Head Start Impact Study

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Building Futures
Head Start
Impact Study

Today's Goal

- Describe the Head Start Impact Study
- Show how the study will affect your program and families
- Discuss why your support and participation are important

What is the Head Start Impact Study?

- Congressionally mandated study
- National study including 75 grantees/ delegate agencies and 225 centers

What is the Head Start Impact Study?

- Newly entering 3 and 4 year olds
- Longitudinal- children followed through first grade
- Approximately 5,000-6,000 children

What is the Head Start Impact Study?

- Randomly assign children who have applied for Head Start to either:
  - Head Start Group: Enrolled in Head Start
  - Non-Head Start Group: Not enrolled in Head Start, but can participate in other childcare

What is the Head Start Impact Study?

- Comparable data collected for both groups

- Study will only be conducted in sites where all children already cannot be served

What are we going to learn from the study?

- How does Head Start help children improve both their readiness for school and their early school performance?
  - Physical well being and motor development
  - Social and emotional development
  - Approaches to learning
  - Language development and emerging literacy
  - Cognition and general knowledge

What are we going to learn from the study?

- Under what circumstances does Head Start achieve the greatest impact?
  - Different types of children
  - Children from different home environments
  - Grantee/delegate agencies with different characteristics
  - Different types of childcare and preschool environments

What are we going to learn from the study?

- What parental practices contribute to children's school readiness?
- Inform policymakers and program managers to help make Head Start as effective as possible

What do I need to know about the study design?

Study conducted in **two** phases:

- Field test:
  - 8 programs/ 24 Head Start centers
  - Approximately 600 children
  - During fall of 2001 and spring 2002
  - Test study procedures and instruments

What do I need to know about the study design?

- Full scale study
  - Recruitment begins June 2001
  - Selection and random assignment in spring and summer of 2002
  - Data collection at Head Start programs begins in fall 2002

What do I need to know about the study design?

- General random assignment strategy
  - Programs follow application and eligibility process
  - Families told that the program is participating in the study
  - Families told that some enrollment decisions made by lottery
  - Small number of families and children selected for the study- 80 per grantee
    - 48 enrolled in Head Start
    - 32 not enrolled in Head Start

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Data Collection Sources

- Parents/ Primary caregivers
- Children
- Program staff, teachers/ other childcare providers
- Care settings- assessment of quality
- Administrative/ school records
- Community stakeholders

Measures

- Context information
  - Telephone protocols to assess program eligibility
  - Site visit protocols to collect contextual information
  - Secondary data sources - contextual and capacity information

Measures

- Child and family measures
  - Child assessment
  - Teacher's/ caregiver's child report form
  - Parent interview

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Measures

- Program measures
  - Classroom/ childcare observation
  - Staff survey
  - Center director survey

How will being in the study affect my program?

- Every effort will be made to limit agency burden and provide the necessary resources
- Use of site coordinator
- Identify an agency liaison to coordinate agency study effort

How will being in the study affect my program?

- Support random assignment procedures
- Identify people with whom we need to talk
- Encourage centers and staff to participate
- Work with evaluation team to protect the confidentiality needs of families

How will being in the study affect my program?

- Help provide locating information on families who move
- Provide a place to conduct child assessments
- Staff will not be responsible for conducting interviews

What is the benefit to participating and supporting the study?

- Rigorous evaluation of Head Start programs across the nation will be conducted and your type of program will be represented

- You will be able to provide input to the researchers on the process, issues to consider, and the meaning of the findings

What is the benefit to participating and supporting the study?

- In appreciation of participation, incentives will be provided to staff, parents, and children
- Please provide other suggestions about ways to make this evaluation work for your program