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# 2026 SRCD State Policy Fellow Spotlight: AnnaMaria Boullion, Ph.D.

AUTHOR

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SRCD State Policy Fellow

2025-2026 Cohort

**Q: In a few sentences, what is your role at the agency you work for?**

*A: I work within the Early Childhood Mental Health unit which hosts programs like Child First, Incredible Years, and early childhood mental health consultation. I have the privilege of working with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab, as well as the Urban Institute, who are supporting a legislatively required evaluation of the early childhood mental health consultation program, Nurturing Connections Colorado. I also oversee the development of Nurturing Connections' first-ever annual report in partnership with the University of Denver's Butler Institute for Families. Finally, I contribute to a range of cross-functional activities, including participating in hiring panels, coordinating workforce professional development like lunch-and-learns, and evaluating contract applications. Overall, my work is primarily embedded in research initiatives, policy improvement, and efforts to support the early childhood workforce.*

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**Q: What interested you in becoming an SRCD Policy Fellow?**

*A: It has always been my career goal to use my training to improve programs and policies around children and families. The SRCD Policy Fellowship offered the opportunity to bring my research skills and area of expertise to the government while simultaneously exposing me to the world of state government - a world I had never stepped foot in. I'm barely halfway through the fellowship and already feel confident in my ability to use data and research to inform government policies and practices.*

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**Q: What has been the most memorable project you have completed during your time at the agency?**

*A: I have had the honor of being part of a measurement validation study. The Colorado Department of Early Childhood has been collaborating with Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab to develop and evaluate a model of early childhood mental health consultation for the last five years. Through this process, Colorado developed several new assessment tools to support evaluation and address gaps in the current field. Now, with two years of available data, I am working with the team to determine the extent to which the tools accurately measure the specific concepts they were intended to measure. The task used all my statistical training and required me to expand my knowledge in order to accommodate the complexities of real data and measures in the field.*

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**Q: How do you think the fellowship has helped further your career?**

*A: The fellowship helped to develop many of my skills to be used outside of academia. I now have a better idea of what kinds of work researchers outside of academia can offer to the government. As an SRCD fellow, I have translated research for various audiences numerous times which has improved my ability to communicate across audiences. I feel confident in my ability to work with interdisciplinary teams and use research to improve programs and policies whether I may be doing that as an academic or in some other capacity.*

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**Q: What has been your favorite aspect of SRCD's fellowship? Please explain why.**

*A: One of my favorite things about the SRCD fellowship is how eager everyone is to get to know you and talk about aligned interests. The conversations I've had with various people in government, non-profit, and research organizations have been exciting, uplifting, and offered continued opportunities to connect with others in their area. Everyone is very invested in your professional development.*

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**Q: What is your favorite place you have traveled?**

*A: My favorite place so far has been Prague—it is the Europe I romanticized as a child.*