Are you an early childhood researcher? A teacher educator? A graduate student? A leader in your state or community agency? A Head Start or child care program developer or administrator? Have you started to think about ways to apply your skills in a broader range of national policy, research, and practice issues? Do you want to invest in yourself, learning while also contributing to our field in new and exciting ways? Are you ready for new challenges in an emerging generation of early childhood leaders?

National fellowships sponsored by professional associations, foundations, and government agencies provide one pathway toward building your leadership potential and making ever greater contributions to young children’s well-being. Typically, fellows are selected in a highly competitive application process that considers both past accomplishments and future promise. Some fellowships are intended for early career professionals, others for mid-career professionals, and still others are for talented graduate students. All are designed to recruit and support a diverse, inclusive cadre of fellows. If the descriptions below interest you, you can visit the sponsors’ Web sites for more information by clicking on their addresses.

APFA Fellowships

The American Psychological Association (APA) provides three kinds of fellowship opportunities. Congressional fellows spend one year working as special legislative assistants on the staff of a member of Congress or congressional committee. Another fellowship opportunity is for psychologists who want an understanding of science policy from the perspective of federal agencies (application deadline for both is early January each year).

The APA Public Interest Policy Internship Program (application deadline, March 5, 2005) provides graduate students with an opportunity, while working on the staff of APA’s public policy office in Washington, D.C., to gain firsthand knowledge of how psychological research can inform public policy.

http://www.apa.org/ppo/funding/

Children and Family Fellowship

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has created an 11-month leadership development program for accomplished professionals in the children and family services field and its related disciplines. The fellowship is an intensive, full-time program; through its activities, participants accumulate the experience...
they need to lead major change efforts. The foundation expects fellows to assume significant leadership positions that will improve the life chances of children and their families who are disadvantaged. The foundation solicits fellowship nominees from a national network of leaders in diverse fields.

http://www.aecf.org/fellowship

**Leaders for the 21st Century**

An initiative of ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families, Leaders for the 21st Century aims to strengthen the ability of committed, talented professionals to implement policies and practices that promote the healthy development of babies and families. Fellows (early or mid-career) are placed in agencies and universities throughout the country. During the year and a half of their fellowship, they work on a specific project, with assistance from ZERO TO THREE board and staff, and attend a series of meetings focused on project work and topics of interest.

http://www.zerotothree.org/ztt_journal.html

**National Head Start Fellows Program**

The Council for Professional Recognition administers the Head Start fellows program. The Commission on National Head Start Fellowships seeks candidates who demonstrate accomplishments in their careers and potential for high levels of professional achievement. Fellows spend a year as special assistants to senior managers in the administrative branch of the U.S. government, in areas such as program development, research, child development, health, family development, and policy. Application deadline is February 14, 2005.

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/programs/fellows.htm

**SRCD Policy Fellowships**

The Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) sponsors congressional and executive branch fellowships, providing exciting opportunities for researchers to come to Washington, D.C., and use their skills to inform and influence public policy. Following a two-week science policy orientation program at AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science), fellows work as resident scholars within a federal agency that sponsors developmental and educational research or as legislative assistants in a congressional office. Application deadline is mid-December each year.

http://www.srcd.org/policyfellowships.html

**The State Early Childhood Policy Leadership Forum**

The State Early Childhood Policy Leadership Forum is an opportunity for individuals who are already in high-level state leadership positions (such as state agency directors, commission executive directors, governor’s staff, and so on) to further develop their personal leadership skills while improving state early childhood programs and policies. This project is a joint effort between ZERO TO THREE and the National Governors Association. Policy fellows are involved in the forum for approximately 18 months.

http://www.zerotothree.org/fellowship.html

“As a Head Start fellow, I gained understandings about blended funding structures, mechanisms, and systems along with the needs of the constituents affected—both parents and providers—and the requirements necessary to stabilize and enhance the workforce. I also learned how important it is to embrace the field of early care as part of the discussion of community building.”

— Dolores Terrazas
Other resources

Search the Web Guide to Careers in Child and Family Policy, which includes information about fellowships and internships:

http://cfp.igpa.uiuc.edu/brSeek/srchIntern1.asp

NAEYC’s publication *Leadership in Early Care and Education*, edited by Sharon Lynn Kagan and Barbara Bowman, features thoughtful discussions by early childhood leaders. Topics include effective management, mentoring early childhood professionals, working to advance the field, and community leadership roles.

http://www.naeyc.org/pubs