



Society for Research in Child Development

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The Society for Research in Child Development is deeply concerned about the recent criticism and scrutiny of particular studies funded by the National Institutes of Health. We write to express our strongest support for the scientific merit review process at NIH, and our deep concern that these developments challenge the integrity of this process. Further, we would like to point out that many of the studies undergoing additional scrutiny have both direct and indirect implications for the behavioral development and health of our nation's children and youth.

The Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) was founded in 1933 by the National Research Council of the National Academies of Science with the following missions: to advance research in child development; to foster an interdisciplinary consideration of substantive and methodological problems in the field of child development; and to encourage applications of research findings for the betterment of children's lives. Our membership of more than 5,600 is representative of the various disciplines and professions that contribute to knowledge of child and youth development. Scientific integrity and scientific progress are integral to the missions of our organization.

Recent efforts to subject individual research projects to additional scrutiny based on political or ideological criteria, disregarding the outcome of the merit review process to which they have already been subject, threatens the interests of both science and public health. It is essential that decisions regarding funding for research, including studies of behaviors that may be unacceptable to some, remain based on a merit review process, free from influence by interest groups or political entities. *All* risks to public health are scientific priorities, and we respect the necessary role of NIH leadership, and Congressional oversight, for ensuring that resources are distributed among them. However, Congressional protection of the peer review process at NIH has been and continues to be critical to preserve both the integrity and progress of science, on which the future health of our nation rests.