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2026 SRCD State Fellow Spotlight: Dr. Briana Ermanni

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Dr. Briana Ermanni

SRCD State Policy Fellow 2025-2026 Cohort

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

A: Within the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, I work in the Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration, which oversees administration of federal CCDF funding and the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System. My role focuses on strengthening New Hampshire's early childhood research capacity by identifying and collaborating on research priorities related to early care and education, and by partnering with the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire, the state's primary early care and education research hub. I also manage several child care priorities outlined in DHHS's 2025–2027 roadmap, which includes refining child care supply and demand numbers, assessing cost-of-care, and supporting implementation of child care initiatives.

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

A: The fellowship has provided exposure to multiple aspects of the policy process, from data collection and research to policy deliberation and cross-agency rule implementations. Through this work, I have developed skills in interpreting federal regulations, managing and integrating data, building relationships and leveraging

resources, and understanding the dynamic interplay between federal and state governments. These experiences have strengthened my interest in the role data plays in early care and education policy while expanding my professional network, which will support my future endeavors in the field.

Q: What piqued your interest in working in policy?

A: During graduate school, I became increasingly aware of the gap between developmental research and the realities families and children face in their daily lives. This realization sparked my interest in bridging research and practice. I wanted to help translate and implement the policy recommendations we often write about in academic publications.

Q: What words of wisdom would you pass on to someone who is interested in SRCD's fellowship program?

A: Apply, apply! Be open to experiences that challenge your existing knowledge and skills. Many people leave academia with a very specific idea of the career path they will follow and the skills they will use, but once you are embedded in the fellowship work, some of the most meaningful opportunities come from engaging in discussions and experiences outside of your original goals. The fellowship is a chance to grow not only as a researcher, but also as a collaborator and a communicator.

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

A: I have two favorite aspects. One of my favorite aspects of the fellowship has been the opportunity to expand my skillset beyond the specialization that I left graduate school with. It was exciting to see, in real time, the many different ways my research and analytic skills could be applied in policy and practice, while also having dedicated space to learn and grow in those areas. The fellowship gave me the flexibility to explore topics and roles that genuinely interested me. Secondly, learning from and engaging with a cohort of fellows working in different states and on different projects has been so exciting. I've gained wonderful friends and colleagues.

Q: Where are you from?

A: I was born and raised in Michigan, and despite living in three other states, it continues to be my favorite place!