budget request proposes a $37 billion cut to non-defense discretionary spending, despite the increase noted in the budget deal. A full analysis of the President's Budget request and its implications for social and behavioral science is available from the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA).

Request for Information on Scientific Priorities for Behavioral and Social Science Research at NIH

The National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research (OBSSR) seeks input on new directions for health-related behavioral and social sciences research. OBSSR requests input on research that will support the scientific priorities in the OBSSR Strategic Plan. Responses must be submitted by March 29, 2020. Read the full request for information and submit a comment.

Additional Updates of Interest

Request for Information: NIH-Wide Strategic Plan

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) requests information on the framework of the NIH-Wide Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2025. The request for information (RFI) is open through March 25, 2020. Read the full request for information and submit a comment.

NICHD Advisory Council Meeting

The National Advisory Child Health and Human Development (NACHHD) Council held a meeting on January 23 to discuss the implementation of their new strategic plan, research on optimal nutrition for pre-term infants, and the extension of NICHD's work through partnerships. Watch the full recording.

Federal Reports

New Reports and Briefs from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation

Several new publications are available from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

(1) *Conceptual Models to Depict the Factors that Influence the Avoidance and Cessation of Sexual Risk Behaviors Among Youth*. This report presents two, complementary conceptual models—one for sexual risk avoidance and a second for sexual risk cessation—that aim to guide efforts to prevent youth risk behaviors and promote optimal health.

(2) *Select Findings from the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) Study 2017: Cultural Items and Language Use (CILU) Checklist*. This report highlights select MSHS Study 2017 findings based on data collected using the *CILU Checklist* during classroom observations.

(3) *Analysis Plan for Cost-Benefit Analysis: National Evaluation of the Second Generation of Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG 2.0)*. This report presents an analysis plan for the Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) to be conducted as part of the HPOG 2.0 Program.

(4) *National and Tribal Evaluation of the 2nd Generation of Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG 2.0): Analysis Plan for the HPOG 2.0 National Evaluation Short-Term Impact Report*. This report presents a research design plan for the Impact Evaluation of the HPOG 2.0 Program.

(5) *User Guide to the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) Study 2017 Data Tables Report*. This report is intended to assist consumers of the MSHS Study 2017 Data Tables report in finding and interpreting data of interest to them.

(6) *Community Readiness: A Toolkit to Support Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program Awardees in Assessing Community Capacity*. This report will help MIECHV awardees complete their community readiness assessment, as part of their requirement to conduct a state- or territory-wide needs assessment.

(7) *Culture of Continuous Learning Project: Theory of Change*. This report describes the theory of change for how and why the Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) is expected to support improvements in social and emotional learning (SEL) practices in child care and Head Start programs.

(8) *Implementing Healthcare Career Pathway Training Programs in Rural Settings: Responsive Approaches by Tribal HPOG 2.0 Grantees*. This report examines the opportunities and challenges in implementing education and training programs in rural communities and describes how the Tribal HPOG 2.0 grantees have leveraged their communities' strengths to maximize these opportunities and overcome challenges.

(9) *Mapping Answers to Child Care Questions: Comparing Your Administrative Data with Other Data: A Webinar for Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies*. This webinar is designed to support CCDF lead agency staff and partners in mapping access to care across their state or other regions.

(10) *Lessons from the Field: Using Continuous Quality Improvement to Refine Interventions for Youth at Risk of Homelessness*. This report describes continuous quality improvement strategies used by organizations in California and Colorado that serve youth and young adults who have been involved in the child welfare system and are at risk of homelessness.

(11) *Home Visiting Career Trajectories*. This report summarizes survey findings and key themes from case studies conducted with the home visitor workforce across 26 Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)-funded local implementing agencies.

(12) *Child Care Subsidies under the CCDF Program: An Overview of Policy Differences Across States and Territories as of October 1, 2018*. This report provides a graphical overview of some of the Child Care and

Development Fund (CCDF) policy differences across states/territories.

(13) *Key Cross-State Variations in CCDF Policies as of October 1, 2018: The CCDF Policies Database Book of Tables*. This report describes the ways in which policies vary within the context of the federal program requirements for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and includes detailed tables showing each state's/territory's policy choices.

(14) *Using the CCDF Policies Database: 2018 Fact Sheets*. This report describes how to use the CCDF Policies Database.

New Reports from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation

Several new publications are available from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

(1) *Improving Data Capacity for American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) Populations in Federal Health Surveys*. This report shares methodological challenges in identifying and quantifying health and social determinants of health of the diverse populations of AIAN across the U.S.

(2) *Promising Practices from Early Experiences with Developing Evidence-Building and Evaluation Plans*. This report describes ASPE's evidence-building plan, which articulates the agency's priority questions and describes an approach to developing evidence in support of those questions.

New Reports and Briefs from the Institute of Education Sciences

Several new publications are available from the National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education:

(1) *Start Time for U.S. Public High Schools*. This report describes the average start time for public high schools in the U.S. during the 2017-18 school year by school characteristics and state.

(2) *Shortened School Weeks in U.S. Public Schools*. This report examines the characteristics of schools where students attend classes fewer than 5 days per week.

(3) *High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLS:09): A First Look at the Postsecondary Transcripts and Student Financial Aid Records of Fall 2009 Ninth-Graders*. This report provides select findings examining postsecondary course-taking experiences and financial aid awards for a subset of fall 2009 ninth-graders who enrolled in postsecondary education after high school.

U.S. Federal Funding Opportunities

The February 2020 U.S. Federal Funding Opportunities (FFO) lists over 100 funding opportunities for research, evaluation, and dissemination. Below we highlight four funding opportunity announcements (FOA) from this month's FFO:

(1) NIJ: Graduate Research Fellowship. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is seeking applications for funding innovative doctoral dissertation research that is relevant to preventing and controlling crime and ensuring the fair and impartial administration of criminal justice in the United States. This program furthers the Department's mission by increasing the pool of researchers who are engaged in providing science-based solutions to problems relevant to criminal and juvenile justice policy and practice in the United States. Applications are due by April 15, 2020.

(2) NIJ: Research and Evaluation on School Safety. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is seeking applications for funding to conduct research and evaluation to enhance knowledge to improve the safety of schools and students. Specifically, applicants should propose research and evaluation projects that will study the root causes of school violence and/or the activities or purpose areas addressed by STOP School Violence Act projects. Applications are due by April 13, 2020.

(3) ACF: Secondary Analyses of Data on Early Care and Education. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) is soliciting applications for Secondary Analyses of Data on Early Care and Education grants. This funding opportunity aims to support researchers

conducting secondary analyses of data to address key questions of relevance to the goals and outcomes of programs administered by ACF, in particular the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS). Analyzing existing data sets may provide researchers an efficient and cost-effective method for answering critical research questions. Applications are due by March 30, 2020.

(4) HHS: Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (TPP). The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, Office of Population Affairs announced three funding opportunities related to the Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) Program. The TPP Program is designed to give youth the information and skills to promote optimal health and prevent teen pregnancy across the United States, especially among those who are most vulnerable, including those who have suffered historic disparities. Application deadlines vary.

Read about these and other funding opportunities.