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Spotlight on the Science and Social Policy Committee: New Name, Clarity of Purpose

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This article continues a series highlighting the initiatives of SRCD's 14 active standing and operational committees, their dedicated members, and how each contributes to a more vibrant Society and to advancing child development research. Each committee has its own charge from SRCD's Governing Council and generates its own activities.

Spotlights on the 2019 Biennial Meeting Program Committee, the Student and Early Career Council (SECC), the Equity and Justice Committee, and the International Affairs Committee have been published. We continue with a closer look at the history and progress of the Science and Social Policy Committee.

Marc H. Bornstein, President and Laura L. Namy, Executive Director

History of the Committee

The committee was originally established as the Social Policy Committee in 1977 by SRCD's Governing Council. Among its early accomplishments was the establishment of the Social Policy Report (known first as the Washington Report), which provides reviews of research on key social policy issues related to children's development. The committee also launched the earliest iteration of the long-standing SRCD Policy Fellowship Programs to offer immersion experiences in Congress for post-doctoral developmental scientists to learn about policy development and to create an opportunity for their research expertise to be used in policy settings.

The committee helped guide establishment of the SRCD Washington, D.C. satellite office in the late 1970s. In the 1990s, the SRCD Executive Branch Policy Fellowship was launched, and to this day the committee continues to play an active role in selecting fellows and guiding the fellowship program, now with placements in Congress as well as federal and state executive branch agencies. SRCD's strategic plan developed in 2005 placed greater emphasis on dissemination and outreach goals. With this increased emphasis on dissemination, the committee, with the director of the D.C. office of SRCD, oversaw the development and dissemination of the *Social Policy Report Briefs*, which distill information from the *Social Policy Report* and communicate key content in nontechnical language to policymakers. The committee, at

that point called the Committee for Policy and Communications, also guided a new effort to develop and disseminate press releases for selected articles in Child Development.

New Name: Clarity of Purpose

Over the course of the last 40 years, the committee has undergone several name changes as its core responsibilities have shifted and expanded based on the needs of the Society. SRCD's 2015 strategic plan emphasizes the central role of both basic and applied developmental science. In 2018, SRCD's Governing Council approved a new committee name, the Science and Social Policy Committee, and a revised charge. The new charge includes ongoing consultation to SRCD regarding the following:

- Supporting implementation or SRCD's strategic plan,
- Linking research with global, national, and state/local policies that affect children and families,
- Keeping membership apprised on policy to inform science,
- Informing governmental decision-making regarding decision-making regarding research on child development,
- Encouraging the development of leaders in the translation of research to policy and practice, and
- Enhancing the effective dissemination of developmental science.

Committee Structure

The committee has traditionally had co-chairs and works in close consultation with SRCD's Policy Team. The current co-chairs are Rachel Chazan Cohen and Rebekah Levine Coley. "Our committee's close connection to the policy staff makes it special and we have adapted our work to meet the needs of the SRCD central office and membership," said Committee Co-Chair Rachel Chazan Cohen, Ph.D. "For instance, to address concerns of early career members, the committee -- led by Kelly Fisher -- is working to shed light on non-academic career trajectories. We'll continue to go where the organization needs us."

Rachel Chazan Cohen*, Co-Chair	2011-2019	Ann Riviera	2015-2019
Rebekah Levine Coley**, Co-Chair	2013-2019	Taniesha A. Woods	2013-2019
Sandra Barrueco	2013-2019	Seth Pollak, Governing Council Representative	2013-2019
Kimberly Boller	2015-2019	Carol Worthman, Governing Council Representative	2017-2019
Sheretta Butler-Barnes	2017-2021	Rachel C. Katz, SECC Representative	2017-2019
Kelly Fisher	2015-2019	Ellen Wartella, Ex Officio	2015-2021

Rachel A. Gordon	2015-2019 Laura Namy, Ex Officio	2017-
Sacha Klein	2017-2021 Martha Zaslow, Ex Officio	2009-

*** Became co-chair in 2013**

**** Became co-chair in 2017**

Note: Committee members and terms change following SRCD's Biennial Meeting in March 2019

Cornerstone Programs

The Science and Social Policy Committee provides expertise and support at the heart of several cornerstone SRCD programs and activities, including:

SRCD Policy Fellowship Programs: Members of the committee are deeply involved in candidate selection and student mentoring for the Federal Policy Fellowship and the State Policy Fellowship. Both programs are now accepting applications.

Biennial Meeting Planning: The committee participates in planning federal and policy-relevant sessions at each biennial meeting as well as the Zigler Policy Preconference, held the day before the Biennial. The Zigler Preconference is a forum to connect development science researchers with policymakers and practitioners to discuss a selected topic of singular policy importance.

Child Evidence Briefs: These briefs, which evolved out of committee discussions, are developed for policy makers and designed to summarize leading scientific evidence to inform policy decisions and improve the lives of children and families.

Looking Ahead

As new legislative policies that affect the health, education, and well-being of children arise in the years ahead, the role of the Science and Social Policy Committee will continue to evolve.

SRCD's 2019 Biennial Meeting in March will mark the end of Rachel Chazan Cohen's term as co-chair with Rebekah Levine Coley. Current committee member Sacha Klein M.S.W., Ph.D. will be stepping in to the role.