NEWS | POSTED OCTOBER 22, 2026

SRCD Launches Initiative with Over 100 Researchers to Increase the Use of Developmental Science in Immigration Policy

Published

Thursday, October 22, 2026 3:18pm

NEWS RELEASE

Child Policy Hub initiative will bring developmental science to lawmakers, advocates and community leaders working to prevent and mitigate harm to children and support their development

WASHINGTON, DC — The Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), through its Child Policy Hub and with support from the William T. Grant Foundation is launching a new initiative to increase the use of developmental science to support immigrant children and families.The initiative is engaging over 100 researchers and being led by SRCD Policy Committee Co-Chairs, Dr. Dalal Katsiaficas and Dr. Guadalupe Díaz Lara, with leadership from SRCD President-Elect, Dr. Deborah Rivas-Drake.

Immigration policies have profound consequences for children's development and family well-being. Research has demonstrated that experiences such as detention and family separation can produce lasting developmental and psychological consequences. At the same time, developmental science provides important evidence about the strengths and resilience of immigrant children, families, and communities, as well as strategies that can support healthy development.

As policies impacting immigrant children and families continue to evolve and expand across federal, state, and local systems, touching on access to education, basic needs, housing stability, community safety and more, policymakers and advocates need accessible, actionable evidence about how policy decisions affect children and families—and what approaches can help prevent and mitigate harm.

"Developmental science has an important contribution to make to immigration policy—not only by documenting how children are affected, but by identifying policies and practices that can support healthy development," said Dr. Katsiaficas. "This initiative will help bring that evidence into conversations where it can be useful to policymakers, advocates, and others working to improve outcomes for children and families."

Connecting Research to Policy Needs

The initiative will begin with engagement with lawmakers, advocates, community organizations, and other stakeholders to better understand emerging policy questions and evidence needs. SRCD will then engage developmental researchers across disciplines and career stages to identify and synthesize relevant research.

The work will provisionally focus on three areas:

- Strengths and resilience: Synthesizing evidence on the strengths and resilience of immigrant children, families, and communities, along with strategies that support healthy development.
- Cross-system policy levers: Identifying policy levers across legal, education, health, economic, and community systems that can prevent or mitigate harm.
- Two-generation approaches: Highlighting approaches that support both children and caregivers and promote healthy developmental trajectories.

The initiative will include three primary research-to-policy translation components:

1. A cross-sector convening in early 2027 of invited leaders to surface and explore live and emerging policy questions and identify actionable evidence gaps.
2. An SRCD Child Policy Brief or other policy-facing summary in 2027 that translates relevant research into actionable policy guidance.
3. Ongoing conversations and relationship-building with policymakers to share evidence, encourage its use and inform emerging policy questions.

Engaging Developmental Researchers

SRCD is currently engaging more than 100 researchers whose work can contribute to this effort, including scholars working in immigration and child development, education and school stability, mental health and resilience, family systems and two-generation approaches, and systems and ecological approaches to child and family well-being.

Researchers will have opportunities to share relevant research, contribute to evidence synthesis and policy-facing products, participate in the research-policy convening, identify practical policy considerations, and engage in discussions with congressional staff and leading advocates.

“By bringing together researchers across disciplines, we have a powerful opportunity to move research beyond academic spaces and into conversations where it can make a meaningful difference,” said Dr. Díaz Lara. “This collective expertise can help ensure that policies affecting children and families are informed by evidence, grounded in their lived realities, and responsive to their needs.”

Interested researchers should express their interest here.

The initiative will run from Fall 2026 through Spring 2027.

About the SRCD Child Policy Hub

The SRCD Child Policy Hub increases the use of developmental science in policymaking by connecting researchers and policymakers, translating research into accessible policy resources, and building researchers' capacity to engage effectively in policy. Through its programs and partnerships, the Hub seeks to ensure that developmental science informs public policy and practice decisions affecting children, youth, and families.

Prior to this initiative, SRCD members have co-authored a Child Policy Brief on the impacts of deportation on the well-being of children and families and contributed to an amicus brief on the impact of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).