Get to Know Your SECC Representatives

2025 - 2027 Student and Early Career Council (SECC) Representatives to SRCD Committees



Lorena Aceves, Co-chair and Incoming SECC Representative to the Governing Council Representative

I am a first-generation Latina scholar and recently completed my Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Studies at the Pennsylvania State University. I am currently serving as an AAAS/SRCD Executive Branch Federal Policy Fellow in the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Head Start. I am committed to pursuing a career directed towards policy formulation and evaluation. Professionally, I aim to further

leverage developmental science to promote equitable opportunities and resources for students, children, and families from underrepresented backgrounds. Outside of research and policy, I enjoy connecting with and mentoring first generation students of color. I also consistently work to shed light on how developmental science can be applied in non-academic settings.

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Michelle Brown, Co-chair and Outgoing SECC Representative to the Governing Council

I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at University of South Carolina in the Clinical-Community Ph.D. Program. I earned my Ph.D. in Child Psychology from University of Minnesota with an emphasis in Developmental Psychopathology and Clinical Science and completed a Postdoctoral Fellow in Child Abuse Pediatrics at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center. My research uses a developmental psychopathology framework to: (1) understand how interpersonal relationships influence victimized children's risk for developing adverse socioemotional outcomes with a particular focus on friendships and (2) elucidate biopsychosocial factors that influence treatment outcomes for victimized children. Within SRCD, I am an active member of Black Caucus, was a 2017 Millennium Scholar, and was a mentor in the inaugural Towards 2044: Horowitz Early Career Scholars Program. I am excited to continue to serve and represent our students and early career members.

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Yan Jiang, Development Committee

Yan Jiang is a Ph.D. Candidate in Education Studies with a specialization in Computational Social Science at the University of California, San Diego. Her research focuses on promoting equitable access to high-quality early childhood education, with special attention to diverse sociocultural contexts and historically underrepresented groups. Her dissertation has been honored with the 2024 SECC Dissertation Funding Award from SRCD. Her research has been published in journals including Early Education and Development, Educational Researcher, and Review of Educational Research. As the representative to the Student and Early Career Council and the Development Committee, she will continue to advocate for programs that empower graduate students and early career scholars. Her goal is to ensure that graduate students and early career scholars have the resources, guidance, and sense of community they need to excel in their academic and professional journeys.

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Christina Rowley, Equity and Justice Committee, Incoming Representative

I am a postdoctoral scholar at San Diego State University and earned my PhD in Clinical Psychology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst specializing in Clinical Child and Family Psychology. I study the impact of racial/economic disparities on the family system and early child socioemotional development, and interventions designed to reduce these disparate effects. I received an NIH F31 which funded my dissertation: a mixed-methods investigation of stress in multiracial families during early parenthood. I merge my experiences as a teen mother with low-SES and child of a Mexican immigrant with my research/service experiences to advocate for diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice in various levels of the academy. I am an active member of the Latinx Caucus and participated in the NSF-SRCD Mentee-Mentor Emerging Scholars Program. As an SECC representative, I hope to promote scholarship on equity and justice with an eye on the heterogeneity of marginalized experiences.

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M. Bishop, Equity and Justice Committee, Outgoing Representative

M. D. Bishop, Ph.D., is a postdoctoral researcher in the department of Family Science at the University of Maryland, College Park. Their research leverages approaches at the nexus of developmental science, public health, and demography to understand the health and wellbeing of sexual and gender minority people across the life course. Dr. Bishop is interested in the developmental and intersectional contexts that shape relations between identity development, minority stress, and health among sexual and gender minority youth. Dr. Bishop's current NIH-funded research examines developmental differences in alcohol use and misuse among youth at the intersection of gender, sexuality, and race/ethnicity. The goal of Dr. Bishop's research is to inform programs and policies aimed at eliminating inequities experienced by sexual and gender minority people. Dr. Bishop holds a Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Science from the University of Texas at Austin.

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Jun Wang, Ethnic and Racial Issues Committee, Incoming Representative

I am a PhD candidate in Education at Johns Hopkins University. My work focuses on early childhood education, exploring the interactions of language, culture, identity, and well-being. I'm particularly interested in the role of linguistic environments in children's educational opportunities, academic success, and overall well-being. I also engage in research and research-practice collaborations that focus on supporting well-being and professional development of early educators, advancing quality of early childhood settings, and the effectiveness of school-based interventions. I am honored to serve as an SECC representative and look forward to contributing to the meaningful work of the Ethnic & Racial Issues Committee.

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Melissa Lucas, Ethnic & Racial Issues Committee, Outgoing Representative

Melissa Lucas is an Applied Developmental and Educational Psychologist and now serves as a postdoctoral associate at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. Her work focuses on supporting educators and Latinx and multilingual children's socioemotional development in order to nurture healthier and more equitable educational environments. By gaining a deeper understanding of how culturally and linguistically minoritized learners develop and navigate academic settings, Dr. Lucas aims to develop interventions, services, and policies that better understand and address the challenges faced by Latinx/multilingual populations in oppressive educational systems, structures, and practices. Melissa is a former IES predoctoral-fellow, former Chair of the Hunter Student Research Conference, and the first recipient of Yale Alumni Service Corps' Yale Child Study Center Scholarship. She earned her Ph.D. from University of Virginia (2022), her B.S. in Psychology and Sociology from Virginia Commonwealth University (2016), and her A.S. in Social Sciences from Northern Virginia Community College (2015).

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Briana Williams, Interdisciplinary Committee, Incoming Representative

I am a Clinical Postdoctoral Fellow at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, with a Ph.D. in School Psychology from Michigan State University. In my clinical work, I specialize in providing Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) in early care settings, where I collaborate with caregivers and educators to foster young children's social-emotional success both at home and in school. My research and clinical interests intersect in exploring how to support parents and caregivers from marginalized backgrounds in promoting the social-emotional development of children from birth to age 6. I am particularly focused on the role of racial/ethnic identity and emotional socialization within Black families. With diverse training across schools, hospitals, and community settings, I am deeply committed to understanding how interdisciplinary approaches can best support children and their families. I am honored to serve as an SECC representative on the Interdisciplinary Committee!

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Ekjyot Saini, Interdisciplinary Committee, Outgoing Representative

I am a postdoctoral scholar in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at Pennsylvania State University. I earned my Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Science from Auburn University, as well as a Masters in Social Work from the University of Michigan. My program of research utilizes interdisciplinary approaches including family systems perspectives and biopsychosocial processes to understand how family and sociocultural contexts contribute to the well-being of children and families across developmental periods. I am particularly interested in how relational (e.g., parenting, attachment) and regulatory processes (e.g., sleep, autonomic nervous system) operate within stressful contexts such as socio-economic adversity, adverse neighborhood and community conditions, and discrimination, and their contributions to socio-emotional and relational outcomes and health disparities in children and their families. I'm excited to serve as the SECC representative on the Interdisciplinary committee and look forward to fostering greater use of interdisciplinary approaches.

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Adelaide Delali Klutse, International Affairs Committee, Incoming Representative

I'm a PhD candidate in the Human Development and Family Studies Program at The Pennsylvania State University. I earned my Masters in Applied Family Science from Kansas State University and a Bachelors in Family and Consumer Sciences (Family and Child Studies major) from the University of Ghana, Legon.
My work currently focuses on the linkages between relational (coparenting, parenting) and environmental (household chaos, access to digital media) family context, and child outcomes such as sleep and socio-emotional development in the early years. Additionally, I am interested translating research into practice through mediums such as parent education programs and policy advocacy. I am excited to serve as the SECC representative on the International Committee and look forward to contributing meaningfully to the team.

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Nazlı Akay, International Affairs Committee, Outgoing Representative

I am a postdoctoral researcher at Middle East Technical University and an honorary research assistant at Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families. I obtained my Ph.D. with the dissertation titled “The family dynamics in nanny-employed families and their impact on the cared child” in 2022. I am interested in parenting, parent-child interactions, attachment, and family dynamics like coparenting, as well as the impact of these factors on child well-being, like the intergenerational transmission of psychopathology. Within that area, I have also specifically studied alternative parents like nannies and their direct impact on child well-being, as well as coparenting dynamics within nanny-employed families.

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Alysia Cruz, Membership Committee, Incoming Representative

I am a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Education at the University of California, Irvine, specializing in Human Development in Context. I earned a B.S. in Psychology from Drexel University, an M.S. in Developmental Psychology from Lehigh University, and an M.A. in Education from UC Irvine. My research explores how family dynamics, parenting, ethnic socialization, and cultural mechanisms influence the well-being and positive development of Latine youth, with a focus on the cultural factors that foster prosocial behaviors in children and adolescents. This line of work is of great scientific significance to counter the predominance of pathology and deficit-oriented research on U.S. Latine youth in the social behavioral sciences. Across several ongoing research projects at UCI, I explore the roles of parents, family, and cultural values such as bien educado (being well-mannered) and familism (affinity, support, and duty to the family) and how they foster youth social wellbeing and resilience. I am honored to serve on the SECC Membership Committee, where I look forward to representing students and early career members, fostering connections, and advocating for their needs.

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Dalhia Lloyd, Membership Committee, Outgoing SECC Representative

I am the director of professional learning at Buffett Early Childhood Institute. I earned my doctoral degree in early childhood education/child development from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. My program of research focuses on using anti-bias, anti-racist, and culturally grounded approaches to identify factors that support the optimal development of Black children. I am interested in culturally specific parenting practices, specifically the racial socialization of young Black children. I also engage in projects and initiatives that focus on dismantling racial inequities and reducing opportunity gaps in early childhood (birth-Grade 3). This includes examining teachers' social and cultural interactions with racially marginalized learners.

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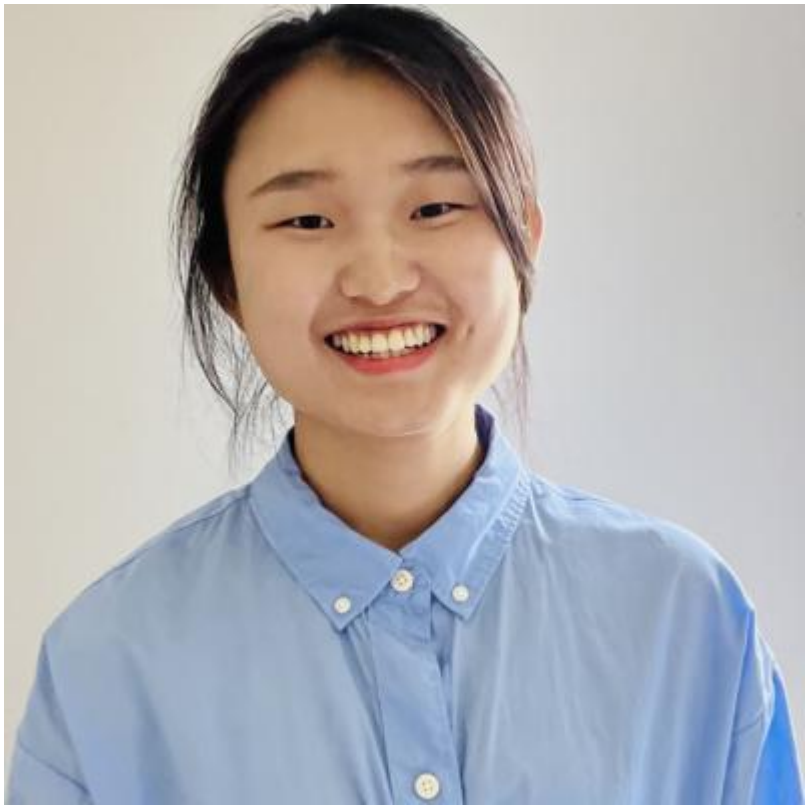


Dominique La Barrie, Program Committee, Incoming Representative

I am a sixth-year developmental psychology graduate student at the University of Georgia and an incoming Assistant Professor at Virginia Tech. My research examines how cultural processes buffer the effects of discrimination in Black and Latinx families, with a focus on ethnic-racial socialization and the role of non-parental agents in promoting youth well-being. As an Afro-Latina scholar, I am passionate about fostering inclusive academic spaces and supporting emerging scholars.

At UGA, I founded mentoring programs for underrepresented minority undergraduates and secured funding to support these initiatives, benefiting over 100 students. Within SRCD, I have served as the graduate student representative for the Latinx Caucus and have contributed to organizing professional development programming and events, including for the 2025 Biennial. My dedication to inclusion and community-building continues as an incoming SECC representative on the Program Committee, where I aim to enhance opportunities for students and early career scholars.

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Qi Huang, Publications Committee, Incoming Representative

I am currently a doctoral candidate in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at Michigan State University, and I will soon begin my postdoctoral research at the University of Minnesota. My research focuses on the experiences of ethnic-racial minoritized adolescents and young adults, with particular attention to the roles of discrimination and ethnic-racial socialization in shaping mental health outcomes. I am also dedicated to understanding the experiences of international students, who often navigate complex, intersectional identities influenced by their ethnic and racial backgrounds. I am eager to contribute to the Publications Committee by supporting the dissemination of high-quality, inclusive research that advances the field of developmental science and fosters a broader understanding of these critical issues.

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Claudia Kruzik, Publications Committee, Outgoing Representative

I am a doctoral candidate in the department of Applied Developmental and Educational Psychology at Boston College. My dissertation work focuses on the relationship between early trauma exposure and kindergarten behavioral development, exploring the mediating role of neighborhood contextual factors. More broadly, I am interested in the ways in which policy and community contexts shape early behavioral, social, and emotional development. In addition to these topical interests, I have a passion for knowledge translation and exchange across academic and policy spheres, which has been fostered through my experiences as an SRCD Pre-Doctoral State Policy Fellow, editorial assistant for SRCD's Child Evidence Briefs, and program manager of the Boston College Institute of Early Childhood Policy. As an SECC representative, I look forward to bringing this zest for academic communication and translation to the Publications Committee.

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Cara Kelly, Policy Committee, Incoming Representative

I am a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa's Early Childhood Education Institute (ECEI). I earned my Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Sciences from the University of Delaware where I specialized in early care and education. My research focuses on early care and education programs and policies that impact young children's development. My scholarship addresses questions about the indicators of early care and education programs that promote children's development, policies that impact these programs, and types of early relationships that are associated with children's short- and long-term outcomes. I approach research from a developmental perspective, with the ultimate goal of producing research for policy and program development so policies can best support children and families. As an SECC representative, I hope to contribute my knowledge and experience toward identifying and implementing changes that benefit graduate students and early career scholars.

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Qingyang Liu, Science and Social Policy Committee, Outgoing Representative

I received a Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Science from Syracuse University. I am currently a postdoctoral scholar in the Department of Psychology at Arizona State University. My research examine children's self-regulation development across childhood, focusing on how early poverty-related stressors intersect with family dynamics and broader socio-environmental contexts to shape self-regulation, particularly among racially/ethnically minoritized families living in poverty. I am incredibly honored to serve as the Student and Early Scholar Representative on the Science and Social Policy Committee!

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Lina Carpenter, Teaching Committee, Incoming Representative

Lina holds a Ph.D. in Education with a concentration in Human Development from the University of California Irvine (UCI); an M.A. in Educational Psychology concentrating in Early Childhood Education from California State University Northridge (CSUN); a second M.A. in Education from UCI; and a B.S. in Fine Art from the University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC). Her research includes topics around child development, socioemotional development, empathy, and prosocial behavior. Drawing on her expertise in child and adolescent development, she has explored how factors such as ascription of social responsibility (accountability for ones' behavior in society), perspective-taking, and emotional regulation influence sympathy and kindness. Lina is extremely passionate about teaching, mentorship, and fostering a positive classroom climate that is sustainable for both faculty and students. She consistently advocates for disabled community members and illuminates the ways in which universal design is universally beneficial.

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Ashleigh Aviles, Teaching Committee, Outgoing Representative

I am a postdoctoral associate at New York University. I research how early family interventions can promote school readiness in at-risk families, as well as the implementation of universal pre-k in New York City. I completed my Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Sciences at The University of Texas at Austin in 2022, where I researched the long-term socioemotional effects of trauma, with a particular focus on childhood psychological maltreatment. In addition to my research, I also focused on creating accessible, empathic, and trauma-informed classrooms in my *Child Development* and *Research Methods* courses. As students continue to grapple with the effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on their mental and physical health, it is even more crucial for the teaching community to create inclusive classrooms for all students.

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