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# SRCD Federal Policy Fellow Professional Portfolio Abstracts: Dianna Tran, Ph.D.

2021-2022 SRCD Federal Executive Branch Policy Fellow at the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

AUTHOR

Dianna Tran, Ph.D.

**Introduction:** During my fellowship at the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE), I have had the opportunity to support federal staff in providing oversight of rigorous research and evaluation projects that support the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) programs. Much of the research and evaluation I have supported has been relevant to the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), Child Care and Early Education (CCEE) Workforce, and strategies implemented by states, territories, and tribes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Portfolio Entry 1: ECE-RISE (Receiving Individualized Support for Evaluation Capacity Building) – Information Sheet**

**Project Overview:**

*Background*: ECE-RISE offers an opportunity for two CCDF agencies to receive tailored support to answer a specific research question and develop research practices that will help lead agencies make more informed decisions about policies, programs, and practices. Additionally, ECE-RISE offers to set up a peer learning community for CCDF agency staff to share knowledge and collaborate with each other.

*Goal(s)*: To offer tailored support to two CCDF lead agencies for evaluation capacity building.

**Contributions of Fellow:**

- Supported federal project officers in reviewing:
- Draft application templates that CCDF agencies would complete if they were interested in participating in ECE-RISE
- Criteria to select CCDF agencies for participation
- Workplans describing the timeline and schedule for completing project activities
- Information sheets and slides describing ECE-RISE

**Activity Focus Keywords:** Conduct Interviews; Document Review; Evaluation; Needs Assessment
**Policy Area Keywords:** Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)
**Knowledge & Skills Keywords:** Federal and state policy connections

**Portfolio Entry 2: Building and Sustaining the ECE Workforce (BASE) – Briefing for Congressional Research Service**

**Project Overview:**

*Background*: The BASE Workforce contract aims to evaluate strategies that support the recruitment and retention of the ECE workforce through activities that include a literature review, environmental scan, expert and stakeholder engagement, secondary analyses, and potentially data collection. It has been widely understood that workforce retention is a significant challenge among ECE programs that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Goal(s)*: To increase knowledge and understanding of factors that affect workforce turnover in early care and education and build evidence on current initiatives at state, local, and provider levels across the United

States.

**Contributions of Fellow:**

- Supported federal staff in reviewing:
- Memos summarizing information-gathering activities (literature review, environmental scan, cross cutting themes across the literature review and environmental scan)
- Conceptual framework depicting strategy themes and contexts
- Work Plans for Secondary Data Analysis
- Design options for evaluation
- Dissemination briefs
- Conference presentation for the National Research Conference on Early Childhood (NRCEC) 2022
- Supported federal staff in sharing findings with federal partners, including:
- Congressional Research Service
- Government Accountability Office
- Office of Head Start
- Office of Child Care

**Activity Focus Keywords:** Cross-Agency Collaboration; Document Review; Framework Development; Literature Review; Presentation ; Survey Design; Written Report
**Policy Area Keywords:** Child Care Development Fund (CCDF); Head Start; Workforce
**Knowledge & Skills Keywords:** What information policymakers need; Conducting research that's useful to policy and practice; Incorporating a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens

**Portfolio Entry 3: Child Care and Early Education Policy and Research Analysis (CCEEPRA) Project - COVID-19 Research, Evaluation, and Data Agenda for Child Care and Early Education**

**Project Overview:**

*Background*: CCEEPRA aims to inform policies and practices related to the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) through a variety of activities that aim to address the needs of children and families with low incomes and the child care and early education workforce. Topical areas include (but are not limited to) COVID-19 response, quality, CCEE workforce, and school-age care.

*Goal(s)*: To support policy and program planning with rigorous research-based information by identifying high-priority issues in CCEE and developing research activities to address issues and share findings with federal, state, and regional leaders.

**Contributions of Fellow:**

- Supported federal staff in leading oversight of the following CCEEPRA activities:
- Secondary Data Analysis of Workforce Compensation data using the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE)
- Center-based Workforce Turnover: Secondary Data Analysis of NSECE
- Workforce Demographics: Secondary Data Analysis of NSECE
- NSECE Search and Use of Care: Secondary Data Analysis
- COVID Research, Evaluation, and Data Agenda for Child Care and Early Education
- COVID-19 Case Studies
- Child Care Disruptions during COVID-19: Secondary Data Analysis
- State CCDF Subsidy Policies and Outcomes Case Studies
- Supported federal staff in reviewing deliverables such as:
- Analysis plans
- Expert engagement plans
- Conference presentation for the National Research Conference on Early Childhood (NRCEC) 2022
- Literature review memos
- Special topics paper
- Interview and recruitment protocol
- Supported federal staff in sharing findings with federal partners (Office of Child Care)

**Activity Focus Keywords:** Conduct Interviews; Data Analysis; Data Visualization; Disseminate Findings; Document Review; Literature Review; Presentation
**Policy Area Keywords:** Center-based Child Care; Child Care Development Fund (CCDF); Child Care Subsidy; Family Child Care ; National Research Conference on Early Childhood (NRCEC)
**Knowledge & Skills Keywords:** How data informs decision-making; What information policymakers need; Processes to connect research to policy and practice; Conducting research that's useful to policy and practice; Effective communication between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers; Incorporating a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens

**Portfolio Entry 4: Understanding Supply-Building and Sustainability Efforts of the Child Care and Early Education (CCEE) Market – Project Description**

**Project Overview:**

*Background*: The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the child care and early education market, and this contract aims to understand how supply-building or sustainability efforts have been responsive to these changes.

*Goal(s)*: To better understand the types of child care and early education (CCEE) supply-building and sustainability efforts states, territories, and tribes are undertaking as well as to plan for a potential future evaluation of those efforts.

**Contributions of Fellow:**

- Supported federal staff in developing the request for proposals and served as a technical advisor to the review panel.
- Supported federal staff in reviewing:
- Work Plans
- Literature Review
- Data Analysis
- Environmental Scan
- Secondary Data Analysis Memos
- Expert Engagement Materials
- Case Study Designs
- Engaged with program partners at the Office of Child Care to discuss research priorities and gather information on strategies tribal communities have implemented

**Activity Focus Keywords:** Conduct Interviews; Cross-Agency Collaboration; Data Analysis; Literature Review; Survey Design
**Policy Area Keywords:** Center-based Child Care; Child Care Development Fund (CCDF); Child Care Subsidy; Family Child Care
**Knowledge & Skills Keywords:** Evidence-based policymaking at the state level; What information policymakers need; Conducting research that's useful to policy and practice; Effective communication

between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers

read more about Dianna's fellowship experience