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Policy Update: June 2021

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

Spotlight on the SRCD Policy Fellows - Lorena Aceves and Wendy Wei

Lorena Aceves, Ph.D., is a SRCD Federal Executive Branch Policy Fellow who is placed in the Office of Head Start (OHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Read about how she applies skills she developed during her graduate studies focused on Latinx adolescents and families (i.e., how to incorporate an equity lens) to Head Start staff recruitment and retention projects.

Wendy Wei, Ed.M., is a SRCD State Pre-doctoral Policy Fellow who is placed in the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). Read about how her fellowship work, which includes analyzing the state's Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) program, has expanded her understanding of the types of research and policy actions that contribute to systemic change.

Visit the SRCD website to read Spotlights describing the contributions SRCD U.S. Policy Fellows have made at their placements.

Legislative Branch Updates

Additional Hearings of Interest

- **Vaccines and the COVID-19 Pandemic.** On June 22, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions held a hearing on "Vaccines: America's Shot at Ending the COVID-19 Pandemic." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.
- **COVID-19 Response and Recovery: Supporting the Needs of Students in Higher Education.** On June 17, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions held a hearing on "COVID-19 Response and Recovery: Supporting the Needs of Students in Higher Education & Lessons on Safely Returning to Campus." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.
- **Mental Health Care in America.** On June 15, the Senate Committee on Finance held a hearing on "Mental Health Care in America: Addressing Root Causes and Identifying Policy Solutions." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.
- **Successful Models of Employment for Justice-Involved Individuals.** On June 15, the House Higher Education and Workforce Investment Subcommittee of the Education and Labor Committee held a hearing on "Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Reauthorization: Examining Successful Models of Employment for Justice-Involved Individuals." View the witness list, recording, and read witness

testimonies.

- **Ending Childhood Hunger.** On June 10, the House Civil Rights and Human Services Subcommittee of the Education and Labor Committee held a hearing on "Ending Child Hunger: Priorities for Child Nutrition Reauthorization." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.

- **The Well-Being of Unaccompanied Children.** On June 9, the House Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing on "A Humane Response: Prioritizing the Well-Being of Unaccompanied Children." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.

- **Universal Paid Leave and Access to Child Care.** On May 27, the House Worker and Family Support Subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee held a hearing on "Universal Paid Leave and Guaranteed Access to Child Care." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.

Executive Branch Updates

President Biden Signs Juneteenth National Independence Day Act Into Law

On June 17, President Biden signed S.475, "Juneteenth National Independence Day Act" into law. S.475 established Juneteenth National Independence Day, June 19, as a national public holiday. The Senate passed S.475 with unanimous consent, and the U.S. House of Representatives passed the bill with a 415-14 vote. For more information, read the White House's Proclamation on Juneteenth Day of Observance, 2021.

President Biden Releases Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Request

On May 28, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Budget. The President's Budget request outlines the Biden Administration's priorities for federal programs and suggested funding levels. The budget request will be used as the starting point by Congress and federal agencies as they move forward with the FY 2022 appropriations process. As previously reported, President Biden released a "skinny budget" in April, which initially shed light on the Administration's priorities for the upcoming fiscal year. The President's FY 2022 request includes investments in specific areas to advance equity, such as:

- **American Indian and Alaska Native Health Equity.** The request includes a $2.2 billion increase for the Indian Health Service.
- **Childhood Food Insecurity.** The request includes a permanent Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) program for all children who are eligible for free-and-reduce price meals through the American Families Plan.
- **Gun Violence Prevention.** The request includes $2.1 billion for the U.S. Department of Justice, the funding will support background check system improvements, incentives for gun licensing laws, and gun buyback pilot programs.
- **Universal Preschool.** The request aims to provide free, high-quality, accessible, and inclusive pre-K for all 3-and-4-year-olds.

FY 2022 funding levels for federal agencies of particular interest to SRCD members include:

- **National Institutes of Health (NIH):** $51.9 billion requested, approximately 21% above the FY 2021 funding level.
- **National Science Foundation (NSF)**: $10.2 billion requested, approximately 20% above the FY 2021 funding level; and the
- **Institute of Education Sciences (IES)**: $737.5 million requested, approximately 15% above the FY 2021 funding level.

Of note, the request includes substantive proposed changes to two agencies: NIH and NSF. For more information, read the President's Budget and the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) analysis of the President's Budget request and its implications for social and behavioral science.

Biden-Harris Administration Launches Child Tax Credit Awareness Day

On June 11, the Biden-Harris Administration announced the launch of Child Tax Credit Awareness Day, a day (June 21st) to spread awareness of the American Rescue Plan's Child Tax Credit expansion and motivate elected officials, as well as advocacy and faith-based organizations, to help eligible families use the Child Tax Credit sign-up tool. In conjunction with Child Tax Credit Awareness Day, the Administration released guidance on the Child Care and Development Block Grant program, the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit , and the Paid Leave Tax Credit.

Request for Information: Methods and Leading Practices for Advancing Equity and Support for Underserved Communities

The Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, issued a request for information (RFI) on "Methods and Leading Practices for Advancing Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through Government." More specifically, OMB is seeking information and recommendations regarding "... effective methods for assessing whether agency policies and actions (e.g., programs, services, processes, and operations) equitably serve all eligible individuals and communities, particularly those that are currently and historically underserved. As part of this effort, agencies are directed to consult with members of communities that have been historically underrepresented in the Federal Government and underserved by, or subject to discrimination in, Federal policies and programs, and to evaluate opportunities, as allowable, to increase coordination, communication, and engagement with community-based and civil rights organizations." Read the RFI for more information and consider submitting a comment. Interested parties should submit comments by **July 6, 2021**.

NSF Dear Colleague Letter: SBE Trans-Atlantic Call for Proposals, Recovery, Renewal, and Resilience

On April 20, the National Science Foundation (NSF) released a Dear Colleague Letter on the NSF Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences' (NSF/SBE) participation in the Trans-Atlantic Platform Call for Proposals, Recovery, Renewal, and Resilience in a Post-Pandemic World (T-AP RRR). The T-AP RRR is a grant competition that will provide researchers with the opportunity to participate in international collaborative research projects on the effects of COVID-19 on society and how to better support recovery and renewal efforts post-pandemic. According to NSF, "T-AP RRR will support collaborative research teams from four continents: Africa (Republic of South Africa); Europe (Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Poland, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom); North America (Canada, the United States); and South America (Brazil and Colombia). Teams must include researchers based in at least three participating T-AP RRR countries and must include partners from both sides of the Atlantic, i.e., from Europe/Africa and the Americas." For more information about this opportunity, read NSF's Dear Colleague Letter. Interested parties must submit their proposals by **July 12, 2021.**

National Advisory Mental Health Council Holds Meeting

The National Advisory Mental Health Council (NAMHC) convened on May 18. The NAMHC advises the Director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on policies and activities related to mental health research, research training, and institute programming. Dr. Joshua Gordon, Director, NIMH, opened the meeting with the Director's Report, which included updates pertaining to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Budget and FY 2022 appropriations, recent legislative activities and engagement, NIMH's current portfolio, ending structural racism in biomedical research, among other topics. Please find select highlights from the council meeting below:

- The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 includes funding for mental health services to expand access to mental health services across the country (e.g., pediatric mental health care). Gordon expressed deep appreciation for Congress' efforts to improve mental health systems in light of the pandemic. Over the past several months, NIMH staff met with several Members of Congress (e.g., Committees, and Caucuses) to answer questions about mental health disparities as they relate to children's mental health, Black youth suicide, COVID-19-related suicide prevention, and the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder among healthcare workers.
- NIMH's major initiatives focus on ameliorating structural racism in biomedical research by promoting scientific excellence through enhanced diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, which include: capacity building and dissemination, workforce development, and environmental inclusion. Dr. Ishmael Amarreh, Office for Disparities Research and Workforce Diversity, NIMH, discussed a NIMH portfolio analysis of funding disparities by demographic groups. Data from 2008 - 2018 indicate that while there were small disparities among most racial and gender groups, the largest disparity existed among Black investigators. Of note, NIMH is moving forward with examining internal processes to improve resubmission rates by increasing diversity among reviewers, enhancing reviewer training, mentoring and coaching applicants, and emphasizing research and funding on topics of interest among Black investigators (e.g., social determinants of health).

For more information about the recent National Science Board meeting, read the public agenda and view the 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) *Home-based Early Care and Education Providers in 2012 and 2019: Counts and Characteristics*. This report uses new, nationally representative data—the 2019 National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE)—together with the 2012 NSECE, to describe home-based early care and education (ECE) providers in this country in 2019 and how they had changed from 2012 to 2019.

(2) *Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness Standards for Non-experimental Comparison Group Designs – 2020*. This resource shows the Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVEE) review's process for rating matched comparison group studies, along with definitions of key concepts the HomVEE team considers when rating studies.

(3) *Assessing Models of Coordinated Services: A Scan of State and Local Approaches to Coordinating Early Care and Education with Other Health and Human Services*. A growing number of states and localities are working to address the needs of families living in poverty by coordinating their services and funding streams. This report shares findings from a national scan of existing state and local coordinated services approaches.

(4) *Presentation: American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey 2015 (AIAN FACES 2015): Key Findings from Fall 2015 and Spring 2016*. This presentation highlights select descriptive findings from the AIAN FACES 2015 regarding: child characteristics and family environments; children's classroom, center, and program cultural and language environment; children's cognitive, social-emotional, and health and physical development; and children's teacher characteristics.

(5) *Engaging Stakeholders in Research: Tips for CCDF Lead Agencies*. This report aims to help Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Agencies identify stakeholders to engage and ways to involve them. It gives tips on how to show respect for stakeholders and how to make decisions about engagement based on your research goals.

(6) *State and Territory Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Investments in Early Care and Education Quality*. The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 and the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Final Rule approved in 2016 outlined major policy changes in four areas: (1)

health and safety, (2) consumer education, (3) equal access to high-quality care for children in families with low-incomes, and (4) quality improvement and support for the workforce. This report provides information on planned and actual investments before the CCDBG Act of 2014, immediately following it, and a few years after its passage.

(7) *Gains in Language and Cognitive Scores Among Children in Their First and Second Years of Head Start*. This report explores possible explanations for why second-year children made smaller gains in language and cognitive scores than first-year children during the Head Start program year.

New Reports and Briefs 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) *Technology Considerations for Virtual Human Services Delivery*. Program administrators and frontline workers across a range of human services programs early in the COVID-19 pandemic shared important takeaways around how to better utilize technology to administer virtual services. This report highlights key considerations which emerged from programs, including around technology access and capacity, staff and participant support and training, and confidentiality and privacy in virtual settings.

(2) *Increases in Out-of-Pocket Child Care Costs: 1995 to 2016*. This report documents the increases in the average amount that families have paid for early care and education (ECE) over two decades among children under age five using data from the National Household Education Survey, Early Childhood Program Participation (NHES-ECPP).

(3) *Perspectives of Program Participants on Virtual Human Services During COVID-19*. This report describes results from focus groups in Fall 2020 that captured the perspectives of people served by human services programs to better understand the perceived strengths and limitations of virtual services.

(4) *Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) FY 2022 Evaluation Plan*. This report includes evaluation plans developed by nine operating divisions within HHS and one staff division and includes information on priority questions being examined by the agencies as well as data, methods, and challenges to addressing those questions.

(5) *Department of Health & Human Services Evaluation Policy*. This evaluation policy for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), required by the Foundations for Evidence-based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Evidence Act), was developed through a convening of agency representatives from across HHS operating and staff divisions.

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) *2019–20 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:20): First Look at the Impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic on Undergraduate Student Enrollment, Housing, and Finances (Preliminary Data)*. This report provides preliminary results of the 2019–20 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, with a particular focus on how the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic affected student experiences.

(2) *2012–2016 Program for International Student Assessment Young Adult Follow-up Study (PISA YAFS): How Reading and Mathematics Performance at Age 15 Relate to Literacy and Numeracy Skills and Education, Workforce, and Life Outcomes at Age 19*. This report provides data on the literacy and numeracy performance of U.S. young adults at age 19, as well as examines the relationship between that performance and their earlier reading and mathematics proficiency in PISA 2012 at age 15.

(3) *State and District Use of Title II, Part A Funds in 2019–20*. Title II, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provides over $2 billion per year to states and districts to support effective instruction through the preparation, recruitment, and training of educators. This report provides a national picture of state and district priorities for Title II-A funds in the 2019–20 school year.

(4) *Parental Involvement in U.S. Public Schools in 2017-18*. This report examines parent and/or guardian involvement in various school-based engagement opportunities.

(5) *Forum Guide to Attendance, Participation, and Engagement Data in Virtual and Hybrid Learning Models*. This report was developed as a companion publication to the 2018 Forum Guide to Collecting and Using Attendance Data, drawing upon the information included in that resource and incorporating lessons learned by state and local education agencies (SEAs and LEAs) during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

(6) *Mapping State Proficiency Standards Onto the NAEP Scales: Results From the 2019 NAEP Reading and Mathematics Assessments*. This report highlights the results of mapping state proficiency standards onto the NAEP scales using state assessment results from the 2018–19 school year and the 2019 NAEP assessments for public schools.

(7) *The Effects of Accelerated College Credit Programs on Educational Attainment in Rhode Island*. This report examined participation in accelerated college credit programs dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and Advanced Placement courses in Rhode Island high schools to understand their effects on educational attainment in the 2013/14 grade 9 cohort.

U.S. Federal Funding Opportunities

The June 2021 FFO lists over 100 funding opportunities for research, evaluation, and dissemination. Below we highlight a few funding opportunities from this month's FFO:

(1) An Administration for Children and Families (ACF) funding opportunity to support partnerships between Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies and researchers to develop rigorous, policy-relevant evaluations testing child care subsidy policies designed to increase low-income families' access to high quality child care. Applications are due by July 20, 2021.

(2) An Administration for Children and Families (ACF) funding opportunity to support a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) Institute on Intimate Partner Violence to expand and enhance the capacity of both domestic violence and LGBTQ-specific organizations to more effectively identify and respond to the unique needs of LGBTQ intimate partner violence victims. Applications are due by July 19, 2021.

(3) An Institute for Education Sciences (IES) funding opportunity to address State education agencies' use of their State's education longitudinal data systems as they and local education agencies reengage their students after the disruptions caused by COVID-19. Applications are due by August 12, 2021.

(4) A National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding opportunity to support research designed to elucidate the etiology, epidemiology, diagnosis, and optimal means of service delivery in relation to Autism Spectrum

Disorders (ASD). Applications are due by October 16, 2021.

Read about these and other funding opportunities.