

| POSTED MARCH 11, 2026

SRCD Emeritus Mentorship Program

The SRCD Emeritus Mentorship Program connects early- and mid-career SRCD members with Emeritus members for mentorship, professional guidance, and community building across career stages in the field of child development.

The SRCD Emeritus Mentorship Program is not currently accepting applications for the 2026–2027 program cycle.

Quick Links:

[About the Program](#)

[Program Objectives](#)

[Mentorship Structure](#)

[Mentor Benefits](#)

[Meet the Mentors and Mentees](#)

[Get Involved](#)

About the Program

The SRCD Emeritus Mentorship Program connects early- and mid-career SRCD members with experienced Emeritus members for mentorship, professional guidance, and community building. The program creates opportunities for established scholars and professionals to share their expertise while supporting the next generation of researchers and practitioners in child development.

Developed by the SRCD Membership Committee, this pilot initiative expands networking and mentorship opportunities and provides a meaningful pathway for Emeritus members to contribute their knowledge and experience to the broader SRCD community.

Through small-group mentorship meetings and collaborative discussion, participants explore topics related to professional development, research, career pathways, and navigating the field of child development.

Program Objectives

The SRCD Emeritus Mentorship Program aims to:

- Provide opportunities for early and mid-career SRCD members to receive mentoring in professional and research activities.
 - Engage SRCD Emeritus members with SRCD and provide their expertise to early and mid-career members.
-

Mentorship Structure

The Emeritus Mentorship Program is structured as a small-group mentorship experience that promotes open dialogue and collaborative learning.

- **Mentor Groups:** Each group is led by an SRCD Emeritus member and includes approximately 5–8 early- or mid-career SRCD members.
- **Meeting Format:** Groups meet virtually via Zoom on a monthly basis.
- **Discussion Topics:** Mentees are encouraged to share questions, challenges, and discussion topics related to research, career development, professional transitions, and the broader field of child development.
- **Program Community:** Participants will have the opportunity to connect as a cohort throughout the program and participate in a final gathering at the SRCD 2027 Biennial Meeting in Atlanta.

The program is designed to be flexible and responsive to the interests and needs of each mentorship group.

Mentor Benefits

Serving as an Emeritus mentor provides an opportunity to continue contributing to the field while supporting the next generation of SRCD members.

Mentors benefit from:

- Knowledge Sharing: Share professional insights and experiences with emerging scholars and professionals.
 - Intergenerational Collaboration: Build meaningful relationships with early- and mid-career members.
 - Community Impact: Contribute to strengthening mentorship, professional development, and collaboration within the field of child development.
-

SRCD Emeritus Mentorship Program Mentors and Mentees

Meet the Mentors and Mentees

SRCD Emeritus Mentorship Program Mentors

■

Dr. Linda Baker



Linda is a Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the

University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). Linda received her Ph.D. from Rutgers University with specializations in cognitive and developmental psychology. She joined UMBC in 1979 and advanced through leadership roles including Department Chair, Director of the Applied Developmental Psychology Ph.D. Program, and President of the Faculty Senate.

Dr. Baker research has been widely cited and focused on development in relation to education. Specific areas include early reading development and the home literacy environment, motivation for reading, metacognition and comprehension monitoring, and instructional interventions. Projects have been funded by NICHD, NSF, and the Spencer Foundation. Dr. Baker has been a Fellow of both the American Educational Research Association and the American Psychological Association.

Dr. Linda Barker continues her during retirement to serve as an editor, reviewer, grant panelist, and accreditation site visitor. These experiences have deepened her understanding of the academic landscape and the challenges faced by emerging scholars.

Dr. Gary Resnick



Gary is a nationally recognized expert in child development research and program evaluation. Dr. Resnick earned a PhD in Applied Developmental Psychology from the Eliot-Pearson Institute of Child Study and Human Development, Tufts University.

He has evaluated early childhood education programs, assessed school readiness outcomes, measured attachment in early adolescence, examined Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS), and measured inter-agency collaboration and coordination.

As Senior Study Director at Westat in Rockville, Maryland, he served as Deputy Project Director for the first three cohorts of the Head Start FACES study and contributed to the Head Start Impact Study (HSIS), and the Early Childhood Longitudinal Studies (ECLS-B/K). He served as Director of Research at Harder + Company Community Research, and, since 2012 Dr. Resnick founded an independent research and evaluation consultancy. He currently serves as Special Content/Associate Editor for The Early Childhood Research Quarterly.

SRCD Emeritus Mentorship Program Mentees

Dr. Baker's Mentees

Yu (Tina) Chen



Dr. Tina Chen is a postdoctoral fellow in the Division of

Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics at NYU Grossman School of Medicine and proudly serves as an Early Career Representative for the SRCD Asian Caucus. She received her PhD in Human Development from the University of Maryland, College Park. Her research focuses on how children's proximal and distal environments influence their development in the first years of life. One way she investigates this topic is by examining the associations between early home learning environments—learning resources, cognitively stimulating activities, and responsive parent-child interactions—and language development in monolingual and bilingual children. Additionally, she studies how distal factors (e.g., SES, parent mental health and self-efficacy, marital and co-parenting relationships, social support, and cultural beliefs) shape early home learning environments and in turn child outcomes. Lastly, she conducts translational research by assessing the effects of preventive interventions on school readiness outcomes through enhancing proximal and distal environments and by developing strategies to broaden the impacts of these interventions for children and families from varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Dr. Chen's long-term goal is to establish an innovative and rigorous research program as a tenure-track faculty and support the next generations of child development researchers through teaching and mentoring.

Nicole Kingdon



Dr. **Nicole Kingdon** is a doctoral student in Educational Studies

with a concentration in Language and Literacy Education at Boston University's Wheelock College of Education & Human Development. She is also the Center Coordinator and a Research Fellow at the Center on the Ecology of Early Development (CEED), where she supports several projects, including the Massachusetts Playful Learning Institute Evaluation and Multnomah Preschool for All Research and Evaluation Partnership.

Nicole is a certified 200-hour trauma-informed yoga teacher and social-emotional learning facilitator through Breathe for Change. Her research examines how mindfulness practices can support the language, literacy, and social-emotional development of young children experiencing marginalization. Grounded in Embodiment Theory, Nicole specializes in using storytelling through yogic postures as a developmentally responsive approach to teaching mindfulness-based social-emotional learning while also strengthening language and literacy skills.

Through her contracting work, Mindful Workshops, Nicole partners with schools and community organizations to offer mindfulness programming and currently serves as a yoga teacher at a preschool. She is an alum of the Suffolk University Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program, a research preparatory program for first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students. She also served in the Jumpstart AmeriCorps Program and previously worked as a childcare teacher at Bright Horizons.

Yushan Jiang



Dr. **Yushan Jiang** is a postdoctoral fellow in the Faculty of

Education at The University of Hong Kong. Yushan's research examines child development within the home learning environment. A central line of her work investigates how home literacy practices and family contexts shape children's language and literacy development, with a particular focus on early second-language learning. Yushan employs mixed methods, longitudinal and cross-sectional designs to explore the interplay between parental involvement, family factors, and children's developmental outcomes. Building on this foundation, she is developing a new research strand examining the potential of AI- and technology-assisted learning tools to enhance language and literacy development within home and community settings. Yushan is particularly interested in how these digital interventions can be designed equitably to support diverse learners and promote positive child development.

Emily Mak



Dr. Emily Mak is a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the

Department of Educational Psychology at Texas A&M University. She earned her Ph.D. in Education with an emphasis in Language, Literacy, and Culture from the University of California, Davis. Her research focuses on language and literacy development among young dual language learners from low-income immigrant families, with particular attention to home literacy environments, parent-child interactions, and culturally grounded parenting practices. Her work examines how everyday language practices, such as shared book reading and family communication, support children's oral language, executive functions, and early literacy across diverse cultural contexts, including Mexican American and Chinese American families. Her research has been published in journals including the *Journal of Child Language*, *Early Education and Development*, and *Frontiers in Psychology*. She is committed to research that centers on families' cultural strengths as assets for child development.



Dr. Jun Wang is a postdoctoral scholar in the College of

Education and Human Ecology at The Ohio State University. Jun's research focuses on early

childhood education, examining the intersections of language, culture, identity, and well-being. Jun is particularly interested in how linguistic environments shape children's educational opportunities, academic success, and overall well-being. She also actively engages in research and research-practice partnerships that support early educators' well-being and professional development, strengthen the quality of early childhood settings, and evaluate the effectiveness of school-based interventions.

Jun is honored to join the inaugural Emeritus Mentorship Program as a mentee. As an early-career scholar, Jun looks forward to connecting with researchers who share a commitment to making children's learning and development joyful, equitable, and meaningful. She is excited about the opportunity to work with her mentor, Dr. Linda Baker, to reflect on her strengths and develop strategies for career advancement.



Dr. Sen Wang's research centers on children's language and

literacy development, with a focus on how vocabulary and knowledge accumulate over time to support comprehension. Grounded in an instructional-core framework, her work examines how explicit instruction and teacher-child interactions promote word learning and conceptual growth; how children's engagement with books, multimedia, and technology-enhanced learning environments broadens access to rich linguistic input; and how the linguistic and conceptual qualities of books and digital media—such as lexical features—shape children's language and literacy learning opportunities.

At BU Wheelock, Dr. Wang contributes to the design of instructional components for text reading and comprehension in reading interventions for early elementary students with reading difficulties. She also actively engages in collaborative research exploring innovative applications of AI to enhance language and literacy learning. In addition, she works with the National Center on Improving Literacy (NCIL), which focuses on disseminating evidence-based practices for screening, identifying, and teaching students with literacy-related disabilities, including dyslexia. Her work includes developing and delivering training for educators and families, translating research into practical tools, and creating accessible toolkits for teachers, parents, and state education agencies.

Dr. Gary Resnick's Mentees



Dr. Nneka Ibekwe-Okafor is an Assistant Professor of African

and African Diaspora Studies with courtesy appointments in Early Childhood Education and Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin. Her research sits at the intersection of developmental science, early childhood education, and social policy. She investigates the social and environmental determinants of Black children's early development by examining how structural inequality—including poverty, racial discrimination, and unequal access to quality early care and education—shapes developmental outcomes from birth through age eight.

Her work emphasizes identifying protective and promotive processes across ecological levels to foster optimal academic, social, and emotional development. Through interdisciplinary and policy-engaged research, she aims to inform social policy and practitioner-led interventions

grounded in the science of human development. Dr. Ibekwe-Okafor received her Ph.D. in Human Development and Quantitative Methods from the University of Pennsylvania, an Ed.M. in Prevention Science from Harvard University, and an M.S.W. from Columbia University. She earned her undergraduate degree in African American Studies and Sociology at the University of California, Davis, where she was an NCAA Division I volleyball player.



Dr. Jenn Finders is an Assistant Professor of Human

Development and Family Studies at Colorado State University where she studies programs and policies that expand access to high-quality early learning opportunities for young children, promote family well-being, and support the early childhood workforce. Situated at the intersection of developmental science, education, and public policy, her work examines how early learning contexts shape foundational school readiness skills, such as executive function and social-emotional learning. She is particularly interested in evaluating the effectiveness of early childhood systems designed to promote educational equity, including state prekindergarten, childcare subsidies, and quality improvement systems. Before joining Colorado State University in 2024, Jenn was an Assistant Professor at Purdue University and Policy Chair of the Center for Early Learning where she led efforts to bridge research, policy, and practice. She also served as a Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) State Policy Postdoctoral Fellow, partnering with the Indiana Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning to inform evidence-based decision making.



Dr. Elizabeth Hentschel is an applied global child development

researcher. With a specific focus on child development in low- and middle-income contexts, Elizabeth utilizes both quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate and develop techniques to better understand factors in the home and early childhood education environment that influence children's early development. Her research builds bridges between basic scientific questions (e.g., how do caregiving environments in diverse social, cultural, and economical contexts shape children's development? How do we measure the responsive caregiving processes in cross-cultural settings?) and applied endeavors (e.g., how do we develop effective policies and programs that target early childhood? How do we understand and support caregivers of young children in communities exposed to high adversity?). Elizabeth has conducted applied, child development field work in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Vietnam, India, and Pakistan.

Her work emphasizes partnerships with global agencies (e.g., the World Bank, WHO, and UNICEF) to conduct research that is directly relevant and responsive to global policy. Currently she serves as a Senior Analyst at Abt Global, where she leads many early childhood evaluations. Elizabeth completed her Postdoctoral Training at the Yale Child Study Center, where she led the cross-cultural validation of The Remote Assessment of Learning (ReAL) in the occupied Palestinian territories, Mozambique, El Salvador, the Philippines, Cambodia, Sudan, and Niger. She completed her PhD in Global Health and Population from Harvard University, with a focus on applied statistics in the field of global child development, her Masters in Global Health from Harvard University and her Bachelors in Science from the University of Michigan.



Dr. Irem Korucu is an Assistant Professor in the Department

of Psychology at Florida Atlantic University. Dr. Korucu received her bachelor's degrees in chemistry and psychology and a master's degree in developmental psychology from Koç University, Istanbul, Turkey. After completing her doctorate in human development and family sciences from Purdue University, she pursued postdoctoral training at Yale University Child Study Center. Before joining FAU, Irem held faculty appointments at Yale University and Oregon State University.

Dr. Korucu research examines the development of executive function and self-regulation in early childhood and how contextual factors, such as the quality of early social contexts, contribute to or hinder children's development, learning, and well-being across the lifespan. Dr. Korucu focuses on three related strands of research: 1) the complex relations between executive function and children's academic and social outcomes, 2) the processes linking early social contexts to executive function, academic skills, and well-being over time, 3) prevention and intervention programs designed to promote early executive function for children from traditionally underserved communities. She primarily uses longitudinal and experimental methods, and community-level and nationally representative data sets. Her research program has important implications for young children's executive function and self-regulation development and how to strengthen these skills before formal schooling.

Arianna Pikus



Dr. Arianna Pikus, Ph. D. is an Assistant Professor in the

Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture and a core faculty member of the Institute for Early Childhood Development and Education at Texas A&M University. Her research focuses on expanding access to high-quality science education in early childhood, with an emphasis on leveraging nature as a meaningful context for introducing scientific concepts to young children. She also investigates how natural environments support children's learning, growth, and overall development. Dr. Pikus applies her findings to the design of early childhood science curricula, assessments, and professional development, helping educators bring more meaningful, nature-based science experiences into their classrooms. Her work has been published in leading academic journals such as *AERA Open*, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* and *Early Education & Development*, and she regularly contributes to practitioner-focused publications, including *Young Children* and *Science & Children*. She is also the co-author of the book *Evaluating Natureness Measuring the Quality of Nature-based Classrooms in Pre-K through 3rd Grade* and the *Nature-based Education Rating Scale (NABERS)* which measures the quality of nature integration into Pre-K and K-3rd grade classrooms.

Xiaoya Zhang



Dr. Xiaoya Zhang's research integrates child development,

intervention and prevention science, and advanced quantitative methods to understand how environments shape human development and well-being. Guided by bioecological and person–environment interaction theories, she examines (1) how family and community factors as well as online experiences influence child and adolescent development, with attention to individual differences in susceptibility; (2) what works for whom in evidence-based prevention and intervention programs; and (3) innovative statistical and AI/machine-learning approaches to improve prediction, causal inference, and the estimation of heterogeneous effects. Overall, her work seeks to reveal both average and individualized environmental effects to inform precision-based interventions that promote resilience across diverse populations.

Get Involved

The applications for the SRCD Emeritus Mentorship 2026–2027 program cycle are **currently closed**.

For inquiries, please reach out to the SRCD Membership Team at membership@srcd.org.