NEWS | POSTED JANUARY 27, 2022

Policy Update: January 2022

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 **Statement of the Evidence on Gender-Affirming Policies and Transgender and Gender Diverse Youth's Health**

SRCD recently released the new *Statement of the Evidence* policy brief, "Gender-Affirming Policies Support Transgender and Gender Diverse Youth's Health," by Russell Toomey, Ph.D., Jenifer K. McGuire, Ph.D., Kristina R. Olson, Ph.D., Laura Baams, Ph.D., and Jessica Fish, Ph.D. The brief summarizes evidence on the role access to supportive school environments and medical services play in fostering transgender children and youth's positive development and mental health, noting "Transgender and gender diverse youth (TGD) (i.e., children and adolescents whose gender identity and/or expression differs from their sex assigned at birth) are more likely to experience poor health than their peers whose gender identity aligns with their assigned sex at birth (i.e., cisgender youth) due to stigma and marginalization. Fortunately, school policies that protect, include, and affirm TGD youth's gender identity are associated with positive mental health and academic outcomes." Interested in learning more about the *Statement of the Evidence* series? Visit SRCD's website to learn more.

Call for Applications: Editor of SRCD's Social Policy Report

We are seeking applications for the 2022 – 2026 editorship of the *Social Policy Report (SPR).* As one of SRCD's hallmark policy publications, the SPR serves as a critical source of scientific knowledge about human development and its application to policy. The SPR is distributed to the membership of SRCD (about 5,000 researchers) and to approximately 300 policy and science organizations, federal agency officials, foundations, advocacy organizations, and policy journalists. The new editor will assume the title of Incoming Editor on May 1, 2022, and will assume the Editor role on July 1, 2022 (at which point they will begin receiving manuscripts).

Given SRCD's strong commitment to advance the developmental sciences *and* promote the use of research to improve human lives (see SRCD's mission and vision for more information), the search committee is especially interested in candidates' unique editorial visions, with particular focus on: (1) how they would increase the policy relevance of manuscripts through the editorial process, (2) how they would encourage robust SPR submissions from a variety of policy-relevant research areas, and (3) how they would incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) approaches into the editorial process.

The application deadline for the editorship is February 4, 2022. To learn more about this opportunity and how to apply, visit SRCD's website.

Legislative Branch Updates

FY 2022 Appropriations Update

Fiscal Year 2022 Appropriations: Leadership Discussions Continue

Last December, President Joe Biden signed H.R. 6119, the Further Extending Government Funding Act into law, a continuing resolution that provides stopgap funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 appropriations (the fiscal year that began on October 1) and extends funding to federal agencies through February 18, 2022. On January 13, U.S House Committee on Appropriations Chair Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-VT) released a joint statement about their recent bicameral, bipartisan meeting with appropriations committee leadership, noting "We appreciated the opportunity to have a constructive Four Corners conversation today on completing fiscal year 2022 appropriations. We look forward to further conversations in the coming days, with the shared goal of finishing our work by the February 18 government funding deadline." Of note, Congress must pass another stopgap funding measure that would postpone the completion of the FY 2022 appropriations process again or complete the appropriations process by February 18 to avoid a government shutdown.

Additional Hearings of Interest

- **Ensuring the Equitable Delivery of Disaster Benefits.** On January 19, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the U.S. House Committee on Financial Services held a hearing on "Ensuring Equitable Delivery of Disaster Benefits to Vulnerable Communities and Peoples: An Examination of GAO's Findings of the [Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery] Program." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.
- **Addressing COVID-19 Variants: A Federal Perspective on Response Efforts**. On January 11, the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions held a hearing on "Addressing New Variants: A Federal Perspective on the COVID-19 Response." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.

Executive Branch Updates

Highlights

NIH RFI: Research Challenges and Needs in the Biobehavioral Mechanisms of Aggression

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recently issued a request for information (RFI) on "Research Challenges and Needs in the Biobehavioral Mechanisms of Aggression." The NIH requests feedback, comments, and ideas from the scientific community on biobehavioral mechanisms of aggression as they relate to health risks. The RFI notes, "Because the biobehavioral mechanisms underlying aggression and its interactions with other risky health behaviors are not fully understood, current interventions to prevent or mitigate aggressive behavior and treatments for those experiencing the impacts of aggression have had varied success. However, new approaches including innovative methodologies and techniques for researching neural circuit function and biobehavioral aspects underlying aggressive behavior can help identify regulatory processes and mechanisms of aggressive behaviors in animals and humans and establish the neurobiological basis of aggression. Applying these new approaches may facilitate the identification of new biological or behavioral therapeutic targets that can improve therapeutic translation from laboratory to real-world implementation. Translating mechanistic knowledge to inform the development, evaluation, and implementation of innovative interventions to prevent and treat aggressive behavior in humans remains a challenge for the research community." NIH requests feedback from a variety of stakeholders from the scientific community, including but not limited to researchers, healthcare professional organizations, and scientific and professional organizations, among others. Read the RFI for more information and consider submitting a comment. Interested parties should submit comments **by January 31, 2022**.

NSF RFI: Future Topics for the NSF Convergence Accelerator

The National Science Foundation (NSF) released a Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) outlining a request for information (RFI) on topics for the NSF Convergence Accelerator. The NSF Convergence Accelerator was launched in 2019 with the following intended goals: "to accelerate use-inspired convergence research in areas of national importance and societal challenges, and to initiate convergence team-building capacity around exploratory, potentially high-risk proposals addressing selected convergent research topics." More specifically, this RFI solicits feedback from "...industry, institutions of higher education (IHEs), non-profits, state and local governments, and other interested parties on potential NSF Convergence Accelerator tracks for the next round of funding, anticipated in fiscal year (FY) 2023." Please note the RFI does not request research proposals. Read the Dear Colleague Letter for more information and consider submitting a response. Interested parties should submit their responses by **February 28, 2022.**

National Advisory Child Health and Human Development Council Holds Meeting

The National Advisory Child Health and Human Development (NACHHD) Council convened from January 11-12. The NACHHD Council is responsible for advising, consulting with, and providing the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Director with recommendations on issues related to NICHD research, research support activities, and functions. The Council covered a variety of topics ranging from the NICHD STrategies to enRich Inclusion and achieVe Equity (STRIVE) Initiative to the National Institutes of Health's Center for Scientific Review's efforts to mitigate bias in the peer review process. For more information about the recent council meeting, read the public agenda, review the presentations, and view the recording.

NIH UNITE Initiative Listening Sessions: Register Now

The National Institutes of Health's (NIH) UNITE Initiative, which was established to identify and address structural racism in the biomedical research community and foster efforts to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within the NIH, is hosting a series of virtual listening sessions. According to the NIH, "the insights shared will provide valuable information on the full range of issues and challenges facing diverse talent and will help develop UNITE initiative priorities and an action plan. Topics of interest include changing culture to promote equity, inclusivity, and justice; improving policies, transparency, and oversight; strengthening career pathways, training, mentoring, and the professoriate; ensuring fairness in review and funding deliberations; enhancing funding and research support for diverse institutions and historically under-resourced research areas; and structural racism in the biomedical research enterprise." To register for an upcoming listening session, visit NIH's website.

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) *Research Agenda for Home-Based Child Care (HBCC).* This report describes a research agenda intended to (1) help the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), state and local agencies, and other

stakeholders deepen their understanding of HBCC availability and quality, and the factors that influence its availability and quality; (2) reveal key gaps in knowledge and data and propose research questions that can help fill those gaps; (3) propose study designs to inform policy and practice; and (4) set the stage for the Home-Based Child Care Supply and Quality (HBCCSQ) project's next steps.

(2) *Pandemic-Era Innovations for the Future of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Programs*. Public health restrictions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic ushered in a wave of adaptations and innovations in how TANF programs operate, many of which could be sustained beyond the pandemic. This report highlights themes related to innovations in use of technology and participant engagement.

(3) *Promoting a Culture of Continuous Learning in Early Care and Education (ECE) Settings.* This report and brief share findings from the feasibility study of implementing an innovative continuous quality improvement methodology called the *Breakthrough Series Collaborative* (BSC) in ECE centers.

(4) *Coparenting and Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education for Dads (CHaRMED): Results from a Qualitative Study of Staff and Participant Experiences in Nine Fatherhood Programs*. This report informs the broader fatherhood practice and research fields about the ways in which fatherhood programs support, or could better support, fathers' healthy coparenting and romantic relationships.

(5) *Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education with Integrated Economic Stability Services: The Impacts of Empowering Families*. This report is the second in a series of two reports on the implementation and impacts of *Empowering Families*. It describes the program's impacts after one 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) *Methods and Emerging Strategies to Engage People with Lived Experience*. This report identifies methods and emerging strategies to engage people with lived experience in federal research, programming, and policymaking. It draws on lessons learned from federal initiatives across a range of human services areas to identify ways that federal staff can meaningfully and effectively engage people with lived experience.

(2) *Interim Cost and Quality Findings from the National Evaluation of the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) Demonstration*. This report describes (1) changes in CCBHC rates and costs from the first demonstration year (DY1) to the second (DY2); (2) performance on quality measures in DY1; and (3) the extent to which states provided Quality Bonus Payments (QBPs) to CCBHCs for demonstration year one (DY1).

(3) *Child and Caregiver Outcomes Using Linked Data: Project Overview*. This report provides a high-level project overview of this project, which provides technical assistance to states to develop state-specific datasets linking the Medicaid administrative claims of parents with the records of their children from the child welfare system.

(4) *Towards an Analytic Framework to Address Economic-Related Risk Factors in Child Welfare: Event Summary*. This report summarizes an expert roundtable focused on two objectives: 1) creating an analytic framework and identifying tools to help states deploy resources to address economic risk factors for child maltreatment and 2) identifying steps to develop the data capacity and infrastructure needed to implement the analytic framework.

(5) *Variation in Use of Anti-SARS-CoV-2 Monoclonal Antibody Therapies by Social Vulnerability and Urbanicity*. Despite the benefits offered by monoclonal antibody treatment, early reports indicated that these therapeutics were not being widely used. This report explores variation in use of the first two monoclonal antibodies from November 2020 through March 2021.

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) *College Affordability Views and College Enrollment.* This report uses data from the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLS:09) and shows differences in college enrollment and employment by views on college affordability when in high school.

(2) *California's Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPAs): Funding Patterns, Inclusion Rates, and Student Outcomes*. This report explores the impact on the surrounding small and midsized districts when large

districts become single-district SELPAs.

(3) *Examining the Implementation and Impact of Full-day Kindergarten (FDK) in Oregon*. In 2015/16, through a policy shift, Oregon changed its funding structure for kindergarten enrollment, which created incentives for districts to offer FDK. This report and brief examine several aspects of FDK in Oregon.

(4) *Branching Out: Using Decision Trees to Inform Education Decisions*. Classification and Regression Tree (CART) analysis is a statistical modeling approach that uses quantitative data to predict future outcomes by generating decision trees. This report introduces CART analysis as an approach that allows data analysts to generate actionable analytic results that can inform educators' decisions about the allocation of extra supports for students.

U.S. Federal Funding Opportunities

The January 2022 FFO lists over 100 funding opportunities for research, evaluation, and dissemination. Below we highlight a few funding opportunities from this month's FFO:

(1) **Grant to Support Injury Research Data Linkage and Analysis:** A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funding opportunity to support the use of data science techniques for new data linkage and analysis to understand risk and protective factors for one of the following two injury research topics: suicide attempts and/or intentional self-harm OR unintentional drowning deaths. Applications are due by March 8, 2022.

(2) **Grant to Support Education Policy and Practice Research Networks:** A Department of Education (ED) funding opportunity to support research networks for researchers that are working on critical education policy and practice problems to share ideas, build new knowledge, and strengthen their research and dissemination capacity. Please note all applications must address the following topic: Leveraging Evidence to Accelerate Recovery Nationwide Network. Applications are due by March 10, 2022.

(3) **Grant to Study the Transition to Adulthood Among Individuals with Autism:** A Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funding opportunity to support research that advances the evidence base on the social determinants and risk factors associated with healthy life outcomes among adolescents and

young adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) who are transitioning to adulthood. Applications are due by April 4, 2022.

(4) **Grant to Study Family Health and Well-Being:** A National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding opportunity to advance the science of minority health and health disparities by supporting research on family health and well-being and resilience to promote equity. Applications are due by June 5, 2022.

Read about these and other funding opportunities.