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Holiday Letter to Members from SRCD President Ken Dodge

AUTHOR

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Past President

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Dear Fellow SRCD Member,

I wish you peace and comfort during this holiday season.

The year that was 2020 has affected all of us, but each of us has been affected in a unique way. I have learned not to compare the magnitude of each other's suffering but to understand that we hurt in different ways and we all need caring and kindness. Some of us lost loved ones cruelly and abruptly. Many of us suffered economic crises, disruptions of work, and challenges in caring for family members young and old. The acute stress of a lockdown has evolved into the chronic stress of social distance. The longstanding reality of racial injustice has been exposed anew in chilling ways. The year has challenged core assumptions that the world is just and democracy cannot be undermined.

How can we muster emotional strength to look forward and act in a way that is more just, kind, and wise? For me, it starts with being thankful. I am lucky in my family life to be surrounded by persons who care about me. I am lucky at work to still have work.

And professionally, I am thankful to have SRCD. We are all fortunate to be served by an outstanding team that starts with Interim Executive Director, Marty Zaslow, and her leadership team of Jill Braunstein, Rick Burdick, Kel Fisher, and Anne Perdue (with ongoing consultation from senior advisor Chuck Kalish), and the remarkable work of staff members Renee Bellis, Carol Bradfield, Nighisti Dawit, Nakera Dumas, Jessica Efstathiou, Gabby Galeano, Rose Ippolito, Julia Johnson, and Rachel Walther (listed alphabetically). They have gone well beyond any call of duty to keep us going, nay, thriving. Thank you, Team.

On to 2021.

Since SRCD's move to Washington, D.C. several years ago, we have positioned ourselves to contribute in new ways and on a larger scale. Assaulted by a pandemic, racism, government corruption, and economic upheaval, it is a new world we enter. We are the organization that asserts that developmental science can help us understand and support children's well-being. Here are some ways SRCD is contributing:

- First, we are making clear in our activities that anti-racism is a core value. Our Publications Committee and its Chair Debbie Rivas-Drake, and the editors-in-chief of our journals, are adopting and implementing policies to broaden the inclusion of under-represented groups in the studies published in our journals, among authors in our journals, and in the pool of reviewers, and to ensure that all editors and reviewers are appropriately guided toward anti-racist actions.
- *Child Development* will be having special sections bringing forward research on anti-racism and children. Working closely with our Ethnic & Racial Issues and Equity & Justice committees, as well as the organizers of the Construction of the 'Other' special topic meeting, we have also sponsored very well-attended webinars on anti-racism and prejudice and children.
- I am thrilled to announce we have received funding from the Wallace Foundation to increase our efforts to support the early career development of scholars of color and from the Jacobs Foundation to support early-career international scholars at our upcoming Biennial Meeting and beyond. Thank you to those organizations.
- I have written before about the contributions SRCD is making to public policy on behalf of children and families; we will continue to strengthen this work in 2021. Our *Child Evidence Briefs*, *Social Policy Reports*, and *Statements of the Evidence* will always be grounded in scientific rigor. We will work to make

them timely to inform policymakers at critical times.

- The 2021 Biennial Meeting will be held on April 7-9, 2021. Although we are saddened that we will not meet in person, we are heartened that a virtual format presents new opportunities. Our Program Co-Chairs Ellen Pinderhughes and Nim Tottenham are doing an outstanding job of planning a meeting with an impressive set of invited speakers and innovative formats. Submissions for presentations and posters have kept pace, and we are grateful to the hundreds of members who have served as panel chairs and reviewers. We are planning to offer a significantly reduced registration fee.

Winston Churchill said, “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” How can you make a life using science to support children’s well-being? Here is what you can do:

1. **Vote!** SRCD members have until January 6, 2021, to vote for new leaders of SRCD. If you are an early career member, vote in the election for your SECC representatives to committees.
2. **Register!** Attend the SRCD Virtual Biennial Meeting on April 7-9, 2021. Registration will open in early 2021.
3. **Continue your developmental science, and grow its inclusiveness.** Children need what you do.
4. **Watch and learn** from the SRCD webinars that address racism and prejudice, and read the growing body of SRCD publications on these issues.
5. **Donate to the SRCD Impact Fund** to support the professional development of early-career SRCD scholars and other key SRCD priorities.

Thank you for all the ways you contribute to SRCD and to the lives of children around the world. I hope the new year brings you ways to connect. Be kind.

Happy Holidays.

Ken Dodge
SRCD President