MIGRANT AND SEASONAL HEAD START SURVEY DESIGN PROJECT

What is the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Survey Design Project?

The result of this project will be a comprehensive research design for a Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) Survey that:

- Describes the characteristics and experiences of children and families served by the programs,
- Reflects the variations in program service delivery approaches, and
- Identifies strengths and gaps in MSHS services.

It will be conducted through a collaborative partnership with MSHS program staff and administrators, children and families of MSHS and the Office of Head Start. This partnership will result in practical applied information that will inform MSHS policy and practice. The primary tasks of this project are selecting the most culturally and linguistically appropriate measures and developing plans for sampling MSHS programs, data collection, and data analyses. All planning activities will include close collaboration with MSHS staff.

Why?

To further the expansion of Head Start research efforts, the Head Start Act of 1998 called for continued evaluation and research activities that explore program quality and effectiveness, identify ways in which services may be improved, and contribute to the understanding of the characteristics and needs of population groups eligible for services. The MSHS Survey Design Project will provide ACF with a culturally and linguistically appropriate, reliable and valid research plan to gather periodic information that adequately describes the richness of MSHS programs and participating families.

Who?

In collaboration with Federal staff, a multidisciplinary team of experts, including multicultural researchers, early childhood and dual language learner assessment experts, sampling and analytic specialists, and representatives from MSHS programs, families, and communities, will conduct this survey design project.

The design project is being conducted by the following organizations: The CDM Group, Inc.; The Catholic University of America; The National Center for Latino Child & Family Research; Social Dynamics, LLC; and Abt Associates Inc.

How?

The Survey Design Team will draw upon the experiences and findings from the existing descriptive studies of Head Start such as The Family and Child Experiences Survey, The Early Head Start Survey, and A Descriptive Study of Children and Families Served by Head Start Migrant Programs. These surveys provide state-of-the-art models for conducting periodic program surveys of preschool programs and accurate estimates of the resources necessary to implement the proposed MSHS Survey. The MSHS Survey design will include observations, interviews, surveys, and direct child assessments and be significantly tailored and refined to consider the unique characteristics of MSHS programs and families, including:

- Language,
- Culture,
- Family mobility,
- Services provided to children from birth to five years old, and
- MSHS' often shorter and fluctuating service seasons.

For more information, please contact:

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