

SRCD Post-doctoral State Policy Fellowship: Call for Letters of Intent

**Call for Letters of Intent:
Post-doctoral State Policy Fellowship sponsored by the
Society for Research in Child Development
in collaboration with
the University-Based Child and Family Policy Consortium**

The Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) is seeking letters of intent for the SRCD Post-doctoral State Policy Fellowship for the 2019-2020 academic year. A letter of intent should be submitted jointly by a prospective candidate for a post-doctoral fellowship focusing on state early childhood policy and from either a professor or a senior researcher (from a university center or research organization) with experience and/or background in policy research who is interested in serving as the academic mentor for a post-doctoral fellow.

SRCD Post-doctoral State Policy Fellows will be placed in a state executive branch early childhood agency for a firsthand experience in state policymaking, program implementation, and program evaluation. For this fellowship program, applications are especially sought from developmental scientists with backgrounds in the development of early mathematics skills, of young dual language learners, or in family engagement in the early years. However, the state agency placement may focus on any topic related to early childhood policy. The specific early childhood focus and project within the agency do not need to be developed ahead of time.

The SRCD Post-doctoral State Policy Fellowship is for candidates who:

- Will have completed their doctoral work in any discipline relevant to child development within the past two years;
- Have expertise in early childhood development and especially in the areas of early mathematics, dual language learners, or family engagement;
- Seek a 12-month post-doctoral fellowship that is a full-time immersion in a state executive branch agency that focuses on early childhood;
- Would be available to start the fellowship full-time on September 1, 2019;
- Are U.S. citizens; and
- Are members of SRCD.

SRCD is offering this fellowship so that: (1) child development scientists have the opportunity to build skills in policy research and implementation and (2) for state agencies focused on early childhood to benefit from the expertise of a child development researcher. In addition, academic mentors may benefit from closer ties with a state executive branch agency and gain greater understanding of the research and policymaking issues of highest priority to the agency office. Academic mentors are not asked to design a project with the fellow in advance, but to support the fellow as the immersion experience proceeds and the potential for bringing child development and research expertise to the placement office becomes clear.

Fellows will be provided with a stipend aligned with federal GS levels (GS Grade 12, Step 1) and an allocation to purchase health insurance. This funding will go directly to the fellow. Fellows will also be reimbursed for up to \$2,800 in approved professional development expenses. Academic mentors will receive an honorarium of \$5,000 for the year of the placement. Staff from the fellowship team in the SRCD office in Washington D.C. will facilitate the fellowship experience and will be available as a resource for professional and placement support throughout the year.

State policy fellows will begin their fellowship year with an individualized state-specific training covering relevant child and family policy topics organized by SRCD. Further training will be held in October at the SRCD office in Washington D.C. to orient the fellow to child and family policy at the federal level. Fellows will be asked to complete a brief log of their activities at the placement and to

participate in a monthly check-in call with a senior member of the fellowship team at SRCD. They will also be asked to develop a professional development plan articulating goals for the fellowship year, with guidance and input from the academic mentor and state placement supervisor.

At the end of the year, again with the guidance and input of the state placement supervisor and academic mentor, fellows will be asked to develop a portfolio illustrating contributions they have made at their placements (with input from the placement supervisor on whether and to what extent documents are confidential or can be shared beyond review by the SRCD fellowship team). All SRCD State Policy Fellows will travel to Washington, D.C. for a Capstone Meeting to provide brief presentations on their portfolios (as appropriate given confidentiality) and to reflect on the experience of the fellowship year.

Academic mentors and state placement supervisors will be asked to participate with the fellow in a kick-off call to start the fellowship year, to have a mid-year touch base call with a senior member of the SRCD fellowship team, and an end-of-year interview to provide SRCD with feedback and input on the fellowship from their perspectives.

Staff in state early childhood executive branch agencies with interest in providing a placement are encouraged to reach out to research colleagues to share information about this post-doctoral fellowship opportunity and encourage them to consider submitting letters of intent as noted below. State agency staff can contact policyfellowships@srcd.org for assistance in identifying university programs in their states.

Application Procedures and Requirements

Letter of Intent Deadline: December 21, 2018

A brief letter of intent is requested as a first step. The letter of intent should be submitted jointly by a post-doctoral candidate and a professor or senior researcher (at a university center or research organization) interested in serving as the academic mentor for an SRCD Post-doctoral State Policy Fellow. Sections from the post-doctoral candidate and academic mentor (as detailed further below) should not exceed three single-spaced pages combined.

The joint letter of intent must include:

From the post-doctoral candidate:

- A description of the candidate's background in child development research, including expertise in early childhood. If possible, the candidate should describe background in early math, the development of dual language learners, or family engagement.
- A description of interests and goals related to bridging research and policy.

From the academic mentor:

- A description of research interests and how these align with the goals of the fellowship.
- A description of the professional support the academic mentor could provide to the fellow throughout the year.
- A description of an ongoing working relationship with a state executive branch office, plans for development of such a working relationship, or previous policy research that would provide background for serving as an academic mentor to an SRCD Post-doctoral State Policy Fellow.
- Confirmation that, should a full application be invited, it will be possible to obtain a letter of commitment from a state executive branch office focusing on early childhood, indicating that

SRCD Post-doctoral State Policy Fellowship Call for Letters of Intent

- a placement at the agency will be feasible.
- A description of the types of work potentially available for the fellow in the state executive branch agency focusing on early childhood, with the understanding that the specific projects and responsibilities for the fellowship year will be determined by the agency, and further, with the understanding that projects and opportunities will evolve during the course of the fellowship year.

Letters of intent should be sent via email to policyfellowships@srcd.org with the subject line “2019-2020 SRCD Post-doctoral State Policy Fellowship Letter of Intent.”

A selection committee will review the letters of intent and invite strong applicants to submit full applications. A link to the application website will be provided to those invited to submit full applications.

Full applications if invited by SRCD: Due by February 15, 2019

Full applications will require:

Application materials from the post-doctoral candidate for the fellowship

The post-doctoral candidate will be asked to enter background information on the application website and will then be asked to upload the following materials:

- *Current C.V.* and,
- *Statement of Interest* of no more than 1,000 words that addresses professional background and qualifications for the fellowship; expertise in early childhood noting background where possible in early math, the development of dual language learners, or family engagement; basis for interest in the fellowship (including policy areas of interest and skills to be acquired); and career goals (including how the fellowship would support those goals).

Three letters of reference for the post-doctoral candidate:

The post-doctoral candidate will be asked to enter email addresses for three individuals providing letters of reference. A message will be sent automatically by the application website to each individual, including a link for uploading the letter of reference.

Application materials from the academic mentor:

The post-doctoral candidate will be asked to provide the email address for the academic mentor. An email will then be sent automatically to the academic mentor, providing a link for uploading as a single pdf document:

- *Current C.V.*, and,
- *Statement of Interest* of no more than 750 words that addresses areas of research; the ways in which the academic mentor would support the post-doctoral fellow; and how having a fellow with a state policy placement would add to and extend ongoing work. The academic mentor can include sections from the letter of intent, where appropriate extending the initial letter.

Letters from staff at state executive branch agency:

The post-doctoral candidate will be asked to provide the email address (or email addresses) for staff members from the state executive branch agency focusing on early childhood issues. A message will then be sent automatically to the staff member(s), providing a link for uploading:

SRCD Post-doctoral State Policy Fellowship Call for Letters of Intent

- *Statement of Interest* of no more than 500 words from an employee at the state executive branch agency in a leadership position in early childhood policy who would supervise the fellow, providing a description of professional background, a description of possible projects the fellow might assist with, and confirmation of interest and time for providing supervision to the fellow that would include not only provision of guidance and feedback on specific placement projects, but also provision of opportunities for the fellow to learn about policy development and implementation in a state agency through participation (where appropriate) in meetings at the agency, and through regularly scheduled discussions during which the fellow could ask questions and reflect on what he or she is learning.
- *Letter of Commitment* from a representative of the state agency with appropriate authority confirming that the agency welcomes the possibility to host a post-doctoral fellow; that such a placement would be in keeping with agency rules and regulations and state laws; naming the specific supervisor; and confirming that an appropriate workspace would be made available including use of a computer and telephone (used only according to agency guidelines). The statement of interest noted above and the letters of commitment may be from the same individual, if appropriate.