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January 2013 Spotlight on the SRCD Policy Fellow: Kelly R. Fisher, Ph.D.

2012-2013 Federal Executive Branch Policy Fellow

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I am a second year Executive Branch Fellow in the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE), which is situated in the Administration for Children and Families. OPRE is responsible for advising the Assistant Secretary on ways to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of programs aimed at improving the economic and social well-being of children and families. To accomplish its mission, OPRE oversees research and evaluation projects that assess the effectiveness and efficiency of ACF programs and inform policy and practice.

I have had the pleasure of working on a variety of projects that inform strategic planning, performance measurement, policy, and program analysis in the areas of early education and childcare. These projects include:

- **Work Groups and Expert Meetings** - I have been involved in a number of interagency workgroups and expert meetings that review cutting edge research, identify gaps in the evidence base, and identify potential research priorities that will inform policy and programmatic practice. During these meetings, program administrators, practitioners, and research scientists from a variety of academic disciplines (e.g., developmental science, psychology, policy, economics, education) discuss current needs and challenges that inform OPRE's research and evaluation work.
- **New Research Initiatives** - I have also contributed to the development of new research initiatives that address research gaps as well as inform policy and practice. This is one of the most intriguing and challenging elements of the fellowship, in which I review literature from multiple disciplines (often times in areas I have little to no training) to develop new federally-funded research projects and grant programs. In addition to the literature review process, I write funding announcements, review proposals, and supervise the research. Some of my recent projects include the development of a multi-method measure of how teachers use progress monitoring data to individualize instructional practices and an exploratory study on how organizational and management systems promote effective early childhood practice.
- **Research Dissemination** - A formative component of OPRE's work is to disseminate research in ways that will inform future research, policy, and practice. I have learned that "one size does not fit all" in dissemination--the most effective dissemination efforts result in markedly different products for researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and parents. This includes presenting research at conferences (such as SRCD's biennial conference), organizing OPRE-funded conferences and workshops, and producing dissemination documents/media (research reports, white papers, briefs, pamphlets, social media). In the last year, for example, I have worked on the final SAC report for the Secretary of Health and Human Services, which reviews the progress of Head Start research and provides research and policyrelevant recommendations. I have also created teacher- and parent-friendly pamphlets communicating results from Head Start surveys.

The last year and a half at OPRE has been an incredible learning opportunity, one that has helped cultivate and expand my professional identity in several meaningful ways. I am trained as an interdisciplinary psychologist with expertise in developmental science and industrial-organizational psychology. The fellowship has provided opportunities to