

PROJECT BRIEF

Project Title Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) 2019
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Project Description.

For over two decades, the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) has been an invaluable source of information on the Head Start program and the children and families it serves. FACES 2019 is the current phase of this important endeavor. FACES 2019 has a Core Plus study design that provides data on a set of key indicators more rapidly and with greater frequency (Core studies) and serves as a vehicle for studying more complex issues and topics in greater detail and with increased efficiency (Plus studies). It also features the alignment of the study of Region XI American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start (AI/AN FACES) with FACES 2019 in Regions I-X.

Research Questions.

- What are the characteristics of Head Start programs, including structural characteristics and program policies and practices? Are the characteristics changing over time?
- What are the characteristics and qualifications of Head Start teachers and management staff? Are the characteristics and qualifications changing over time?
- What are the characteristics and observed quality of Head Start classrooms? Are classroom characteristics and quality improving over time?
- Does classroom quality vary by characteristics of classrooms, teachers, or programs?
- What characteristics of programs, teachers, or classrooms are associated with aspects of classroom quality?
- What are the demographic characteristics and home environments of children and families served by Head Start? Are characteristics and home environments changing over time?

- How do families make early care and education decisions?
- What are the experiences of families and children in Head Start?
- What are the average school readiness skills and developmental outcomes of the population of Head Start children in fall and spring of the Head Start year? What gains do children make during a year of Head Start? Are children's school readiness skills (average skills or average gains in skills) improving over time?
- Do the school readiness skills of children in the fall and the spring, and their gains in skills, vary by child, family, program, and classroom characteristics?
- What is the association between observed classroom quality and children's school readiness skills? Between child and family characteristics and children's school readiness skills?

Sample.

A nationally representative sample of 180 Head Start programs, 360 Head Start centers, 760 classrooms. In 60 of those programs, child-level data will be collected from 2,400 children and their parents.

Methods.

In fall 2019 and spring 2020, FACES 2019 will assess the school readiness skills of Head Start children, survey their parents, and ask the children's teachers to rate children's social and emotional skills and report on their developmental conditions or concerns. In spring 2020 and 2022, FACES 2019 will conduct observations in Head Start classrooms. Surveys with program directors, center directors, and teachers will also be conducted in both springs.

Progress Update. Study design work is complete. FACES gathers information about quality and school readiness, with an enhanced focus in FACES 2019 on four topics: program experiences of Hispanic/Latino families, Head Start overlap with other early care and education systems, family financial strain, and linkages between classroom instruction and teacher-child relationships. Program recruitment will begin in spring 2019 and data collection in fall 2019.

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Implications for policy/practice

The purpose of the FACES data collection is to support the 2007 reauthorization of the Head Start program (P.L. 110–134), which calls for periodic assessments of Head Start’s quality and effectiveness. Data from the study are intended to be responsive to policy questions and to support programs and practitioners working with families in Head Start. In particular, FACES 2019 has an enhanced focus on four topics of priority to the Office of Head Start: program experiences of Hispanic/Latino families, Head Start overlap with other early care and education systems, family financial strain, and linkages between classroom instruction and teacher-child relationships.

Implications for research

FACES provides national information on Head Start programs, classrooms, and children that can be used as context for others. A restricted use data file is available for secondary analysis www.researchconnections.org. Therefore, future work by researchers with FACES data can help broaden the knowledge base on early childhood development and early care and education experiences.

For more information:

More information about the FACES study, including all dissemination products, is available online at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/head-start-family-and-child-experiences-survey-faces>.

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