



Becoming Architects of Change

Six Impacts of the Schott Fellowship in Early Care and Education

Schott Fellows come from diverse communities and bring with them a demonstrated commitment to children and families. They hold leadership positions in child care centers, advocacy organizations, universities, public agencies, and community organizations. Over the course of the Fellowship year, they learn new skills; develop confidence in their leadership abilities; expand their networks; engage with decision-makers and field experts; strengthen their organization's commitment to policy action; and influence state and local early education and care policies.

In an evaluation of the Schott Fellowship¹, the following developmental impacts were documented:

1 Fellows Gain New Skills

The Schott Fellowship provides an opportunity to learn and practice policy skills such as how to:

- Identify policy gaps
- Collect and analyze data
- Work collaboratively to develop policy solutions
- Frame an issue
- Facilitate community dialogues
- Advocate for policy solutions

Fellows learn and practice policy skills through a year-long policy project and through community roundtables.

Some outcomes that Fellows report include:

Greater awareness of policy issues

"I have a greater awareness of policy issues and I'm much more concerned. Before I would participate but I was not as personally engaged. I was not thinking about how those policies affected my work on a day-to-day basis. Now I can't be part of meetings or advocacy efforts without being actively engaged. I take more responsibility because of the Fellowship Program. It has taught me that I have to be an active player." :: Nicole St. Victor

Working more effectively in a team

"As a result of the Schott Fellowship I have gained a deeper understanding of how to take responsibility for a project and work it through to completion. Having to "learn how to get along" with a strong group of individuals, like myself, in order to complete this project helped me to see myself less personally and more professionally." :: Paula Bowie

2 Fellows Develop the Confidence to Assume Leadership

Fellows learn from and develop relationships with decision-makers and field experts through community forums and policy projects. Interacting and learning from the field's leaders builds leadership confidence and a greater willingness to step up and take action.

"I just became a director of a state office of minority health, it is both policy- and systems-focused. The Fellowship gave me the confidence to apply for this position. We were always told that we could take on high-level positions of policy development."

:: Lisa Sockabasin

"One of the speakers confirmed for me what I was feeling about moving away from just the Latino agenda into a wider agenda that allows me to work to improve the academic conditions of all children." :: Hilda Ramirez

3 Fellows Expand and Deepen Their Networks

Schott Fellows meet and develop strong relationships with a highly diverse group of Massachusetts and national leaders. They bond with each other and build bridges with leaders and policymakers to become a powerful force for change.

Through an opening retreat, monthly meetings, and collaborating on policy projects, Fellows develop deep trust with one another. Through community roundtables and policy project presentations, Fellows reach out to share information and mobilize support around policy issues.

Fellows continue to deepen and expand their relationships with each other and take policy action through the Schott Fellowship Alumni Network.

The Fellowship Network provides:

Honest support

"I have developed relationships with people that I know will always be there. We can be honest with each other even if we have differences. I know I can go to the other Fellows and bounce ideas off of them, and feel that I can do that in confidence, and they will understand."

::Lori Cox

Affirmation and community

"I live on the Cape and am often one of the only people of color in a group. To be in a group where there was equal representation of people of color was huge for me. You don't feel like you have to explain everything. You also learn not to assume that because someone is a person of color they share your perspective."

:: Marie Enochty

Diversity of perspective

"It was so nice sitting in an incredibly diverse group. It was so comfortable. Let's be honest, quite often we sit with the same white middle-aged people that we've seen so many times before." :: Maureen Farris

4 Fellows Lead Organizational Change

Fellows are leading their organizations to become more involved in the policy process. Through policy dialogues and sharing their fellowship learning, they mobilize staff, board members, and clients to take a greater interest in policy solutions and to consider how they can improve their own policies and procedures to better support children and families.

"The Fellowship invited me to look at and reflect on the mission, the goals and objectives of my organization to see how what I do really supports this mission. I now take a deeper look at our policies and procedures to identify gaps and what needs to be changed to better serve children and families." :: Nicole St. Victor

"Before when we met with legislators my boss always provided the technical information. Now I feel comfortable meeting with them independent of her and bringing the information back to her. She's been very vocal that we all need to take a piece in the policy work, and the fact that I'm now on board is beneficial to the whole agency." :: Mal Hughes

5 Fellows Impact Public Policy

Fellows are researching policy gaps, and developing innovative solutions to address these gaps including:

- Regulations to ensure that early educators receive training to increase their cultural competence
- Quality standards that apply equally to all programs that serve young children
- Program practices and training that actively encourage family involvement and support

"We presented our policy to the EEC Department, and in the January issue of their newsletter they recommended 'developing a core set of regulations that brings together all common elements of our current system, for any type of care setting and age of child.'" :: Joe Martin

"We were able to get language into the Early Education and Care bill that all providers need to have a family involvement program. The Schott Fellowship helped make that happen. Now we have to watch for implementation."

:: Maureen Farris

6 Fellows Step Up and Speak Out for Change

During the fellowship year and beyond, Schott Fellows move into leadership positions with policy responsibilities, train and coach policy leaders, run for office, and speak passionately and publicly on behalf of children and families in Massachusetts.

"I'm working with another Fellow to put together a curriculum to train the next generation of leaders to take up the cause of quality care for children and families, not just because it's important to them but because it is a global cause. Giving them basic training, and supporting them to apply what they learn, is a really good way to support them."

:: Maureen Farris

"As a result of our policy presentation, I have been assisting WGBH on their early childhood literacy curriculum that targets American Indian Children in Head Start Programs. I have talked with them about how they can approach communities in a culturally sensitive manner, reach out to Native communities, and hopefully be more successful." :: Lisa Sockabasin

"I have a new two-part workshop I am doing on cultural diversity and sensitivity. I'm trying to perfect this workshop so that it might be a model that can be replicated."

:: Marcia Farris

As Fellows develop and expand their leadership confidence, skills, and relationships, they become architects of change for children and families in their workplaces, in their communities, in Massachusetts and beyond. Over time it is anticipated that Fellows will continue to take on more visible roles in public policy, and lead change in their organizations and communities that will result in better policies for children and families.

¹ Evaluation findings in this report are based on quarterly evaluation activities during the Fellowship year, baseline surveys of entering Fellows in 2005 and 2006, post-Fellowship surveys of all alumni in 2005 and 2006, and post-Fellowship interviews with 2005 Fellows.