

[NEWS](#)

2025 SRCD Governing Council Election Candidates

Meet the 2025 SRCD Governing Council candidates for President-Elect and Governing Council Member-at-Large

The 2025 SRCD Governing Council Election

Thank you for participating in the processes of nominating and voting for members of our next Governing Council. **Voting concluded on Friday, February 7, 2025.** Please stay tuned for updates on election results.

The [Governing Council](#) is comprised of a President, President-Elect, Past President, Secretary, Treasurer, and At-Large members. The President, Secretary, Treasurer, and a subset of At-Large members are elected by SRCD members. The remainder of At-Large members are appointed by the Governing Council to ensure maximal diversity of representation.

The election's nominees are featured (in alphabetical order) below.

Bios: Candidates for President-Elect (2025-2027)

[Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, Ph.D.](#)

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Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, Ph.D.

Jeanne Brooks-Gunn is the Virginia and Leonard Marx Professor of Child Development at Teachers College and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University. She earned her Ed.M. from Harvard University and PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. Her research focuses on biological and social transitions through childhood, adolescence and adulthood, as well as the environmental factors (such as parental education, income, mental health and stability, as well as neighborhood conditions) that enhance and constrain wellbeing and changes in wellbeing over time. She also conducts evaluations of national and multi-site interventions for children. She is a member of the National Academy of Medicine and has received lifetime awards for her policy infused work from SRCD, SRA, APA, APS, NIH, Harvard Graduate School of Education, and AASPS and has an honorary degree from Northwestern University. She has served on the NIDA Board of Scientific Counselors and NICHD Intramural Board of Scientific Counselors. Specifically, with SRCD, she has served on the SRCD Governing Council and co-edited the SRCD Social Policy Reports for over a decade. She was one of the co-founders of the University Consortium on Child Policy which ran through SRCD. She was honored to receive SRCD's Contributions to the Public Policy Award for Children Award.

Christia Spears Brown, Ph.D.



Christia Spears Brown, Ph.D.

My affiliation with SRCD began in 1998 as a graduate student at The University of Texas at Austin. Currently, I am a Professor of Developmental Psychology and Associate Dean at the University of Kentucky. My research explores children's and adolescents' experiences with discrimination and the development of stereotypes and group identity. I am also an APS Fellow, on the board for Council on Contemporary Families, and the President of Society for the Study of Human Development. For the past 20 years, I have contributed extensively to SRCD through various roles: I have been a member of the Ethnic and Racial Issues, Nominations, and Publications Committees; chaired the Equity and Justice Committee; helped establish the SOGIE Caucus; and was a member of the Rapid Assessment and Response Strategy Team. In 2019, I was the SRCD Scholar-in-Residence while writing *Unraveling Bias*. I am currently a member of the Governing Council and am helping SRCD revise their code of ethical conduct.

As SRCD President, my goals would be to advance the organization's global reach and impact, solidify inclusive and transparent practices, and move toward greater financial sustainability. By supporting scholars from underrepresented regions and creating opportunities for cross-cultural collaborations, as well as strengthening partnerships with policymakers and other stakeholders, SRCD can become the global organization for scientific expertise on child and adolescent development. Transparency, anti-racism, and ethics would remain central to my goals, and I would work to ensure our publications, conferences, and funding opportunities actively dismantle barriers to inclusion. Maintaining financial strength and sustainability is also critical to SRCD's long-term success, and it will be important to re-engage scholars across all career stages. By embracing our role as a global leader, SRCD can foster research excellence, advance policy, and strengthen connections across continents. Through this vision, we can ensure that SRCD not only thrives but also continues to make a profound impact on the lives of children and families around the world.

Deborah Rivas-Drake, Ph.D.



Deborah Rivas-Drake, Ph.D.

I am the Stephanie J. Rowley Collegiate Professor of Education and Professor of Psychology at the University of Michigan. My scholarship examines how school, peer, family, and community settings support adolescents in navigating issues related to race and ethnicity, and how these experiences inform young people's academic, socioemotional, and civic development. I have been recognized for excellence in my scholarship, mentorship, and service. I have also collaboratively developed products for parents, educators, non-profit organizations, youth program developers, and industry.

I have extensive leadership experience as an academic administrator at the University of Michigan and through service to SRCD as the Secretary of our Governing Council and Executive Committee. As part of the EC and GC, I have collaborated with three presidents (current, former, and president-elect) as well as our Treasurer and Executive Director to help advance a strategic and fiscally sound vision for the organization. Previously, I have served as a member and Chair of our Publications Committee, biennial conference panel review Chair, member of our Nominations Committee, and member of our Senior Distinguished Contributions Awards Committee.

The hallmarks of my work to date in SRCD are the same ones I would continue to prioritize as President:

- 1) to support and develop strategic initiatives that strengthen our capacity to elevate and leverage the research, practice, and policy expertise of our members, especially those whose work focuses on the most pressing inequalities affecting youth;
 - 2) to actively strengthen our organizational identity as an intellectual home for scholars from socially marginalized groups in the U.S. and around the world, particularly graduate and early career scholars who represent the future of the field and of SRCD; and
 - 3) to make our organization's practices more transparent and sustainable so that we can continue building upon our successes more inclusively going forward.
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Bios: Candidates for Governing Council Member-at-Large (2025-2031)

Margarita Azmitia, Ph.D.



Margarita Azmitia, Ph.D.

I grew up in a large family in Guatemala. At 17, I got the opportunity to attend college in North Carolina. I didn't realize how terrible my English was until I got there but muddled through and received my BA and MA from UNCG. I received my Ph.D. in Child Development from the Institute of Child Development at the University of Minnesota in 1986 and, since 1989, have been a faculty member at the University of California at Santa Cruz. I joined SRCD during graduate school and have been an active member for over 30 years. I am also a member of the Latinx and the Black Caucuses and have served on the steering committee of the Latinx Caucus, been a mentor for the Horowitz scholars, and currently serve on SRCD's Implementation Task Force for the recommendations proposed by SRCD's Task Force on Publications and Ethical Behavior.

I aim to contribute to the vision of developing a culturally sensitive and inclusive society for all members and working through the challenges that are unavoidable for large societies that include members from the majority and minority (i.e., Western) world. For over 30 years, my research has focused on the school transitions of minoritized, immigrant, low-income children and youth. My current work primarily focuses on students who are the first generation in their families to attend college. Our mixed-methods research investigates how their ethnic/race, gender, social class, and sexuality identities, emotional support from parents and peers, and coping with discrimination relate to their sense of belonging, persistence and well-being. I am excited about the possibility of serving the Society by being a member of the Governing Council and collaborating to implement socially just, inclusive policies and practices.

Ximena Franco-Jenkins, Ph.D.



Ximena Franco-Jenkins, Ph.D.

It is an honor to be nominated to the SRCD Governing Council as a member at large. As a dedicated member of SRCD since 2011, I am deeply committed to the Society's mission and vision of advancing the scientific study of child development. I am a developmental psychologist with over 20 years of experience in research evaluation and implementation science. I am a senior research scientist at the University of North Carolina Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG) and co-director of FPG's National Implementation Research Network (NIRN). My research focuses on high-quality dual language programs, enhancing socio-emotional and academic outcomes for multilingual learners, and improving early childhood education quality.

My service is dedicated to promoting research on child development, especially within understudied communities. I was elected and re-elected to serve as Treasurer for the SRCD Latinx Caucus from 2015 to 2019, and I continue to be a member of the SRCD Latinx and Black Caucuses. I also have served two terms on the SRCD Finance and Audit Committee, contributing to strategic planning and financial oversight. These experiences have provided valuable insights into the field's challenges and opportunities and fostered my commitment to collaborative and inclusive approaches. Lastly, I served on the SRCD Communication Advisory Panel.

My leadership skills, collaborative approach, commitment to diversity and inclusion, and understanding of SRCD's operations would be valuable assets to the Governing Council. I am eager to contribute my time and expertise to guide the Society's future direction and effectively represent the membership's interests.

Silvia Koller, Ed.D.





Silvia Koller, Ed.D.

I am Silvia Koller, a Brazilian developmental psychologist with over 40 years of experience in research, education, and advocacy for child development. My work has been dedicated to fostering international collaboration and amplifying the voices of underrepresented regions, particularly the Global South. I have served as a Full Professor and Chair of the Center for Psychological Studies of At-Risk Populations in Brazilian universities and as a Visiting Scholar at Harvard University. Currently, I hold academic positions in South Africa, Brazil, and Peru.

My longstanding engagement with SRCD includes serving as Co-Chair of SRCD's 2019 Program Committee, Chair of the International Affairs Committee, and member of the SRCD Development Committee. These roles have deepened my commitment to ensuring SRCD's inclusivity and global relevance.

If elected to SRCD's Governing Council, I will advocate for the integration of diverse perspectives, particularly from the Global South, in developmental science and leadership. My vision is to enhance SRCD's global visibility and inclusivity by prioritizing initiatives that expand its presence in underserved regions and promote equitable collaborations. I am committed to bridging

research gaps, supporting culturally relevant methodologies, and addressing the unique challenges faced by children in low-resource settings.

Through my extensive network and experience, I aim to amplify the voices of scholars and communities from the Global South, ensuring their representation within SRCD. Together, we can foster a more inclusive developmental science that truly reflects the diverse realities and needs of children worldwide.

Florrie Fei-Yin Ng, Ph.D.



Florrie Fei-Yin Ng, Ph.D.

I am a Professor and Chair of the Department of Educational Psychology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Born and raised in Hong Kong, I completed my undergraduate and doctoral studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I returned to Hong Kong after

receiving postdoctoral training at New York University and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. My research focuses on the role of parents in child development, with attention to how cultural, socioeconomic, and child factors shape parenting cognitions and practices. I am particularly interested in how socialization serves as a pathway through which cultural values are transmitted to children, enabling culture to endure while adapting to changing ecologies. In SRCD, I have served as a member of the International Affairs Committee and an Associate Editor of *Child Development*. Currently, I am a member of the Publications Committee. I am a long-term member of the Asian Caucus and serve on the Publication and Scientific Programming Subcommittee.

Based in Asia, I am committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion on a global scale. I believe that addressing inequities and amplifying underrepresented voices in developmental science requires a sustained commitment, strategic investment of resources, and deliberate efforts to equip and empower researchers from underrepresented backgrounds. These actions are essential not only for building a more inclusive and equitable academic community, but also for fostering a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of human development—one that truly reflects the rich diversity of human experiences.

Natalia Palacios, Ph.D.

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Natalia Palacios, Ph.D.

Natalia Palacios is Associate Professor of Education in the Educational Psychology: Applied Developmental Science Program at the University of Virginia's School of Education and Human Development. She earned her Ph.D. in Human Development and Social Policy from Northwestern University. Dr. Palacios's research examines the familial and instructional processes that support the development and success of Latinx children, with a focus on recognizing and integrating cultural and linguistic assets into educational settings. By employing both quantitative and qualitative methods, her work provides nuanced insights into teacher-family dynamics and the developmental trajectories of English learners and immigrant children. Her research highlights the critical role of family engagement and teacher practices in fostering Latinx children's academic and socio-emotional growth. Her findings have been published in leading journals such as *Child Development*, *Child Development Perspectives*, *Developmental Psychology*, and *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* and has been funded by various organizations including the Institute for Education Sciences and the Spencer Foundation. With over two decades of involvement in SRCD, Dr. Palacios has held several leadership roles, including Co-Chair of the Student and Early Career Council. She has also served on the Task Force on Publications and Ethical Behavior and is currently a member of the SRCD Publications

Committee. Dr. Palacios has been a strong advocate for initiatives that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as for promoting transparency and ethical integrity in SRCD's practices. Her significant experience with SRCD equips her to address critical governance issues, enhance SRCD's impact, and support its members in producing research that is both rigorous and socially meaningful. As Member-at-Large, Dr. Palacios aims to continue championing equity-driven initiatives and fostering collaborative engagement across the organization.

Jessica Sommerville, Ph.D.



Jessica Sommerville, Ph.D.

I am honored to be nominated for membership on the Governing Council of the SRCD, an organization I have been deeply committed to since 1999. As a professor of psychology at the University of Toronto, my research focuses on the development of social and moral cognition from infancy through early childhood, with a particular emphasis on mechanisms of

developmental change and individual differences. My research has been supported by NSF, NIH, NSERC, SSHRC, the Canadian Foundation for Innovation, and the John Templeton Foundation.

My leadership experience spans across various roles, including serving as President-Elect for the International Congress on Infant Studies, Associate Editor at Child Development, as a member of the Planning Committee for the 2022 International Congress on Infant Studies in Ottawa, and as a panel member for the NIH Cognition and Perception Study Section. Additionally, I have contributed to SRCD by serving as a Panel Chair for past Biennial Conferences.

As Member-at-Large, I aim to promote diversity and inclusion by fostering opportunities for scholars in training and junior scholars. I am committed to advancing developmental science through interdisciplinary methods that address diverse cultural contexts. I also seek to identify novel funding sources for developmental science, build capacity with allied international societies and foundations, and innovate strategies to translate and disseminate developmental research. I believe these initiatives will strengthen SRCD's impact and ensure that our research continues to shape the field of developmental science and beyond.

Members, we greatly appreciate your ongoing support of SRCD and look forward to informing you of the outcome of the election!