

Ombuds Charter

Society for Research in Child Development Ombuds Charter for the SRCD 2025 Biennial Meeting

I. INTRODUCTION

To support the Society for Research in Child Development's (SRCD) commitment to ensuring that the 2025 Biennial Meeting is safe and welcoming for all, consistent with the principles outlined in the Society for Research in Child Development Code of Conduct and Compliance Agreement, SRCD will provide organizational ombuds services in connection with its 2025 Biennial Meeting, taking place in Minneapolis, Minnesota during May 1, 2025 – May 3, 2025. ("Ombuds Program"). SRCD's goal is to make its 2025 Biennial Meeting as inclusive and accessible as possible for attendees, staff, exhibitors, and anyone else participating in the 2025 Biennial Meeting, regardless of gender, sexual orientation/identity, race/ethnicity, religion, employment status, or status in the field. In addition, SRCD desires to improve the quality of events and organizational participation. The ombuds will prepare and present a confidential written summary on or before June 5, 2025. This summary will include aggregate data, insights, and observations of the ombuds on the types of issues and concerns raised during the meeting.

II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE OMBUDS

The Ombuds Program is designed to be an independent, impartial, informal, and confidential channel for meeting attendees, staff, exhibitors, and anyone participating in the 2025 Biennial Meeting to discuss any issues concerning meeting-related activities. The ombuds selected to provide these services, Jai Calloway ("ombuds"), will be available to provide information confidentially and will provide a safe place for people to discuss issues such as safety, inappropriate actions from overly-friendliness to harassment, micro-aggressions, free speech, integrity, privacy, conflicts of interest (including accessibility, lodging, and food), alcohol consumption and cliques. The ombuds is a resource to informally discuss any of these or other meeting-related concerns and help visitors develop options, problem-solve, create paths for self-advocacy, and make informed choices about the best path forward.

This Charter sets forth the operating principles under which the Ombuds Program will operate and reflects the SRCD's commitment to the ombuds and the role of this position.

III. STANDARDS OF OPERATION

The Ombuds providing organizational ombuds services for the SRCD 2025 Biennial Meeting is a member of the International Ombudsman Association (IOA) and will adhere to the IOA's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice in performing ombuds services. See www.ombudsassociation.org/standards-of-practice-code-of-ethics. These tenets require organizational ombuds programs to be independent, impartial, informal, and confidential:

1. Independence

The Ombuds is an independent contractor and not an SRCD staff member. The Ombuds functions outside existing administrative structures pursuant to a Contract between MWI and the SRCD.

2. Impartiality

The Ombuds provides impartial assessments of concerns. As an impartial third party, the Ombuds is a resource for an equitable and fair process and the fair administration of the process. The Ombuds does not, however, provide legal or other kinds of advocacy nor enforce SRCD policies. The Ombuds does not render services or become involved in any matter that would be a conflict of interest for the Ombuds to do so.

3. Informality

The Ombuds provides a means for off-the-record discussions of concerns. The Ombuds is empowered to provide only informal assistance and does not conduct investigations, make or override decisions, determine policy, testify or participate in formal or administrative proceedings concerning confidential communications, provide legal advice, or accept legal notice of claims against the SRCD or any other organization, entity, or person. For those wishing to assert claims or have on-the-record communications, the Ombuds can identify resources to the appropriate formal channels so that individuals may make informed choices about which process they decide is best for them to pursue.

4. Confidentiality

Communications with the Ombuds are confidential to the maximum extent permitted by law. The principle of confidentiality helps the Ombuds provide a safe place for attendees, staff, exhibitors, and anyone participating in the 2025 Biennial Meeting to voice concerns, evaluate issues, and identify options for possible further action. The Ombuds is a purely voluntary resource. No one is required to use it, but those who do will be deemed to have agreed to respect and abide by the above principles on which it was created and not to call the Ombuds to testify or produce documents related to confidential communications in any administrative or legal proceeding. The SRCD has also agreed not to call upon or attempt to have the Ombuds or MWI disclose confidential communications, testify, or produce documents relating to confidential communications in any administrative or legal proceeding.

Consistent with the International Ombudsman Association Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, the only exceptions to this confidentiality principle are (a) if, during the course of communications with the Ombuds, an inquirer gives the Ombuds permission to make a disclosure, and the Ombuds agrees it is appropriate to do so, or (b) if the Ombuds determines that there is an imminent threat of serious harm.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Ombuds will be available to consult with attendees, staff, exhibitors, and anyone else participating in the 2025 Biennial Meeting concerning any meeting-related issues identified above. The Ombuds will be available on-site from April 30, 2025, to the conclusion of the SRCD Biennial Meeting on May 3, 2025. Meeting attendees, staff, exhibitors, and anyone else participating in the 2025 Biennial Meeting will be advised on how to contact the Ombuds and when and where the Ombuds may be found.

As an impartial third party, the Ombuds is an advocate for a fair and equitable process. The Ombuds does not, however, provide legal or other kinds of advocacy or enforce the SRCD.

IV. ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING

The Ombuds reports to the Executive Director and to the Director of Meetings and Events. The ombuds may also meet with and alert other executive team members to any systemic issues or trends the Ombuds believes may help the organization address identified or potential issues, improve the climate for membership or future meetings, or improve its policies and practices.

V. RECORD-KEEPING

The Ombuds provides only informal assistance, and although informal notes may be temporarily created as needed, the Ombuds does not retain permanent records containing personally identifiable information or confidential communications. Any post-meeting summaries to senior leadership will only have aggregate data, ombuds insights, and observations on the types of issues raised.

VII. INQUIRY ABOUT THE USE OF THE OMBUDS IS INAPPROPRIATE; RETALIATION FOR DOING SO IS PROHIBITED

The SRCD supports efforts to manage and resolve conflicts informally to preserve collegial and effective working relationships and avoid the time and expense required for formal proceedings or litigation. Because the Ombuds Program is intended to be a confidential resource, it is not appropriate for anyone at SRCD to inquire about an individual's use of it or any communication that may have occurred there. Furthermore, discouraging or preventing eligible visitors from using the Ombuds Program is inappropriate because it is contrary to the organization's intent of providing a resource for the early, informal management and resolution of conflicts.

While the organization supports and encourages the use of the Ombuds Program for conflict management, an individual's use of the resource must always be entirely voluntary. Reminding individuals that the Ombuds Program is available as an option, or a resource is acceptable. However, no one may be ordered or required to visit the Ombuds, nor may an individual be punished for not seeing the ombuds.

All attendees, staff, exhibitors, and anyone participating in the SRCD 2025 Biennial Meeting will have the right to consult the Ombuds without fear of retaliation or reprisal. Retaliation against any attendee or staff for consulting with the Ombuds or against the Ombuds for actions within the legitimate scope of her duties as described in the Charter is prohibited.

VIII. PROCEDURE FOR REVISION OR REVOCATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This Charter remains in effect unless otherwise revoked by the Society for Research in Child Development, and such revocation shall be provided in writing to MWI’s Director of Ombuds Services. Any revision to this Charter shall be jointly agreed to in writing by both the SRCD and the Ombuds representatives from MWI and will be appended to this document.

SRCD

Signed:



Name: Saima K. Hedrick

Title: Executive Director

Date: 11/26/2024

Duly Authorized Hereunto

MWI

Signed:



Name: Charles P. Doran

Title: Executive Director

Date: 26/11/2024

Duly Authorized Hereunto






Ombuds Charter

Final Audit Report

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