



# Head Start Impact Study

**Presentation at the National Head Start Association's 28th Annual  
Training Conference  
Orlando, Florida  
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# 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?

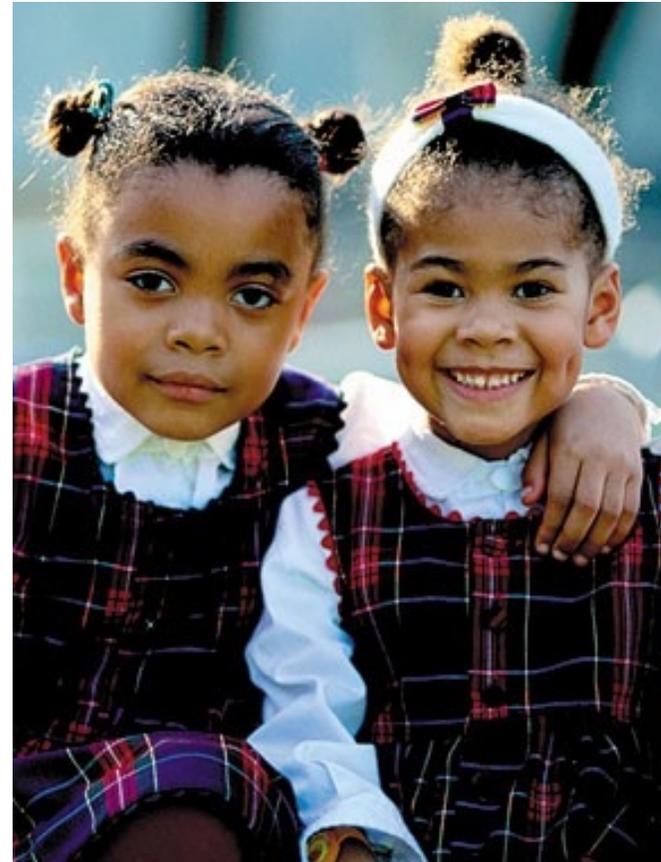
Study conducted in **two** phases:

- 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



# 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





# 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

