



ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
OFFICE OF PLANNING, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

# Child and Family Development Research

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## Administration for Children and Families

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov>



The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is responsible for Federal programs that promote the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals and communities. ACF aims to foster health and well-being by providing federal leadership, partnership, and resources for the compassionate and effective delivery of human services. The 2015 ACF strategic priorities include:

- Promote economic, health, and social well-being for individuals, families and communities;
- Promote healthy development and school readiness for children, especially for those in low-income families and other special populations;
- Promote safety and well-being of children, youth, and families;
- Support underserved and underrepresented populations; and
- Upgrade the capacity of the Administration for Children and Families to make a difference for families and communities.

## Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation

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The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) in ACF serves as principal advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Children and Families on increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of programs designed to improve the economic and social well-being of children and families. In collaboration with ACF program offices and others, OPRE is responsible for ACF performance management, conducting research and policy analyses and developing and overseeing research and evaluation projects to assess program performance and inform policy and practice. OPRE also provides guidance, analysis, technical assistance and oversight to ACF programs on strategic planning; performance measurement; research and evaluation methods; statistical, policy and program analysis and synthesis and dissemination of research and demonstration findings.

A central focus of OPRE's research and evaluation is developing reliable knowledge of the effectiveness of different programmatic strategies in order to inform programmatic and policy choices, with a particular focus on testing innovative approaches used by States, Tribes, communities and service organizations in major program areas, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Head Start, child care and child welfare. Moving more families from welfare to work, persistence and progression in employment, marriage and family formation and the well-being and development of children are major focal areas. OPRE includes the Division of Economic Independence, the Division of Child and Family Development and the Division of Family Strengthening. A cross-cutting Performance Management Team leads ACF-wide efforts to plan, monitor and improve program performance.

OPRE's research and evaluation projects are conducted primarily through grants and contracts, and include collaboration with ACF program offices; HHS's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE); other Federal entities and State, Tribal and community partners.

## Child and Family Development Research and Evaluation

OPRE's Division of Child and Family Development (DCFD) is responsible for research and evaluation related to Head Start programs, early childhood development, childcare, dual language learners, child maltreatment, and child welfare services.

OPRE's research in the area of child and family development focuses on young children, mothers, families, and youth.

DCFD invests in rigorous research and evaluation on child and family development topics and disseminates findings to a diverse range of stakeholders, including federal and state policymakers, program administrators, researchers, and intermediary organizations. DCFD funds experimental impact evaluations, process and implementation evaluations, descriptive and theory-building research projects, and measure development aimed at informing the design and implementation of programs and improving our ability to capture outcomes. OPRE also invests in building capacity in the research and evaluation community to answer policy-relevant questions.

DCFD works in close partnership with a number of other offices, including, among others:

- In ACF:
  - The Office of Head Start;
  - The Office of Child Care;
  - The Children's Bureau; and
  - The Office of Early Childhood Development;
- In HHS:
  - The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation;
  - The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration;
  - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;
  - The Health Resources and Services Administration; and
  - The National Institutes of Health;
- In the Department of Education:
  - The Institute for Education Sciences;
  - The Office of Early Learning;
  - The Office of Special Education; and
  - The Office of English Language Acquisition.

DCFD also disseminates findings to a diverse range of stakeholders, including federal and state policy-makers, program administrators, researchers, and intermediary organizations.

The following pages describe major OPRE/DCFD projects in Fiscal Year 2015.

# Cross-Cutting Early Childhood Research

DCFD sponsors projects that focus on issues facing low-income children and families who may be served in a variety of settings. These cross-cutting projects may examine populations that multiple ACF programs serve, studies that have several foci, or research methodology that supports high-quality evaluations across OPRE's work.

## Assessing Early Childhood Teachers' Use of Child Progress Monitoring to Individualize Teaching Practices

This contract explores the possibility of measuring teachers' use of ongoing assessment for individualization of instruction to support children's early development. The literature review summarizes research on progress monitoring approaches in early childhood and other contexts. The [conceptual model](#) articulates the theoretical relations between key constructs underlying progress monitoring. The measurement plan includes key constructs, defines relevant terms and mechanisms, and proposes a draft tool to be used to measure teachers' use of assessment for the individualization of instruction. The tool is called the Examining Data Informing Teaching (EDIT) measure and is currently undergoing pre-testing. OPRE released one [brief that summarizes the literature review](#) and another [brief that highlights key findings from the review](#) in the summer of FY2015. In the fall of FY2015, OPRE will release an additional report that describes the iterative development of the Examining Data Informing Teaching (EDIT).

## Child Care and Early Education Research Connections

[Child Care & Early Education Research Connections \(Research Connections\)](#) promotes high-quality research in child care and early education and the use of research findings in policymaking. Research Connections' Website offers a free, comprehensive, and up-to-date collection of scholarly research, policy briefs, government reports, data sets, and instruments from a wide range of disciplines and sources. Interactive tools allow users to refine searches, download full text documents, build customized tables, and analyze research data online. Research Connections also compiles bibliographies, develops issue briefs, synthesizes research on key topics, and hosts data-training workshops.

## Cross-Site Evaluation of Project LAUNCH

This evaluation focuses on the outcomes of Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health) for children and families. This work is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) through an intra-agency agreement between OPRE and SAMHSA. Project LAUNCH grantees implement a range of evidence-based public health strategies to support young child wellness. The multi-site evaluation involves primary data collection of child-specific outcomes from parents recruited from schools and early childhood education centers randomly selected from LAUNCH grantee locations and matched control schools and centers from non-LAUNCH grantee locations. The evaluation design also involves the structured collection and compilation of data regarding system changes in LAUNCH target areas, and control areas.

# SPOTLIGHT ON CHILD CARE & EARLY EDUCATION POLICY RESEARCH CONSORTIUM (CCEEPRC)

The **Child Care & Early Education Policy Research Consortium (CCEEPRC)** meets annually and in topical workgroups throughout the year to bring together researchers, policymakers, and administrators to discuss relevant issues and research findings in the field of early childhood care and education. CCEEPRC consists of grantees, contractors, and other stakeholders who have worked on ACF sponsored research projects and partnerships. The consortium helps ACF to increase national capacity for sound early childhood and child care research, identify and respond to critical policy issues, plan future projects, and bridge research with policy and practice.

There are currently five CCEEPRC workgroups:

## ◆ **Early Care and Education Access and Choices**

This workgroup discusses emerging research and policy initiatives related to increasing access to high quality child care and supporting families' child care search. This effort has supported several literature reviews, including [Supporting Continuity through Child Care and Development Fund Subsidies: A Review of Select State Policies](#), [Child Care Subsidy Literature Review](#), and [Child Care Decision Making Literature Review](#)."

## ◆ **Implementation Science**

This workgroup explores how researchers, policymakers and practitioners apply the principles of implementation science in early care and education. Specifically, it explores topics such as professional de-

velopment of the early care and education workforce, the introduction of curricula, and the implementation of statewide quality improvement initiatives. This effort has sponsored numerous meetings, presentations, and webinars.

## ◆ **Quality Initiatives Research and Evaluation Consortium**

The Quality Initiatives Research and Evaluation Consortium (INQUIRE) facilitates the exchange of information related to research and evaluations of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) and other quality initiatives. INQUIRE has supported the development and production of multiple briefs related to QRIS/QI research and evaluation for stakeholders at the state and national level. INQUIRE members, including researchers in early childhood quality and systemic approaches to quality improvement, determine the Consortium's work and priorities annually.

## ◆ **Professional Development**

The Professional Development workgroup facilitates the exchange of information, research and evaluations on the professional development of the early care and education workforce; coordinates with the Implementation Science workgroup on issues of professional development implementation; and recommends comprehensive definitions of early childhood professionals that could be used in state and national data collection.

## ◆ **Home Based Child Care**

The Home Based Child Care workgroup

# SPOTLIGHT ON CHILD CARE & EARLY EDUCATION POLICY RESEARCH CONSORTIUM (CCEEPRC)

covers the characteristics of home based providers, the quality of care children receive in home based settings, and potential quality improvement strategies for providers. The workgroup includes researchers focused on home based care as well as federal and state policymakers.

## **Child Care Administrative Data Analysis Center**

In addition to these workgroups, CCPRC also sponsors the Child Care Administrative Data Analysis Center (CCADAC), which supports state child care administrators and researchers in using administrative data to address child care policy relevant research questions. CCADAC identifies common data issues and challenges in developing and executing studies using child care administrative data, and it synthesizes, develops, and shares best practices, tools, and resources to address them.

## Development of a Measure of Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality

The Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality (FPTRQ) project has developed new measures to assess the quality of family provider/teacher relationships in early care and education programs. The measures examine this relationship from both the parent and the provider/teacher perspectives, and capture important elements of family provider/teacher relationships, such as attitudes of respect, commitment, and openness to adapting practices. The project developed measures that are appropriate for use across different types of early care and education settings, including Head Start and Early Head Start programs, center-based child care, pre-K classrooms, and home-based child care. In addition, a high priority of the project is to make the new measures culturally appropriate for diverse populations, including lower-income and higher-income families, ethnically/racially diverse groups, and non-English speaking families and providers. OPRE released several FPTRQ products in FY2015, including:

- ◆ [The Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality Measures: Filling Gaps for Research and Practice](#)
- ◆ [Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality Measures User's Manual](#)
- ◆ ["Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality Measures Short Forms: Amendment to the User's Manual"](#)
- ◆ ["Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality Measures: User's Manual Brief"](#)
- ◆ ["Assessing Quality in Family & Provider-Teacher Relationships: Using the FPTRQ Measures in Conjunction with Strengthening Families™ & the Head Start Parent, Family & Community Engagement Frameworks & Self-Assessments - A Research-to-Practice Brief"](#)
- ◆ ["Family Services Staff and Family Services Staff Parent Measures: Amendment to the FPTRQ User's Manual"](#)
- ◆ ["Understanding & Measuring Providers'](#)

[Teachers' Cultural Sensitivity with Families - Lesson Learned & Measurement Recommendations"](#)

- ◆ ["The Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality Measures: Questions and Answers"](#)
- ◆ ["Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality \(FPTRQ\) Parent Measure"](#)
- ◆ ["Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality \(FPTRQ\) Parent Measure Short Form"](#)
- ◆ ["Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality \(FPTRQ\) Director Measure"](#)
- ◆ ["Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality \(FPTRQ\) Provider/Teacher Measure Short Form"](#)
- ◆ ["Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality \(FPTRQ\) Provider/Teacher Measure Short Form"](#)
- ◆ ["Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality \(FPTRQ\) Family Services Staff Measure"](#)
- ◆ ["Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality \(FPTRQ\) Family Services Staff Measure Short Form"](#)
- ◆ ["Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality \(FPTRQ\) Family Services Staff Parent Measure"](#)
- ◆ ["Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality \(FPTRQ\) Family Services Staff Parent Measure Short Form"](#)

This project also sponsored a webinar series in the fall of FY2014 entitled, ["Quality Connections in Early Care and Education: Measuring Relationships between Families and Providers or Teachers."](#) The series included presentations for [practitioners](#), [researchers](#), and [state and local administrators](#).

## Development of a Measure of the Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infants and Toddlers

Under this project, DCFD developed a new measure that assesses the quality of caregiver-

child interactions in settings serving infants and toddlers. The Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infants and Toddlers (Q-CCIIT) evaluates caregivers' responsiveness while accounting for the developmental levels of children from birth to three years old. Researchers will be able to apply Q-CCIIT to a variety of child care settings, including center-based and family child care homes, as well as both single- and mixed-age classrooms. In addition to developing the tool, a psychometric field test was conducted to examine the reliability and validity of the new tool and ensure the soundness of the measure for diverse populations and settings. OPRE released the report, [Measuring the Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infants and Toddlers \(Q-CCIIT\)](#) in the winter of FY2015.

## The Early Childhood Secondary Data Analysis Project

The Early Childhood Secondary Data Analysis Project seeks to expand the knowledge base on early childhood development and programming through activities utilizing existing archived datasets that are funded by OPRE. The project entails conducting secondary analysis of the datasets on specific topics identified by OPRE; providing training and technical assistance to those interested in using the archived data to address issues related to early childhood; and disseminating related products. The project focuses on the Head Start Impact Study (HSIS), Family and Child Experience Study (FACES), Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project (EHSREP), Early Head Start Family and Child Experience Study (Baby FACES), and Head Start Classroom-based Approaches and Resources for Emotion and Social skill promotion (Head Start CARES) datasets. Other ACF datasets providing information regarding early childhood development may also be utilized in the future, including, for example, the data from the National Survey of Early Care and Education or the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being (NSCAW).

## Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships Study

The Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnerships Study offers a comprehensive review and theory of change model for understanding EHS-Child Care partnerships. The study will identify constructs, including purposes, goals, and key characteristics of partnerships, supports necessary for their success, and challenges or barriers they face. This work will provide the framework for studying the implementation of ACF's EHS-CC Partnerships program and inform future or existing studies or data collections of childcare partnerships nationwide. OPRE released the literature review, "[Early Care and Education Partnerships](#)" in the winter of FY2015.

## Executive Function Mapping Project: Translating Research for Application

The Executive Function Mapping Project is a comprehensive "map" of the executive functioning (EF), effortful control (EC), and regulation literatures that connect technical and applied definitions of EF, EC, and regulation during childhood. The project explores the conceptual and developmental issues of EF, EC, and regulation across childhood and provides implications and/or recommendations for practice and policy.

## National Survey of Early Care and Education

The National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) documents the nation's current utilization and availability of early care and education (including school age care), in order to deepen the understanding of families' experiences with childcare services and of the characteristics of early care and education services in the U.S. The survey focuses on low-income families because they are a significant component of early care and education/school-age (ECE/SA) public policy. The NSECE was conducted with nationally-

representative samples of parents and programs, and included interviews in all fifty states and Washington, DC. In FY2015, OPRE released two reports, [Prices Charged in Early Care and Education: Initial Findings from the National Survey of Early Care and Education \(NSECE\)](#) and [Characteristics of Center-based Early Care and Education Programs: Initial Findings from the National Survey of Early Care and Education \(NSECE\)](#), two fact sheets, “[Provision of Early Care and Education during Non-Standard Hours](#)” and “[Who is Providing Home-Based Early Care and Education?](#)” as well as a [brief on household search for and perceptions of early care and education](#).

## The Network of Infant/Toddler Researchers

The Network of Infant/Toddler Researchers (NITR) answers questions concerning children’s first three years of life by bringing together researchers interested in policy and practice that pertain to infants and toddlers. NITR members collaborate to identify relevant existing research and translate it for a variety of audiences. NITR builds capacity by facilitating networking and coordination among the participants to conduct future research that will inform programs. NITR members include staff from OPRE and other ACF/HHS agencies, researchers in academia, and contractors that are working on issues related to the first three years of life. In the spring of FY2015, NITR released the research-to-practice brief, “[Services for Families of Infants and Toddlers Experiencing Trauma](#).”

## Quality Features, Dosages and Thresholds, and Child Outcomes: Study Design

This project examines associations between the quality of early care and education settings and child outcomes, asking whether certain thresholds of quality or dosage need to be met or par-

ticular aspects of quality need to be present before these associations are apparent. The study will also consider the interrelationships of these factors and their relevance to children ages 0-5 participating in center-based care settings. A special focus of the project is children from low-income families, including those with risk factors affecting their school readiness.

## Use of Technology to Support Early Childhood Practice

This project aims to understand how technology can support and improve the quality of practices of early childhood professionals who work directly with children and families. The review examines the technologies that are currently available to early childhood programs, how practitioners are using these technologies, and the barriers to and facilitators for practitioner use. In the spring of FY2015, OPRE released a report, [Uses of Technology to Support Early Childhood Practice](#) and three research-to-practice briefs on the uses of technology to support [parent, family and community engagement](#), [professional development and informal learning](#), and [instruction and assessment](#).

# Child Care: Raising Quality and Supporting Parental Employment

**A growing body of research demonstrating the link between early care and education and positive child and family outcomes has encouraged efforts to enhance early care and education programs. Early care and education programs serve as resources for families, supporting young children’s development in a variety of domains, assisting parents, and providing comprehensive services for families. Research in this area focuses on early learning education standards, improving quality in care settings, innovative interventions, and supporting parental employment through access to high quality health care. This section contains descriptions of some of the completed and ongoing studies, initiatives, and areas of interest in this portfolio.**

## Child Care Administrative Data Analysis Cooperative Agreements

Child Care Administrative Data Analysis Cooperative Agreements support Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies in conducting rigorous, policy-relevant research that primarily utilizes child care administrative data. Grantees pursue research questions of national and state relevance, developing their methodology and research questions in partnership with local and state child care researchers and other stakeholders.

## Child Care and Development Fund Policies Database

Since 2008, the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Policies Database has collected, coded, and disseminated CCDF policies for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, as well as U.S. territories and outlying areas. It captures

detailed information on eligibility, family payments, application procedures, and provider-related policies, including dates of enactment and some of the policy variations that exist within states/territories. The project disseminates information in different forms to meet the needs of various users—quantitative and qualitative researchers, policymakers, and administrators at all levels of government. In the fall of FY2015, OPRE released the report, [\*The CCDF Policies Database Book of Tables: Key Cross-State Variations in CCDF Policies as of October 1, 2013.\*](#)

## Child Care and Early Education Policy and Research Analysis

The Child Care and Early Education Policy and Research Analysis (CCEEPRA) project provides expert advice, assistance, and consultation to researchers and policymakers. It conducts assessments, analyses, and summaries of policies, practices, and research relevant to the Administration for Children and Families, informing OPRE’s research priorities. CCEEPRA also identifies and refines measures and instruments to improve data collection and convenes early care and education experts conducting research relevant to the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and other early childhood programs and systems in States, Territories, and Tribes. This contract supports the production of literature reviews, measures compendia, meeting summaries, briefing papers, webinars, research briefs, and research-to-policy and research-to-practice briefs. OPRE released the brief, [\*“Reviewing and Clarifying Goals, Outcomes, and Levels of Implementation: Toward the Next Generation of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems \(QRIS\)”\*](#) in the winter of FY2015. The research brief, [\*“An Integrated Stage-Based Framework for Implementation of Early Childhood Programs and Systems”\*](#) was also published in the spring of FY2015.

## Child Care Policy Research Grants

The Child Care Policy Research Grants facilitate partnerships between institutions and public child care agencies to address research questions that are relevant to current policy work. The goals of these grants include: addressing issues of current relevance to decision makers at the local, state, and national levels; encouraging active communication, networking, and collaboration among prominent child care researchers and policymakers; and increasing the dissemination capacity for child care research at the national, state, and local levels.

## Child Care Research Partnerships

The Child Care Research Partnership cooperative agreements support research on child care policy issues conducted in partnership among state agencies, researchers and other organizations. Partnership teams must include the state agency that administers the Child Care and Development Fund and a research organization. Current grantees (2013-2017) include: Brandeis University, Education Development Center, The University Corporation (California State University, Northridge) University of Chicago, University of Delaware, and the Virgin Islands Department of Human Services.

## Early Care and Education Research Scholars: Child Care

The Early Care and Education Research Scholars: Child Care program supports dissertation research on child care policy issues in partnership with state Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) lead agencies, and builds capacity in the field to focus research on questions that inform child care policy decision-making.

# Head Start and Early Head Start: Enhancing Health and Human Services for Low-Income Families

Head Start research over the past decade has provided valuable information not only for guiding program improvements in Head Start itself, but also the larger field of early childhood programming and development. Dozens of Head Start programs have collaborated with researchers in making significant contributions in terms of program innovation and evaluation, as well as the use of systematic data collection, analysis and interpretation in program operations.

## Classroom-Based Approaches and Resources for Emotion and Social Skill Promotion

The Classroom-Based Approaches and Resources for Emotion and Social Skill Promotion (Head Start CARES) project is a large-scale group randomized trial of three evidence-based social emotional program enhancements within Head Start classrooms. The project includes an impact and implementation study of the following enhancements: Incredible Years Classroom Management program, Preschool PATHS, and an adaptation of Tools of the Mind. Head Start CARES involves 17 Head Start grantees, 104 centers, 307 classrooms, 608 teachers and teaching assistants, and 3,927 three and four year old children. Data collection began in the spring of 2009, and kindergarten follow-up data collection was completed in the spring of 2012. Impact results were published in 2014. In the winter of FY2015, OPRE released the report, [Exploratory Impacts of Three Social-Emotional Curricula on Three-Year-Olds in the Head Start CARES Demonstration](#).

## Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Study – 2009

The Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Study (Baby FACES) 2009 cohort provides descriptive information on a nationally-representative sample of 89 Early Head Start programs and the children they serve in two age cohorts (1-year-olds and newborns). Baby FACES 2009 aims to describe the Early Head Start services offered, the characteristics and outcomes of families served, and the associations between services and child and family well-being. OPRE released several products related to Baby FACES in FY2015, including:

- ◆ [Toddlers in Early Head Start: A Portrait of 2-Year-Olds, Their Families, and the Programs Serving Them](#)
- ◆ [The Faces of Early Head Start: A National Picture of Early Head Start Programs and the Children and Families They Serve](#)
- ◆ [Imputing Attendance Data in a Longitudinal Multilevel Panel Data Set](#)
- ◆ [Early Head Start Home Visits and Classrooms: Stability, Predictors, and Thresholds of Quality](#)
- ◆ [Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey \(Baby FACES\) Design Options Report](#)
- ◆ [“Children in Early Head Start and Head Start: A Profile of Early Leavers”](#)
- ◆ [“Measuring Infant/Toddler Language Development: Lessons Learned About Assessment and Screening Tools”](#)

## Early Head Start University Partnership Grants: Buffering Children from Toxic Stress

The Early Head Start University Partnership Grants: Buffering Children from Toxic Stress project has three goals: identify the children and families most vulnerable to stress, augment Early Head Start services with parenting interventions aimed at ameliorating the effects of chronic stress on children's development, and advance applied developmental neuroscience. Six grants will implement promising parenting interventions in Early Head Start settings to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable infants and toddlers. Additionally, the grantees, in collaboration with OPRE and Early Head Start, have identified common measures of risk and protective factors to assess across all of the projects. Results from this research will help build a cumulative knowledge base regarding the role that Early Head Start can play in promoting parenting practices that buffer children from toxic stress.

## Evaluation of the Head Start Designation Renewal System

In the fall of 2011, the Office of Head Start (OHS) significantly expanded its accountability provisions with the establishment of the Head Start Designation Renewal System (DRS). The DRS was designed to determine whether Head Start and Early Head Start grantees are providing high quality comprehensive services for children and families. Where they are not, grantees are denied automatic renewal of their grant and must apply for funding renewal through an open competition process. DRS determinations are based on seven conditions assessing quality in three broad categories—service quality, licensing and operations, and fiscal and internal controls. In 2012, DCFD launched an evaluation of the DRS to examine how the system is being implemented, the validity of the DRS, and its role in improving quality in Head Start and Early Head Start. Results from the evaluation are expected in 2016.

## Head Start Coaching Study: Design Phase

The Head Start Coaching Study: Design Phase project seeks to develop designs for a study of coaching within the context of Head Start professional development systems. Coaching is a common mechanism through which the early care and education workforce accesses professional development services. The content and goals of coaching vary by mentee/mentor, programmatic need, and model used. Theories about the mechanisms for changing teacher/staff skills and knowledge also vary. This project identifies the key elements of coaching that result in improvements in early childhood teachers' skills. The report, [Design Options for an Evaluation of Head Start Coaching](#), as well as [a review of methods for evaluating components of social interventions](#) were released in the winter of FY2015.

## Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey

The Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) is a periodic survey of a nationally representative sample of Head Start Children that provides descriptive information on the characteristics, experiences and outcomes of Head Start children and families, as well as the characteristics of the Head Start programs that serve them. The most recent data collections occurred in the fall of 2014 and the spring of 2015. Data collection will be repeated in the spring of 2017.

# SPOTLIGHT ON HEAD START LEADERSHIP, EXCELLENCE & DATA SYSTEMS AND SCHOOL READINESS GOALS & HEAD START PROGRAM FUNCTIONING

The **Head Start Leadership, Excellence, and Data Systems (HS LEADS)** project sought to develop a literature review and conceptual model to describe key factors in management systems that promote effective early childhood practices. The project supports a small set of case studies of programs that use data effectively. The information developed through these efforts was also used to publish a resource guide to help Head Start programs improve their use of data and organizational systems. OPRE released the literature review and conceptual framework, [Data Use for Continuous Quality Improvement: What the Head Start Field Can Learn from Other Disciplines](#) in the winter of FY2015. The resource guide, [Moving beyond a Culture of Compliance to a Culture of Continuous Improvement](#), an overview of the guide, and a brief, [Understanding Data Use for Continuous Quality Improvement in Head Start: Preliminary Findings](#) were released in the spring of FY2015.

The **School Readiness Goals and Head Start Program Functioning** project generates knowledge about how Head Start grantees develop and utilize school readiness goals. The project includes a study of the processes used to define, measure, and prioritize goals. This study examines the mechanisms programs use to communicate goals, and how they use data to inform program planning. In FY2015, OPRE released several products related to this project:

- ◆ [How Head Start Grantees Set and Use School Readiness Goals](#)

This report and accompanying brief present findings from a study describing how local Head Start and Early Head Start grantees set school readiness goals, how they collect and analyze data to track progress towards goals, and how they use these data in program planning and practice to improve program functioning. This report and [an accompanying brief](#) were released in the winter of FY2015.

- ◆ [Collecting Information from Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees on Implementation of the School Readiness Goals Requirements: Survey Items for Program Leadership, Teachers, and Administrative Data Collection](#)

This methodological report presents recommended survey items for understanding Head Start and Early Head Start programs' use of school readiness goals. These survey items represent the second component of the School Readiness Goals and Head Start Program Functioning project, and were informed by the data collected from the main study. The report defines a set of key constructs and offers three sets of survey items related to the constructs: one targeted at program directors and education managers, one targeted at teachers, and one with questions that could be added to annual program reporting requirements. The report was released in the spring of FY2015.

## Early Care and Education Research Scholars: Head Start

The Early Care and Education Research Scholars: Head Start program supports dissertation research on Head Start policy issues in partnership with the Office of Head Start (OHS) and builds capacity in the field to focus research on questions that inform Head Start policy decision-making.

## Head Start Health Manager Descriptive Survey

The Head Start Health Manager Descriptive Survey describes the characteristics of health managers and related staff in Head Start and Early Head Start programs. It also identifies the current landscape of health programs and services for children and families, determines how health initiatives are prioritized, implemented, and sustained, and identifies the programmatic features and policy levers that exist to support health services, including staffing, environment, and community collaboration.

## Head Start University Partnership Grants: Dual-Generation Approaches

The goal of this grant program is to examine how Head Start can promote family well-being, including health, safety, and financial security, as well as children's school readiness. Researchers working in partnership with one or more Head Start programs lead these studies, evaluating promising dual generation approaches, which combine child-focused programs with intensive adult-focused services to support both parents' well-being and children's school readiness. Each of the four grantees is conducting an implementation study and evaluating the effectiveness of the selected intervention or approach.

## Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Supplement to the National Agricultural Workers Survey

The Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) Supplement to the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) is a project that DCFD has collaborated with the Office of Head Start and the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration to develop, pilot, and implement. This supplement will provide a demographic portrait of families who are currently accessing or eligible to access MSHS nationwide. OPRE released [two briefs](#) on the MSHS Supplement in the fall of FY2015.

## Tracking of the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project Sample

The Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project (EHSREP) is a longitudinal impact evaluation of the Early Head Start program initiated in 1996, at the same time that the Early Head Start program was created. Child and family assessments were conducted when children were 14 months old, 24 months old, 36 months old, in the spring prior to kindergarten entry, and again in the spring of the sixth year of formal schooling (5th grade for most children).

In 2012, ACF awarded a contract to RAND Corporation to track the children and families who participated in the EHSREP in order to maintain up-to-date contact information and prepare for a possible follow-up data collection. Tracking activities involve locating children/families, verifying and updating their relevant contact information, and collecting information on a small set of items related to well-being and self-sufficiency (e.g., high school graduation, involvement in the juvenile justice system, employment, etc.).

The project has also implemented several small experiments to determine effective distance

tracking strategies (e.g., emails, text messages, mobile-optimized surveys) for maximizing response rates while minimizing the use of costly, in-person field tracking activities (e.g., sending project staff to a family's last known address).

# Promoting Child Welfare

**The promotion of children’s safety, permanence, and well-being are the principles that guide child welfare practice and policy. OPRE’s child welfare research portfolio includes studies on children who have experienced or are at risk for maltreatment, families who are investigated by Child Protective Services, and children and families who access child welfare services. OPRE partners with the Children’s Bureau to conduct research covering a broad array of topics, including identification of antecedents and consequences of child maltreatment, strategies for its prevention, and service needs and outcomes for children who experience it. This section contains descriptions of some of the completed and ongoing studies in this portfolio.**

## Design Options for Understanding Child Maltreatment Incidence

This project seeks to develop design options for a potential study or group of studies that would leverage existing administrative data, innovative methods, and advanced statistical techniques to obtain accurate and ongoing surveillance on both the incidence of child abuse and neglect and types of related risk. This project will allow for the identification and prioritization of key research questions; exploration of design options, including innovative methodological approaches; review of existing administrative datasets and ongoing surveys; examination of measurement issues; and consideration of resource allocation.

## Evaluation of Domestic Human Trafficking Demonstration Projects

In 2014, ACF’s Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) awarded three grants to carry out demonstration projects to provide coordinated case management and comprehensive direct

victim assistance to domestic victims of severe forms of human trafficking. Working closely with FYSB, OPRE is overseeing a cross-site process evaluation of these new demonstration projects. Key questions of interest are related to the use of the community needs assessment, the necessary conditions for partnership expansion, factors associated with the provision and receipt of comprehensive victim-centered services, survivors’ experiences with the program and their short-term outcomes, and the costs of program components. Additional project activities include working with grantees to improve performance measurement and informing ACF’s decisions regarding future evaluation activities. Future activities may include developing instruments and planning and executing additional evaluation activities.

## Multi-Site Evaluation of Foster Youth Programs (Chafee Independent Living Evaluation Project)

In collaboration with the Children’s Bureau, OPRE designs and conducts evaluations of selected programs funded through the John Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 called for these evaluations, which use rigorous, random assignment designs. The goal is to determine the effects of CFCIP-funded Independent Living Programs in achieving key outcomes for participating youth, including increased educational attainment, higher employment rates and stability, greater interpersonal and relationship skills, reduced non-marital pregnancy and births, and reduced delinquency and crime rates. In the winter of FY2015, OPRE released the overview brief, [“Preparing for a ‘Next Generation’ Evaluation of Independent Living Programs for Youth in Foster Care.”](#) Three issue briefs were also released in FY2015 on supporting youth transition-

ing out of foster care: “[Education Programs](#),” “[Financial Literacy and Asset Building Programs](#),” and “[Employment Programs](#).”

## National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being

The National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW) is a nationally-representative, longitudinal survey of children and families who have been the subjects of investigation by Child Protective Services. NSCAW examines data from first-hand reports of children, parents, and other caregivers, as well as reports from caseworkers, teachers, and administrative records data. The Survey also addresses child and family well-being outcomes in detail and seeks to relate those outcomes to experience with the child welfare system, as well as family characteristics, community environment, and other factors. In the fall of FY2015, OPRE awarded a new contract to begin work to field a third cohort for the study.

## Permanency Innovations Initiative Evaluation

The Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII) is a multi-site federal demonstration project designed to improve outcomes among children in foster care who have the most serious barriers to permanency. This 5-year, \$100 million initiative supports six grantees, each with a unique intervention to help a subgroup of children leave foster care in fewer than three years. PII aims to reduce long-term foster care stays, use an implementation framework that will guide technical assistance activities, rigorously evaluate these efforts, and disseminate findings to build knowledge in the child welfare field. OPRE, in collaboration with the Children’s Bureau, provides oversight for a comprehensive evaluation of the initiative. A PII Evaluation Team is currently designing and conducting rigorous studies that

document the implementation and effectiveness of projects that the initiative funds.

## Services for Youth Involved with Child Welfare Services and at Risk for Homelessness

In FY2013, the Children’s Bureau awarded 18 two-year planning grants that will build the capacity of child welfare systems to prevent long-term homelessness among the most at-risk youth and young adults who access child welfare. After the two-year planning grant, a limited number of grants were funded to implement the planned projects. A contract managed by OPRE is working with the grantees to implement strong models and to develop the capacity for rigorous evaluation.

# Recognizing Cultural Diversity

Although a variety of recent research projects have greatly advanced knowledge of child and family development, many of these works have not adequately accounted for the diversity of cultural features (e.g., language) among families accessing federal resources. DCFD seeks to better represent Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native, and other cultural minority groups in studies geared toward improving policy and practice. OPRE has launched several projects that aim to expand the knowledge base and improve resources for these communities.

## Human Services Research Partnerships: Puerto Rico

The Human Services Research Partnerships: Puerto Rico initiative expands understanding of the most promising human services approaches to improving quality of life in the region, focusing on topics related to the Head Start and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families programs. The Inter American University of Puerto Rico Metropolitan Campus (IAUPR) supports partnerships among researchers, local governments, and community-based organizations to define and address research questions regarding the social and economic well-being of low-income children and families. In FY2015 the research partnership released several publications, including, [\*Beneficios de las personas elegibles al TANF vs. escenario de salario mínimo federal\*](#), [\*The Demographic Characteristics of Low-Income Families and Children in Puerto Rico\*](#), and [\*Supporting Children and Families: TANF and Head Start in Puerto Rico\*](#).

## Human Services Research Partnerships: Virgin Islands

The Human Services Research Partnerships: Virgin Islands project aims to establish an accessible, comprehensive research infrastructure to support the provision of quality human services for Head Start and TANF clients. It seeks to develop a secure data collection system, provide training to support the development of research capacity, and implement two human services research studies, which will address questions of interest to Head Start and TANF programs locally. In FY2015, the Virgin Islands partnership convened stakeholder groups comprised of representatives from a broad array of human services, including members of the newly established Department of Human Services. It is currently reaching out to community-based participatory research experts.

# SPOTLIGHT ON AMERICAN INDIAN & ALASKA NATIVE HEAD START FAMILY AND CHILD EXPERIENCES SURVEY

The Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) is a major source of information on Head Start programs and the children and families they serve. Since 1997, FACES has conducted studies in a nationally representative sample of Head Start programs. The large scale survey has not included Region XI, whose programs are designed to serve predominantly American Indian and Alaska Native children and families. The **American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (AI/AN FACES)**, is designed to fill this information gap.

Planning activities for AI/AN FACES began in FY2014 and involved collaboration between DCFD, the Office of Head Start (OHS), Region XI American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) Head Start directors, researchers from the Tribal Early Childhood Research Center, and Mathematica Policy Research. Based on this extensive collaboration, the project developed a framework to include Region XI Head Start in FACES, which recognizes that the needs of tribal Head Start programs and communities are unique, and therefore necessitate intense collaboration among all stakeholders to ensure that the study will be informative to tribal Head Start directors, as well as OHS more broadly.

Data collection with Region XI children, families, classrooms, and programs began in the fall of 2015, and will be repeated in the spring of 2016 and the spring of 2017. Twenty two Region XI Head Start programs will be included.

The brief, [American Indian & Alaska Native Head Start Family & Child Experiences Survey \(AI/AN FACES\) Highlights](#) offers preliminary information about the survey.

## National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families

The [National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families](#) (NRCHCF) conducts, translates, and provides research concerning three priority areas—poverty reduction and self-sufficiency, healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood, and early care and education—informing ACF programs and policies that support Hispanic families and children. The Center additionally has three primary goals: advancing a cutting-edge research agenda, building research capacity, and implementing an innovative communication and dissemination approach. In FY2015, NRCHCF released several publications, including:

- ◆ [“Mexican Immigrant Family Life in a Pre-Emerging Southern Gateway Community”](#)
- ◆ [“Integrated Data Systems: An Emerging Tool to Support Services for Low-Income Hispanic Families with Young Children”](#)
- ◆ [“Improving Data Infrastructure to Recognize Hispanic Diversity in the United States”](#)
- ◆ [“A Guide to Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Programs for Hispanic Couples and Families”](#)
- ◆ [“The Complex and Varied Households of Low-Income Hispanic Children”](#)
- ◆ [“Family Structure and Family Formation among Low-Income Hispanics in the U.S.”](#)

## Tribal Research Center on Early Childhood

The Tribal Early Childhood Research Center (TRC) seeks to partner with American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) communities, programs, practitioners, and researchers to advance research on young children’s development. It also examines early childhood programs and facilitates the translation of research findings to inform early childhood practice with AIAN children and families.

# Links to Projects and Reports

## Cross-Cutting Early Childhood Research

Assessing Early Childhood Teachers' Use of Child Progress Monitoring to Individualize Teaching Practices

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/early-childhood-teachers-use-of-progress-monitoring-to-individualize>

Child Care and Early Education Research Connections

<http://www.researchconnections.org/content/childcare/federal/ccprc.html>

Cross-Site Evaluation of Project LAUNCH

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/cross-site-evaluation-of-project-launch-linking-actions-for-unmet-needs-in>

Development of a Measure of Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/development-of-a-measure-of-family-and-provider-teacher-relationship-quality-fptrq>

Development of a Measure of the Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infants and Toddlers

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/resource/quality-of-caregiver-child-interaction-for-infants-and-toddlers-q-ccit-a>

The Early Childhood Secondary Data Analysis Project

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/early-childhood-secondary-data-analysis-project>

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/ehs-cc-partnerships>

Executive Function Mapping Project: Translating Research for Application

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/resource/cognitive-control-executive-functions-in-young-children-relevance-of-what>

National Survey of Early Care and Education

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/national-survey-of-early-care-and-education-nsece-2010-2014>

The Network of Infant/Toddler Researchers

<http://www.researchconnections.org/content/childcare/federal/nitr.html>

Quality Features, Dosages and Thresholds, and Child Outcomes: Study Design

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/quality-features-dosages-and-thresholds-and-child-outcomes-study-design-q>

Use of Technology to Support Early Childhood Practice

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/resource/uses-of-technology-to-support-early-childhood-practice-full-report>

## Spotlight on Child Care & Early Education Policy Research Consortium

Child Care & Early Education Policy Research Consortium (CCEEPRC)

<http://www.researchconnections.org/content/childcare/federal/ccprc.html>

## Child Care: Raising Quality and Supporting Parental Employment

Child Care Administrative Data Analysis Cooperative Agreements

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/child-care-administrative-data-analysis-cooperative-agreements>

Child Care and Development Fund Policies Database

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/child-care-and-development-fund-ccdf-policies-database-2008-2013>

Child Care and Early Education Policy and Research Analysis

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/child-care-and-early-education-policy-and-research-and-technical>

Child Care Policy Research Grants

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/child-care-policy-research-grants-2000-2010>

Child Care Research Partnerships

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/child-care-research-partnerships>

Early Care and Education Research Scholars: Child Care

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/child-care-research-scholars>

## Head Start and Early Head Start: Enhancing Health and Human Services for Low-Income Families

Classroom-Based Approaches and Resources for Emotion and Social Skill Promotion

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/head-start-cares-head-start-classroom-based-approaches-and-resources-for>

Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Study – 2009

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/early-head-start-family-and-child-experiences-study-baby-faces>

Early Head Start University Partnership Grants: Buffering Children from Toxic Stress

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/early-head-start-university-partnership-grants-buffering-children-from>

Evaluation of the Head Start Designation Renewal System

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/evaluation-of-the-head-start-designation-renewal-system-drs>

Head Start Coaching Study: Design Phase

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/head-start-coaching-study-design-phase>

Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/head-start-family-and-child-experiences-survey-faces>

Early Care and Education Research Scholars: Head Start

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/head-start-graduate-student-research-program>

Head Start Health Manager Descriptive Survey

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/head-start-health-managers-descriptive-study>

Head Start University Partnership Grants: Dual-Generation Approaches

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/head-start-university-partnership-grants-dual-generation-approaches>

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Supplement to the National Agricultural Workers Survey

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/migrant-and-seasonal-head-start-supplement-to-the-national-agricultural>

Tracking of the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project Sample

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/tracking-of-the-early-head-start-research-and-evaluation-project-ehsrep>

## Spotlight on Head Start Leadership, Excellence & Data Systems and School Readiness Goals & Head Start Program Functioning

Head Start Leadership, Excellence, and Data Systems (HS LEADS)

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/head-start-leadership-excellence-and-data-systems-hs-leads>

School Readiness Goals and Head Start Program Functioning

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/school-readiness-goals-and-head-start-program-functioning>

## Promoting Child Welfare

Design Options for Understanding Child Maltreatment Incidence

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/design-options-for-understanding-child-maltreatment-incidence-2015-2017>

Evaluation of Domestic Human Trafficking Demonstration Projects

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/evaluation-of-domestic-human-trafficking-demonstration-projects>

Multi-Site Evaluation of Foster Youth Programs (Chafee Independent Living Evaluation Project)

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/multi-site-evaluation-of-foster-youth-programs-chafee-independent-living>

National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/national-survey-of-child-and-adolescent-well-being-nscaw>

Permanency Innovations Initiative Evaluation

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/permanency-innovations-initiative-pii-evaluation>

Services for Youth Involved with Child Welfare Services and at Risk for Homelessness

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/building-capacity-to-evaluate-interventions-for-youth-with-child-welfare-involvement-at-risk-of-homelessness>

## **Recognizing Cultural Diversity**

Human Services Research Partnerships: Puerto Rico

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/human-services-research-partnerships-puerto-rico>

Human Services Research Partnerships: Virgin Islands

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/human-services-research-partnership-us-virgin-islands>

National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/center-for-research-on-hispanic-children-families>

Tribal Research Center on Early Childhood

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/tribal-research-center-on-early-childhood-under-the-affordable-care-acts>

## **Spotlight on American Indian & Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey**

American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/resource/american-indian-alaska-native-head-start-family-child-experiences-survey-faces-highlights>

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