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Policy Update: October 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

New **Child Evidence Brief on How Reducing Child Poverty Can Promote Children's Development and Productivity in Adulthood**

SRCD recently released a *Child Evidence Brief* titled, "Reducing Child Poverty Can Promote Children's Development and Productivity in Adulthood." The brief summarizes evidence on the impact of poverty on children's development and highlights how investing in existing federal income support policies coupled with the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021's expansion of the Child Tax Credit has the potential to cut child poverty in the United States in half. Interested in learning more about the *Child Evidence Brief* series? Visit SRCD's website to learn more.

SRCD Child and Family Policy Resources

Call for Presentations: ACF's National Research Conference on Early Childhood 2022

The Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) National Research Conference on Early Childhood (NRCEC) seeks poster, paper symposium, and poster symposium proposals. The conference will be held June 27-29, 2022, at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, VA. Visit the NRCEC's website to read the call for presentations and learn more about the conference.

Legislative Branch Updates

FY 2022 Appropriations Update

President Biden Signs Stopgap Funding Bill into Law and Congress Makes Progress on FY 2022 Appropriations

Last month, President Joe Biden signed H.R. 5305, the Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act, into law. H.R. 5305, a continuing resolution, extended Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 appropriations to federal agencies through December 3, 2021. By signing the bill into law shortly before the end of the fiscal year, President Biden was able to avoid a government shutdown. Of note, H.R. 5305 temporarily extended funding; congressional lawmakers must complete the FY 2022 appropriations process before the upcoming December deadline to avoid a government shutdown. At the time of writing, the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations has advanced three of the 12 annual appropriations bills, releasing the nine remaining appropriations bills for consideration on October 18. Upon release of the remaining appropriations bills, Senate Committee on Appropriations Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-VT) stated, "I look forward to working with Chair DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, and Vice Chairman Shelby, to move this

process forward, with the goal of enacting all 12 bills by December 3rd. Failure to do that will lead to a long-term continuing resolution, which locks in outdated spending priorities that will not meet the challenges of today and will not serve the American people. As Senators, and Members of Congress, we should do our job, make the hard choices, and complete our work on behalf of the American people."

Meanwhile, the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations has advanced all 12 annual appropriations bills, and the full U.S. House of Representatives has passed nine of the 12 appropriations bills. Interested in learning more about the annual appropriations process? Read this Congressional Research Service summary . As previously reported, H.R. 5305 initially included a provision that would have suspended the statutory debt limit on federal debt through December 16, 2022, to address the nation's concurrent debt ceiling crisis. The provision was ultimately removed from the bill before final passage. However, the House and Senate passed a standalone bill, S. 1301, that includes a $480 billion increase in the U.S. Treasury's debt limit, an increase that is expected to delay the potential default until early December 2021. President Biden signed S.1301 into law on October 14. To learn more about the debt limit, read the U.S. Department of the Treasury's summary.

Additional Hearings of Interest

- **Public Health Improvements for Children and Families.** On October 20, the Subcommittee on Health of the U.S House Committee on Energy and Commerce held a hearing on "Enhancing Public Health: Legislation to Protect Children and Families." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.
- **The Impact of Exclusionary Zoning on People and Communities**. On October 15, the Subcommittee on Housing, Community Development and Insurance of the U.S. House Committee on Financial Services held a hearing on "Zoned Out: Examining the Impact of Exclusionary Zoning on People, Resources, and Opportunity." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.
- **Open Science and Security in the U.S. Research Enterprise.** On October 5, the Subcommittees on Investigations and Oversight and Research and Technology of the U.S. House Science, Space, and Technology Committee held a hearing on "Balancing Open Science and Security in the U.S. Research Enterprise." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.
- **School Reopening Plans and the COVID-19 Pandemic.** On September 30, the U.S Senate Committee on Education and Labor held a hearing on "School Reopening During COVID-19: Supporting Students, Educators, and Families." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.

- **Best Practices for Safely Reopening Schools.** On September 29, the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education of the U.S. House Committee on Education and Labor held a hearing on "Back to School: Highlighting Best Practices for Safely Reopening Schools." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.

- **Online Security and Children's Mental Health**. On September 30, the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, and Data Security of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation held a hearing on "Protecting Kids Online: Facebook, Instagram, and Mental Health Harms." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.

Executive Branch Updates

Highlights

President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology Convenes

The President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) convened days after President Joe Biden announced its membership. For background, the PCAST is "... the sole body of advisors from outside the federal government charged with making science, technology, and innovation policy recommendations to the President and the White House. Established by Executive Order, it is an independent Federal Advisory Committee comprised of distinguished individuals from industry, academia, and non-profit organizations with a range of perspectives and expertise. PCAST develops evidence-based recommendations for the President on matters involving science, technology, and innovation policy, as well as on matters involving scientific and technological information that is needed to inform policy affecting the economy, worker empowerment, education, energy, the environment, public health, national and homeland security, racial equity, and other topics." The inaugural meeting, which took place from September 28-29, addressed U.S. competitiveness, security, and international science and technology leadership, as well as U.S. public health and pandemic preparedness. The second PCAST meeting on climate change, energy, and the environment, took place from October 18-19. PCAST meetings will be virtual until further notice and are open to the public. To learn more about past PCAST meetings or watch recordings, visit the White House's website.

NIH Director Francis S. Collins to Step Down

On October 5, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced the departure of NIH Director Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., who has decided to step down. Dr. Collins is the longest serving presidentially appointed NIH director, serving three U.S. presidents across more than 12 years. Dr. Collins shared, “It has been an incredible privilege to lead this great agency for more than a decade...I love this agency and its people so deeply that the decision to step down was a difficult one, done in close counsel with my wife, Diane Baker, and my family. I am proud of all we’ve accomplished. I fundamentally believe, however, that no single person should serve in the position too long, and that it’s time to bring in a new scientist to lead the NIH into the future. I’m most grateful and proud of the NIH staff and the scientific community, whose extraordinary commitment to lifesaving research delivers hope to the American people and the world every day.” To learn more about Dr. Collins and the transition, read the NIH announcement.

NIH Associate Director for Behavioral and Social Sciences Research William T. Riley to Retire

On September 30, the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR), National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced the retirement of William (Bill) T. Riley, Ph.D., NIH Associate Director for Behavioral and Social Sciences Research and Director of the Office of BSSR. In their statement, NIH notes, “For the past 7 years in his dual roles as NIH Associate Director for BSSR and Director of the Office of BSSR, Bill has done an outstanding job advancing understanding of the field and integrating BSSR into broader biomedical research efforts. Bill has led OBSSR during a time of a great change in the field. The integration of BSSR with the neuroscience, genetics, and “omics” fields is beginning to shed light on the many complex interactions between the brain, behavior, and the environment. Advances in measurement science and technologies are providing data on the influence of human behavior on health at levels of detail previously unimaginable. Expanding sources of integrated population-level data provide both the platform to better monitor the behavioral and social influences on health and the ability to assess population-level interventions more rigorously. The health of the nation is shaped primarily by behavior and social influences, and research in this area provides the tools to help people modify their behaviors to improve their health.” Dr. Riley will retire from NIH later this year (December 2021) and OBSSR Deputy Director Christine M. Hunter, Ph.D., ABPP, will serve as Acting NIH Associate Director for BSSR and Acting Director of OBSSR. To learn more about Dr. Riley and the transition, read the OBSSR announcement.

OJJDP Hosts Virtual Symposium on Youth Hate Crimes and Identity-Based Bullying

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, is hosting a national symposium on bullying prevention and combating identity-based bullying and criminal extremist hate groups from October 27-28. According to OJJDP, "This virtual symposium will address important topics like current trends and research on identity-based bullying, cyberbullying, youth-related hate crimes, and how hate groups use social media and technology to reach, recruit, and radicalize youth. It will also provide programs and best practices on how schools, families, law enforcement, and communities can work together to build protective factors in youth and help youth resist and disengage from extremist hate groups." To learn more about the symposium and register, visit OJJDP's website.

OSTP Launches Time is Now: Advancing Equity in Science and Technology Ideation Challenge

On October 14, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) launched *The Time is Now: Advancing Equity in Science and Technology Ideation Challenge.* OSTP Director Eric Lander, Ph.D., seeks public input on the following question, "How can we guarantee all Americans can fully participate in, and contribute to, science and technology?" The challenge aims to provide students, technical workers, scientists, advocates, among others the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas on how to build equity and inclusion in science and technology domains. The announcement notes, "This ideation challenge is the second phase of OSTP's 'Time is Now: Advancing Equity in Science and Technology' initiative. It builds on a five-part roundtable series of candid and robust conversation with researchers, thought leaders, and advocates on themes related to science and technology equity, to gather valuable feedback that can assist OSTP in assuring that our national science and technology ecosystem is preeminent, equitable, and inclusive." The challenge will be open on Challenge.gov between October 14 and November 19, 2021. For more information about the challenge and the five-part roundtable series, read the announcement.

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) *Six Recommendations for Supporting Families Affected by Parental Incarceration: A Review of the Literature* . This report offers recommendations for programs designing and implementing family-strengthening program models, defined as programs that seek to maintain and build healthy relationships between parents who are incarcerated and their children.

(2) *How the National Domestic Violence Hotline Can Support Family and Friends of Victims/Survivors: Theoretical Framework Research Brief*. This report describes and illustrates a theoretical framework for family/friends of those affected by relationship abuse and to inform members of research and academic communities about the process for developing the theoretical framework.

(3) *Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVEE) Review: Brief – 2021*. This brief presents updates from 2021's HomVEE review of home visiting program models that serve families with pregnant women and children from birth to age five.

(4) *Professional Development Supports for Home Visitors and Supervisors: Strengthening the Home Visiting Workforce (Revised)*. This report presents findings from a national descriptive study of the home visiting workforce in local agencies receiving Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program funding with a focus on the professional development opportunities and gaps that exist to support the early childhood home visiting workforce.

(5) *How Employment Programs Can Support Young People Transitioning Out of Foster Care: Formative Evaluation Findings of Two Employment Programs*. The purpose of the formative evaluation described in this report is to examine whether programs are being implemented as intended, expected outputs are being produced, and short-term outcomes are trending in the right direction; and to provide feedback to programs about program functioning and data-collection needs.

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) *Practice Guide: Centering Fathers in Human Services Programming to Increase Participation*. This report offers strategies for a two-step process of increasing father participation in services to promote child and

family well-being: (1) getting fathers into human services programs and (2) keeping them engaged in programming.

(2) *Parents' Intentions to Vaccinate Children Ages 12-17 for COVID-19: Demographic Factors, Geographic Patterns, and Reasons for Hesitancy*. To support state and local communication and outreach efforts, this report examines hesitancy among parents to vaccinate children ages 12-17 against COVID-19 using data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey.

(3) *Child and Adolescent Mental Health During COVID-19: Considerations for Schools and Early Childhood Providers*. Utilizing a large national claims database, this report uses descriptive statistics to estimate the rates of mental health conditions, co-occurring health conditions, disability and adverse childhood experiences among a sample of children with COVID-19 diagnosis, negative COVID-19 test or COVID-19 symptoms only.

(4) *The Initial Impact of COVID-19 on Children and Youth (Birth to 24 years)*. This report provides a high level overview of the impact of COVID-19 on the development, emotional and behavioral health, social, and economic well-being of children and youth (ages birth to 24).

(5) *The Impact of the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Recession on Families With Low Incomes*. Drawing on recent surveys and studies, this report details impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the associated recession, on low-income families' employment and income, economic well-being, and physical and mental health.

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) *Identifying Students At Risk Using Prior Performance Versus a Machine Learning Algorithm*. This report provides information for administrators in local education agencies who are considering early warning systems to identify at-risk students.

(2) *Variations in District Strategies for Remote Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. This report uses document analysis to examine proposed strategies in districts' remote learning plans related to infrastructure; strategies and supports for instruction; and supports for teachers, students, and parents.

(3) *Characteristics of Private Schools in the United States: Results From the 2019-20 Private School Universe Survey*. This report includes information regarding private schools' school size, school level, religious orientation, association membership, geographic region, community type, and program emphasis.

(4) *Factors Associated with Grade 3 Reading Outcomes of Students in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Public School System*. To better understand factors associated with the reading proficiency of CNMI grade 3 students, this report and brief examine the demographic characteristics and education experiences of students who demonstrated reading proficiency by grade 3.

(5) *Supports Associated with Teacher Retention in Michigan*. Implementing teacher supports—which may be policies, practices, or programs—to increase teacher retention offers a way to alleviate statewide teacher shortages. This report identifies supports implemented by local education agencies (traditional school districts and charter schools) that are associated with teacher retention.

U.S. Federal Funding Opportunities

The October 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) **Award to Study Health Equity in the Context of COVID-19:** A U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) funding opportunity to support innovative research that will strengthen and advance COVID-19 health equity research. Applications are due by November 29, 2021.

(2) **Grant for Biopsychosocial Research on Social Connectedness and Isolation:** A National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding opportunity to support research that seeks to explain or model the underlying mechanisms, processes, and trajectories of social relationships and how these factors affect outcomes in human health, illness, recovery, and overall wellbeing. Applications are due by June 21, 2022.

(3) **Grant to Study Suicide Prevention Strategies in Primary Care Settings:** A National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) funding opportunity to support primary care practice-based research focused on rigorous evaluations of factors that impact or account for the effectiveness of existing suicide prevention practices and/or pilot clinical trials aimed at optimizing and pilot testing patient-, provider-, or systems-level suicide prevention strategies. Applications are due by June 21, 2022.

Read about these and other funding opportunities.