



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

# Child & Family Development

FY2018



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## ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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.

### ACF programs aim to:

- Empower families and individuals to increase their economic independence and productivity
- Encourage strong, healthy, supportive communities that have a positive impact on quality of life and the development of children
- Create partnerships with front-line service providers, states, localities and tribal communities to identify and implement solutions that transcend traditional program boundaries
- Improve access to services through planning, reform and integration
- Address the needs, strengths and abilities of vulnerable populations including people with developmental disabilities, refugees and migrants

## OFFICE OF PLANNING, RESEARCH, AND EVALUATION

The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) studies ACF programs and the populations they serve through rigorous research and evaluation projects. These include evaluations of existing programs, evaluations of innovative approaches to helping low-income children and families, research syntheses, and descriptive and exploratory studies. OPRE aims to build and disseminate knowledge about effective approaches to helping low-income children and families. OPRE's research and evaluation projects are conducted primarily through grants and contracts, and include collaboration with ACF programs offices, HHS's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), other Federal entities, and State, Tribal and community partners.

### OPRE includes four divisions:

- The Division of Economic Independence focuses on welfare, employment, and family self-sufficiency.
- The Division of Child and Family Development focuses on child care, Head Start, Early Head Start, and child abuse and neglect.
- The Division of Family Strengthening focuses on teen pregnancy prevention, youth development, healthy marriage, responsible fatherhood, family violence, runaway and homeless youth, and home visiting.
- The Division of Data and Improvement focuses on improving the quality, usefulness, sharing, and analysis of data on ACF programs.



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## 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, child maltreatment, and child welfare services. OPRE's research in the area of child and family development focuses on young children, parents and caregivers, families, and youth. Examples of recent focal areas include dual language learners, classroom quality, family engagement, and building workforce capacity.

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 officers, 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

*The following pages describe major OPRE/DCFD projects in Fiscal Year 2018.*

## ACF EVALUATION POLICY

ACF's Evaluation Policy, published in the Federal Register on August 29, 2014, articulates five major principles for conducting evaluations and using evidence to inform policy and practice:

- **Rigor:** ACF is committed to using the most rigorous methods that are appropriate for the evaluation questions, budget, and other constraints.
- **Relevance:** Evaluation priorities should take into account legislative requirements and Congressional interests and should reflect the interests and needs of ACF, HHS, and Administration leadership; program office staff and leadership; ACF partners such as states, territories, tribes, and local grantees; the populations served; researchers; and other stakeholders. Evaluations should be designed to represent the diverse populations that ACF programs serve.
- **Transparency:** ACF will make information about planned and ongoing evaluations easily accessible, typically through posting on the web information about the contractor or grantee conducting the work and descriptions of the evaluation questions, methods to be used, and expected timeline for reporting results.
- **Independence:** To promote objectivity, ACF protects independence in the design, conduct, and analysis of evaluations.
- **Ethics:** ACF-sponsored evaluations will be conducted in an ethical manner and safeguard the dignity, rights, safety and privacy of participants.



# 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.

## National Survey of Early Care and Education

The National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) of 2012 documented the nation's utilization and availability of early care and education (including school age care), in order to deepen understanding of the extent to which families' needs and preferences coordinate well with providers' offerings and constraints in the United States. The survey oversampled low-income families because they are a significant focus of early care and education (ECE)/school-age public policy. The NSECE 2012 included five survey components and four related questionnaires, including: a Household Survey; a Home-based Provider Survey; a Center-based Provider Survey; and a Workforce Survey. Data were collected from nationally-representative samples of households with children under the age of 13, ECE programs serving children birth to age five, and staff in ECE programs working directly with children in all fifty states and Washington, D.C. A follow-up project implements enhancements to the NSECE 2012 data, provides technical assistance to data users, conducts analyses on the 2012 data, and disseminates restricted-use data.

The survey was conducted through a contract with NORC at the University of Chicago, subcontractors Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, Child Trends, Berkeley Policy Associates, and Acumen LLC, and co-pi's and consultants Lisa Gennetian, Ann Witte, Richard Brandon, Roberta Weber, Lee Kreader, and Deanna Schexnayder.

The National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) of 2019 will repeat the NSECE surveys implemented in 2012 with (1) child care and early education programs and providers serving families with children from birth through age five who are not yet in kindergarten; 2) the teachers and

caregivers that work directly with young children; and (3) households with children from birth through age 13. Data collection is scheduled to happen between January and May of 2019.

These surveys of center- and home-based providers (both listed and unlisted) and the workforce will gather nationally representative information on the supply of child care and early education available to families across all income levels, with attention to generating a robust sample of providers serving low-income families of all racial, ethnic, language, and cultural backgrounds, in diverse geographic areas. Providers include programs that do or do not participate in the child care subsidy program, regulated, registered, or otherwise listed home-based providers, unlisted home-based providers, and center-based programs (e.g., private, community-based child care, Head Start, and state or local pre-K). The household survey with families with children ages birth through age 13-years will gather information about the characteristics of all adults in the family and all the children and will capture schedules of employment, training, and education of the adults and schedules of care used by the children, including all forms of non-parental care in center and homes. In addition, the NSECE 2019 will collect information in a manner that facilitates comparisons with data collected for the NSECE in 2012 and allows for examination of the changing landscape of child care and early education programs during that 7-year period and the interactions of demand and supply/utilization of non-parental care.

The NSECE 2019 is implemented through a contract with NORC at the University of Chicago, with partners from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, Child Trends, and Mathematica Policy Research.

## Variations in Implementation of Quality Interventions

This project is studying the relationship of initial child care and early education (CCEE) classroom process and/or domain-specific quality to intervention-induced changes in observed quality and children's outcomes through a rigorous experimental design. The study will provide the conditions to test the association between process/domain-specific quality and child outcomes above and below predetermined levels of quality. Questions about the quality-child outcomes relationship will be addressed in the context of an in-depth implementation study to understand the conditions necessary to plan, install, and implement an evidence-based intervention that will produce changes in process and/or domain-specific quality and in child outcomes in CCEE classrooms at different levels of initial quality. CCEE classrooms include those in Head Start and community-based child care serving children age birth through four years, not yet in kindergarten. In 2017, DCFD worked with the contractor for the project to finalize a study design, which includes a pilot conducted in 2018-2019 to test the feasibility of implementation and impacts on quality for two quality interventions in the context of a rigorous experimental design.

This project is led by MDRC (JoAnn Hsueh as Principal Investigator) along with partners from the Abt Associates, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, and MEF Associates.

## Infant and Toddler Teacher and Caregiver Competencies

Identifying the competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics) essential to a given profession may offer a common language and lens for assessing job performance and provide a clear structure for professional growth and development. The Infant and Toddler Teacher and Caregiver Competencies (ITTCC) project examines existing efforts — across states, institutes of higher education, professional organizations, and programs — related to competencies for teachers and caregivers serving infants and toddlers. The ITTCC project began in 2017 and explores approaches to the implementation and assessment of

competencies, building a conceptual foundation for measurement, research, and evaluation. This effort draws on knowledge and expertise in competency modeling from industrial-organizational psychology, as well as from relevant caregiving professions that have developed, implemented, and assessed competencies. In 2018, the ITTCC project conducted a scan of competency frameworks; exploring the content of existing frameworks and approaches to implementation and assessment of the competencies contained in the frameworks. The ITTCC project will support ACF in its efforts to improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers in community-based child care and Early Head Start.

This project is led by Mathematica Policy Research (Emily Moiduddin and Sally Atkins-Burnett).

## Supporting the Sustainability of the Q-CCIIT Observational Tool

The Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infants and Toddlers (Q-CCIIT) observation tool is a reliable and valid research-based observational tool that measures the quality of interactions between infants and toddlers and their caregivers in early care and education (ECE) settings. The Q-CCIIT observation tool measures the support that caregivers provide for social-emotional, language and literacy, and cognitive development and also identifies areas of concern. It is appropriate for use across ECE settings serving infants and toddlers, including center-based care and family child care homes, as well as single- and mixed age classrooms. Q-CCIIT FORWARD began in 2018 and will support initial capacity and infrastructure-building activities intended to facilitate the long-term sustainability, proper use, and dissemination of the Q-CCIIT observation tool. Q-CCIIT Forward will build capacity to: (1) develop, manage, and oversee activities related to the administration of the Q-CCIIT observation tool; and (2) disseminate the Q-CCIIT observation tool to multiple audiences and for multiple uses (e.g., professional development, accountability, monitoring, research, and evaluation).

This project is led by Mathematica Policy Research (Ashley Kopack Klein as Project Director).

## Professional Development Tools to Improve Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infant and Toddler Care

The Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infants and Toddlers (Q-CCIIT) observation tool was developed between 2010 and 2014 to assess the quality of caregiver-child interactions in non-parental care settings serving infants and toddlers. This project will develop research-based professional development resources to support the use of Q-CCIIT to improve the quality of child care for infants and toddlers. The project will also conduct a field test to examine use of the professional development tools with caregivers in center-based and family child care settings.

This project is led by Mathematica Policy Research (Louisa Tarullo as Project Director, Shannon Monahan, and Sally Atkins-Burnett).

## Study of Coaching Practices in Early Care and Education Settings

To explore how coaching practices are implemented and vary in early care and education (ECE) classrooms serving children supported by Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) subsidies or Head Start grants, OPRE is sponsoring a project to advance understanding of how core features of coaching are implemented in ECE classrooms, how they may vary by key contextual factors, and which are ripe for more rigorous evaluation. Tasks will include establishing an empirically supported conceptual model for how core features may contribute to desired changes in teacher knowledge and practice, designing and conducting a descriptive study to examine the occurrence and variability of coaching features in ECE classrooms, and conducting case studies to examine program or systems-level drivers of coaching and the features being implemented. In early spring 2019, the study team is scheduled to recruit seven states with existing coaching in center-based and home care settings and will be collecting data over the spring and summer.

This project is led by Mathematica Policy Research (Emily Moiduddin as Project Director).

## Creating a Culture of Continuous Quality Improvement in Child Care and Head Start Settings

The purpose of this project is to explore how child care and Head Start programs can improve the quality of services received by young children, while institutionalizing continuous quality improvement activities. The project will design and assess the feasibility of implementation of a specific approach to continuous quality improvement — the Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) — to promote the uptake and success of evidence-based practices around social and emotional learning (SEL) in both child care and Head Start settings. In 2017, OPRE contracted with Child Trends and the team conducted a literature review, developed a theory of change framework, and designed a feasibility study with a measurement plan.

In 2018, a BSC focused on supporting children’s SEL within seven ECE settings in an East Coast, urban area began. Simultaneously, researchers are conducting a study to assess the feasibility of implementing a BSC. The study is an embedded case study design with data collection from multiple sources at multiple time points, across all phases of implementation of the BSC. The purpose of the study is to learn about the overall cost of implementation, the organizational and individual characteristics that relate to feasibility, barriers related to feasibility, and the supports within the BSC that are associated with progress towards improvement.

This project is led by Child Trends (Kathryn Tout as Principal Investigator, Tamara Halle as co-PI) along with partnership from the University of Massachusetts Boston (Anne Douglass as co-PI).



## Assessing the Implementation and Cost of High Quality Early Care and Education

The goal of the Assessing the Implementation and Cost of High Quality Early Care and Education (ECE-ICHQ) project is to create an instrument for research, practice, and programs to measure implementation and costs of providing ECE services at centers for children from birth to age 5. The project has two focuses: (1) measuring programs' efforts to support quality; and (2) measuring the cost of operating the programs. The ultimate goal is to produce measures of implementation and costs that can be used to examine how differences in what a center does and how resources are used influence quality. In fall 2017 and spring 2018, the project collected data from 30 centers across 3 states in Phase II of the project. The team is currently refining the data collection tools and instruments. They are also planning for a field test and a user's manual during the 2019-2020 program year.

This project is led by Mathematica Policy Research (Andrew Burwick as Principal Investigator, Gretchen Kirby as Project Director), in partnership with consultant Elizabeth Davis at the University of Minnesota.

## Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships Study

The purpose of the Study of Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-child care) Partnerships is to gain a better understanding of EHS-child care partnerships aimed at supporting quality improvement, child development, and family wellbeing in early childhood settings serving infants and toddlers. The study includes a review of the literature to summarize the current knowledge base around EHS-child care partnerships; development of a theory of change model to articulate relations among key features, characteristics, and expected outcomes of partnerships; development of approaches to measuring partnerships for existing and new data collection efforts; and the design and implementation of a descriptive study documenting the

characteristics and features of EHS-child care partnerships and activities aiming to improve professional development and the quality of services to better meet families' needs. Data collection for the surveys and case studies was completed in 2017. Preliminary findings from the study were presented at ACF's 2018 National Research Conference on Early Childhood. The final report is expected to be released early in 2019, followed shortly by several briefs and other papers summarizing findings.

This project is led by Mathematica Policy Research (Dianne Paulsell, Patricia Del Grosso, Jaime Thomas).

## 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 an up-to-date searchable bibliography of scholarly research, policy briefs, and government reports from a wide range of disciplines and sources. Interactive tools allow users to refine their searches to identify key articles on early childhood research topics.

Research Connections is a partnership between the National Center for Children in Poverty at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University; and the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at the Institute for Social Research, the University of Michigan.

## Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium

The Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium (CCEEPRC) was created by ACF in 1995 and aims to increase national capacity for sound child care and early education research, identify and respond to critical issues, and link child care and early education research with policy and practice. Supported by OPRE and the Offices of Child Care and Head Start, the CCEEPRC includes former and current grant-



ees and contractors funded by ACF to conduct child care and early education policy-related research. In partnership with OPRE, CCEEPRC holds an annual research meeting that builds on in-depth roundtables and other activities throughout the year, and provides a forum for researchers and policymakers to investigate emerging research findings, questions, and methods that relate to improved outcomes for children and families. State agency administrators, technical assistance partners, and Federal staff from other agencies and departments join with CCEEPRC members at the annual meeting to learn about emerging research findings, consider how the findings can be used to improve child care and early education policy and practice, and highlight new research questions and methodologies.

## National Research Conference on Early Childhood

Since 1991, the conference has highlighted innovative research regarding early childhood policy and practice, and services for low-income families with young children. The conference aims to actively encourage participation from researchers, practitioners, and policymakers across early childhood research fields, and is unique in its efforts to shape rigorous scientific presentations in ways that are meaningful to policymakers and practitioners. The 2018 conference was held June 25th through 27th at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, Virginia. As information about the 2020 conference becomes available, it will be posted on the [NRCEC website](#).

This project is led by IMPAQ (Annie Oliver as Project Director).

## Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance Cross-Systems Evaluation

This utilization-focused evaluation of ACF's Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System (T/TA System) aims to inform ongoing improvement of the T/TA System and to support the evaluation activities of T/TA system stakeholders. The project includes a comprehensive literature review, cross-system evaluation studies, and technical support for evaluation and continuous

quality improvement among ACF's T/TA System stakeholders. Stakeholders include Federal agencies and ACF's National T/TA network, such as the national centers and the Regional T/TA network of T/TA developers and providers funded by the Offices of Head Start and Child Care.

This project is led by NORC at the University of Chicago (Carol Hafford, Rupa Datta, Marc Hernandez).

## 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 who are working on issues related to the first three years of life. In June 2018, NITR members convened ahead of ACF's National Research Conference on Early Childhood to network, discuss family engagement, and learn about the current priorities of ACF program offices.

Recently, a NITR graduate student group was formed. This group brings together early career scholars and aims to increase opportunities for students to collaborate with NITR faculty members as well as other students to conduct research that informs policy and practice in ACF-relevant programs.

## Human-Centered Design for Human Services

Human-centered design (HCD), also known as "design thinking," is an applied research and design approach for organizational innovation. It offers a framework for creating solutions to complex problems that meet the needs of the users (e.g., staff or program participants). The purpose of this project is to gain a better

understanding of what the process of HCD looks like in the context of human services, the requirements for implementation across a range of programs, the measurable outcomes, evaluability, feasibility, and sustainability of HCD approaches. HCD will be explored across ACF's service delivery programs at federal, state, and local levels.

To do this, an assessment of the current state of the field will be conducted through expert and stakeholder consultation, a review of literature, and key informant interviews. This work will define core elements of the human-centered design process, identify programs currently implementing or that recently implemented human-centered design in human services programs, and describe the current state of the field in terms implementation, sustainability, and evaluation efforts to date. Building on what is learned from the field, an implementation and evaluation pilot study is planned to be conducted at up to three sites administering ACF programs. The pilot study will implement HCD and evaluate the implementation, feasibility, evaluability, and outcomes of interest to ACF programs. The project, Human-Centered Design for Human Services (HCD4HS), was awarded in September 2018, and will be conducted over three years.

This project is led by Child Trends (Lauren Supplee as Principal Investigator), with subcontracts to MEF Associates and Anthro-Tech, Inc.

## Early Care and Education Data Archive

OPRE oversees numerous data collection efforts through research studies on a wide-range of early childhood topics within and across child care, Head Start, home visiting, and other early care and education (ECE) efforts. The Early Care and Education Data Archive will develop and provide ongoing support to facilitate sharing data from previous, current, and future OPRE-supported grants and contracts relevant to the field of early care and education. The primary objectives of this effort include:

- Maintaining and establishing a secure data archive to serve as a central repository for these datasets to allow for replication of study findings;
- Fostering the ability of researchers and other analysts to perform secondary analyses examining additional research questions beyond those addressed in

the original study;

- Promoting the ability of researchers and other analysts to link or harmonize across datasets; and supporting advances in knowledge related to the ECE field.

Additionally, this effort includes activities to support the archiving of datasets and supporting materials in other ECE-relevant fields such as economic self-sufficiency, welfare, employment, co-parenting, marriage, family formation and stability, and father involvement.

The contractor for the study is the Institute for Social Research (ICPSR), University of Michigan.

## Early Care and Education Leadership Study

Leadership is widely recognized as an essential driver of organizational performance and improvement, but little is known about its role in driving quality of early childhood programs and outcomes for staff and families. In launching the Early Care and Education Leadership Study (ExCELS), OPRE seeks to fill the definitional and measurement gaps to help the early childhood field understand how effective leaders can improve quality experiences for families in early care and education (ECE) settings.

The project will identify the key features of effective ECE leadership and highlight gaps in our understanding through a review of existing research literature; construct a theory of change that shows how ECE leaders can act as change agents for quality improvement; develop a compendium of existing measures aligned with the theory of change to identify measurement gaps; develop a short form instrument to examine key ECE leadership constructs in center-based settings; identify promising leadership quality improvement initiatives and methods of evaluating them; and conduct a descriptive study in 100 centers that receive funding from Head Start or the Child Care and Development Fund to test hypothesized associations between leadership constructs and outcomes in the theory of change.

OPRE contracted with Mathematica Policy Research and its subcontractor, the University of Massachusetts, Boston, to conduct this study.



# SPOTLIGHT ON EXECUTIVE FUNCTION MAPPING PROJECT MEASURES COMPENDIUM

The Executive Function Mapping Project Measures Compendium, released by OPRE in spring 2018, provides information about the range of measures available to assess executive function (EF) and other regulation related skills. The field of EF and other regulation related research is broad, rapidly growing, and encompasses many related but distinct skills and competencies (Jones, Bailey, Barnes, & Partee, 2016).

The Compendium aims to:

1. Align specific EF and regulation related skills with the measures used to assess them;
2. Describe similarities and differences across commonly used measures; and
3. Compile information about the relevant psychometric properties of each measure.

The Compendium describes 44 measures of executive function and other regulation related skills and consists of four parts:

- **Overview** explains the type of information included in each part of the Compendium and how it can be used by researchers and other stakeholders;
- **Summary Table and Figures** provide an at a glance view of the measures and how they compare to one another based on broad features that are relevant for specific purposes, such as age range or type of assessment;
- **Measures Chart** summarizes the key information needed to identify and select measures, including the task description and psychometric properties; and

- **Profiles** provide additional details about each of the measures included in the compendium, including sample scores and notes about task or survey administration and how the measure has been used in prior research

The Compendium builds from a comprehensive framework of executive function and other regulation related skills described in *Executive Function Mapping Project: Untangling the Terms and Skills Related to Executive Function and Self Regulation in Early Childhood* (released by OPRE in fall 2016). Each measure included in the Compendium is described and categorized using the four features of the framework: Skill Complexity, Developmental Stage, Developmental Domain, and Measurement Strategy.

The resources provided in the Compendium are designed to help researchers, program staff, child development specialists, and other professionals identify the measures that are most appropriate for the age, setting, and specific objectives of their assessment and evaluation work.

This project was led by researchers from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

# CHILD CARE: RAISING QUALITY AND SUPPORTING PARENTAL EMPLOYMENT

A growing body of research demonstrating the link between high quality 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 care.

## Child Care and Development Block Grant Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grants Cohort 1 and Cohort 2

In 2016, ACF began the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Implementation Research and Evaluation Grants program. The goal of this grant program is to provide Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies the opportunity to plan for and evaluate initiatives and policy changes in response to the goals of the CCDBG Act of 2014. The grant program has two phases: a planning grant (Phase I) to develop and plan for an evaluation research project and an implementation grant (Phase II) to conduct the evaluations designed in Phase I.

The first cohort of planning grants (Phase I/Cohort 1) includes eight CCDF Lead Agencies awarded cooperative agreements in September 2016. The second cohort (Phase I/Cohort 2) includes three CCDF Lead Agencies awarded cooperative agreements in May 2017.

The first cohort of implementation grantees (Phase II/ Cohort 1) includes four CCDF Lead Agencies awarded cooperative agreements in March 2018. Projects focus on: improving infant and toddler care quality with increased set-aside; evaluating extension of redetermination length of subsidies; evaluating new health and safety standards; monitoring license exempt providers; stability of subsidies for families and providers; professional development supports

for home based providers; and increasing access to care.

## Child Care and Early Education Policy and Research Analysis Project

The purpose of the Child Care and Early Education Policy and Research Analysis Project (CCEEPRA) is to support the provision of expert consultation, assessment and analysis in child care and early education policy and research to the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), including activities related to:

- providing expert advice, assistance and consultation in support of the agency's research priorities and goals;
- conducting assessment, analyses and summaries of policies, practices, and research of relevance to the agency's mission;
- conducting studies to inform policy and practice and the development of new research priorities;
- identifying and refining measures and instruments to improve the collection of data related to program policies and practices and to program outcomes for families and children;
- identifying sources of data and conducting statistical analyses on national and other original datasets to answer questions of relevance to ACF on child care utilization, child care supply, and the effects of child care and other early childhood policies on parental and child outcomes;
- providing expertise in the preparation of written materials; and
- convening experts on ECE research and policy issues of relevance to the administration of the Child Care and Development Fund and other early childhood programs in States, Territories, and Tribes.



Products supported through this contract include literature reviews, measures compendia, meeting summaries, briefing papers, webinars, research briefs, and research-to-policy/research-to-practice briefs.

This project is led by Child Trends (Tamara Halle, Kathryn Tout, Kelly Maxwell, Nicole Forry, Martha Zaslow).

## 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. The specific goals of the Child Care Research Scholars grants are: (1) to directly support graduate students as a way of encouraging the conduct of child care policy research; (2) to foster mentoring relationships between faculty members and graduate students who are pursuing doctoral-level research in the child care field; and (3) to encourage active communication, networking, and collaboration among graduate students, their mentors, and other senior child care researchers; and (4) To encourage active communication, networking, and collaboration among graduate students, their mentors, and policymakers.

## Center for Supporting Research on Child Care and Development Block Grant Implementation

The purpose of this Center is to support Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies in building research capacity to help inform and evaluate policies and initiatives implemented in response to the goals of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014. OPRE also awarded research and evaluation planning grants to eight lead agencies in FY 2016 and to three additional grantees in FY 2017. The Center will support agencies that received planning grants. The Center also aims to enhance research capacity among all lead agencies, including those that are not grant recipients.

As a primary focus, the Center will provide capacity-building activities, tailoring specific activities to meet the interests and needs of lead agencies, as well as supporting cross-grantee collaboration and learning.

## Child Care Interstate Background Checks

The Child Care Interstate Background Checks (CC-IBaCs) project seeks to fill gaps in knowledge to inform states' and territories' implementation of interstate background checks as mandated by the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014. The project will identify barriers and promising solutions to implementation of interstate background checks, and provide ACF and Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) administrators with timely information to support states' and territories' compliance with the law. The project will conduct research and analysis into the requirements of the CCDBG Act of 2014, determine the compliance status of states and territories, and identify any policy, organizational, and resource constraints that CCDF lead agencies face. The project will consist of multiple activities, including an information review, a scan of states and territories, in-depth case studies or implementation studies, and a prevalence study. Through active engagement with stakeholders and experts, ACF's goal is to provide timely knowledge, information, and options to help states achieve full implementation of the CC-IBaCs requirements.

This project is led by CNA (Delilah Barton as Project Director, Ernie Baumann as Technical Advisor) in partnership with NORC and JRSA.

## Assessing Models of Coordinated Services for Low-Income Children and Their Families

Through this project, OPRE seeks to learn more about how states and communities coordinate early care and education, family economic security, and/or other health and human services to most efficiently and effectively serve the needs of low-income children and their families. This work builds on the Integrated Approaches to Supporting Child Development and Improving Family Economic Security project. The goal of this new award is to build on that investment by identifying the range of existing models that coordinate a broader set of services.

Coordinated services programs seek to address the multi-faceted needs of families and to support children’s development by providing access to high quality early childhood education, while simultaneously addressing additional family needs such as parenting education, supports for family economic security, and other health and human services. By connecting and facilitating these services for families, coordinated services programs endeavor to move families out of poverty in the short-term and decrease the chance that poverty will continue into the next generation. The project activities include a targeted literature synthesis, a national scan of existing programs that coordinate early care and education with family economic security or other health and human services, and site visits with select programs to gather more in-depth information about how programs are serving families on the ground. A series of reports and briefs will be produced to inform both ACF and the public about the findings and address gaps or needs in the field.

This project is led by Mathematica Policy Research.





# SPOTLIGHT ON CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND (CCDF) DATABASE

The CCDF Policies Database is a source of information on the detailed policies used to operate child care subsidy programs under the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). Since 2008, the CCDF Policies Database has collected, coded, and disseminated CCDF policies for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories and outlying areas. The information in the database is based primarily on the documents that caseworkers use as they work with families and providers, as well as the CCDF Plans and amendments submitted by States/Territories to ACF, state law, and regulations used by the staff operating the program. The database 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.

On the project's website, users can utilize a search tool to search the full database and download custom datasets. The website also provides access to all data documentation, project reports, and other resources.

In November of 2018, the project published its annual report, or book of tables, which presents key aspects of the differences in CCDF funded programs as of October 1, 2017. Each annual report also presents policy changes since the previous year, as well as changes in select policies over the previous five years.

From the most recent report, highlights of policy changes from 2013 to 2017 include:

- Twenty one States/Territories made changes to their policies regarding eligibility during periods of job search, with most of the changes occurring between 2016 and 2017.
- Thirty two States/Territories made changes to their redetermination periods between 2013 and 2017, with most of the changes occurring between 2015 and 2016 when several States/Territories extended their redetermination periods from 6 to 12 months.
- Twenty two States/Territories changed the monthly copayment amounts for a family of three earning \$15,000. The majority of States/Territories decreased copayment amounts between 2013 and 2017.

The project also periodically produces policy briefs and other short reports. In early 2018, the project released a brief providing a graphic overview of some of the CCDF policy differences across States/Territories as of October 1, 2016. A similar graphic overview of CCDF policies as of October 1, 2017 is expected in early 2019.

This project is led by Urban Institute (Sarah Minton, Linda Giannarelli).



# 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 for the larger field of early childhood programming and development. 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.

## Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Study

The Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (Baby FACES) is a nationally representative descriptive study of Early Head Start (EHS) aimed at informing program planning, technical assistance, and research at the national level by:

- providing descriptive information about the quality, frequency, and intensity of EHS services;
- describing the characteristics, qualifications, and professional supports provided to staff working with EHS families;
- identifying key characteristics, strengths, and needs of families served in EHS;
- learning how EHS children and families are faring in key areas of child and family well-being; and
- exploring associations between the type and quality of EHS services and child and family well-being.

There have been two cohorts of the Baby FACES study to date and a third is planned for 2020. Baby FACES 2009 was the first cohort of the study. It used a longitudinal design and followed two age cohorts of children (newborns and one-year-olds) through their time in EHS, from 2009 to 2012. Baby FACES was redesigned in 2015 to employ a repeated cross-sectional approach with a nationally representative sample of programs, centers, classrooms, home visitors, and children of all age groups enrolled in EHS. Data collection for the second cohort was completed in the spring

of 2018. Baby FACES 2018 included a particular focus on unpacking how center-based EHS classrooms support infant/toddler development through responsive relationships between teachers and children. Several reports and briefs summarizing findings are planned for publication in 2019. A third cohort is planned for 2020 (Baby FACES 2020) which will also utilize a cross-sectional design to focus on the processes and practices in home-based EHS that support positive parent-infant/toddler relationships and child development.

This project is led by Mathematica Policy Research (Cheri Vogel, Sally Atkins-Burnett, Yange Xue).

## 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, spring of 2015, and spring of 2017. OPRE released a technical report in the fall of 2016, which examines data from three successive cohorts (2006, 2009, 2014) for trends in observed classroom quality. A number of products from the fall 2014, spring 2015, and spring 2017 data collections, including the data files, were released in 2018.

In 2017, a new contract was awarded to continue the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES). In 2018 the research team has completed substantial planning for the design, measurement, analysis, and dissemination of the FACES 2019 study. Data collection will begin in the fall of 2019.

The project is led by Mathematica Policy Research (Lizabeth Malone as Project Director, Ashley Kopack



Klein as APD, Louisa Tarullo as co-PI, Nikki Aikens as co-PI).

## Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Study

MSHS provides early childhood support for migrant and seasonal farmworkers. The Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) study is a four-year study that examined MSHS programs and practices and the children and families served by the MSHS programs. The study examined program practices in multiple domains, including enrollment, recruitment, and dual language support. The study also explored the well-being of children and families receiving services. A particular focus of the MSHS Study will be language practice and language assessments utilized across centers. The data tables for the MSHS Study will be released in early spring 2019 and the data will be made public for secondary analyses.

This project is led by Abt Associates (Linda Caswell, Michael Lopez, Sandra Barrueco), with their partners the Catholic University of America and Westat.

## 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 OPRE established in collaboration with the Office of Head Start and the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA/DOL). This effort partially addresses requirements from the Head Start School Readiness Act 2007 for an MSHS Study of the MSHS-eligible population. This supplement also provides a demographic portrait of families who are currently accessing or eligible to access MSHS nationwide.

This project is led by JBS Aguirre, International, working with ETA/DOL.

## Early Care and Education Research Scholars: Head Start

The Head Start Graduate Student Research Grant Program is designed to build research capacity in and knowledge of effective early childhood interventions with low-income children and families. The grant program does this by providing support for dissertation research conducted by graduate students working in partnership with local Head Start or Early Head Start programs. The immediate goals of the grant program are to: (1) support the completion of high quality research projects directed at the current concerns of Head Start and Early Head Start programs and policy makers; (2) encourage research with Head Start and Early Head Start populations; (3) promote mentor-student relationships that provide project supervision in the field and support students' professional development; (4) emphasize the importance of developing working research partnerships with Head Start and Early Head Start programs, thereby increasing the effectiveness of the applied research work; and (5) support active communication, networking and collaboration among the group of grantee graduate students, their mentors, and policymakers.

## 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.

The grants were awarded to Northwestern University, University of Alabama, University of Southern California, and University of Oregon.

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

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

The Early Head Start University Partnership Grants: Buffering Children from Toxic Stress is a set of 6 grants examining the implementation and efficacy of different promising parenting interventions in Early Head Start (EHS) settings to help buffer children from toxic stress. These grants have three overarching goals: (1) identify the children and families most vulnerable to stress; (2) enhance EHS services by implementing parenting interventions that are designed to ameliorate the effects of chronic stress on children's development; and (3) advance applied developmental neuroscience. Each grant is testing a different preventative intervention (e.g., The Playing and Learning Strategies Intervention (PALS), Promoting First Relationships (PFR), Filming Interactions to Nurture Developments (FIND), etc.). Results from this research will help build a cumulative knowledge base regarding the role EHS can play in promoting practices that buffer children from toxic stress.

The grants were awarded to New York University, University of Colorado Denver, University of Delaware, University of Denver, University of Maryland School of Social Work, and Washington University in St. Louis.

## Early Head Start University Partnership Grants: Building the Evidence for Infant/Toddler Center-based Programs

The goal of this grant program is to examine how Early Head Start (EHS) and other early care and education programs can promote and improve early child development by supporting both parenting and caregiving. Researchers working in partnership with one or more EHS center-based programs and/or EHS-Child Care Partnership programs lead these studies, evaluating interventions that target both parents and center-based teachers as a means of achieving child development goals. Each of the four grantees is conducting an implementation study and evaluating the effectiveness of the selected intervention.

Grantees include the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, Wayne State University (Detroit, MI), University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and University of Miami.

## Head Start Connects: Individualizing and Connecting Families to Comprehensive Family Support Services

The Head Start Connects project was launched in 2018 to generate knowledge about the processes through which Head Start programs individualize, coordinate, and provide appropriate services that meet families' needs. The project will address this goal through a set of research activities that build on and inform one another. First, the project will conduct a literature review on the coordination, tailoring, and provision of family support services. This review will help inform the development and refinement of a theory of change model that articulates pathways between key program activities and processes related to coordination of family support services and expected outputs and outcomes for families and children. The literature review and theory of change will guide the research design for a set of case studies, including qualitative interviews with Head Start staff and families. The staff interviews will include a reflective case file review where staff describe their work with specific families and how they engage with these families over time to coordinate family support services.

The team will use insights from the case studies to further refine the theory of change, refine a set of research questions, and develop a set of design options for a large-scale descriptive study of Head Start programs nationally that is focused on describing the coordination of family support services in Head Start and the degree to which coordination is responsive to family needs.

This project is led by MDRC (Michelle Maier as Project Director).







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

The American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (AI/AN FACES) is the first ever nationally representative study of children, families, and Head Start programs operated in Head Start Region XI. Region XI Head Start grants are awarded to programs serving predominantly AI/AN children. AI/AN FACES 2015 was first fielded in 2015, and another cohort of AI/AN FACES is being planned to be fielded in 2019.

The design of both AI/AN FACES 2015 and AI/AN FACES 2019 was informed by members of the AI/AN FACES Workgroup which includes tribal Head Start directors, members of the National Indian Head Start Directors Association (NIHSDA) Board of Directors, researchers with expertise working with tribal communities, Mathematica Policy Research study staff, and federal officials from the Office of Head Start, Region XI, and OPRE. Members of the AI/AN FACES Workgroup have shared insights and information on the kinds of information needed about Region XI Head Start programs (including children's development and school readiness, parent and family demographics, health, and program engagement, and teacher, classroom, and program characteristics). Members have also recommended recruitment practices that are responsive to the unique cultural and self-governing contexts of tribal Head Start programs.

In 2018, OPRE released several reports, briefs, and webinars highlighting findings from AI/AN FACES 2015.

*Region XI American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start: A Portrait of Children and Families* provides descriptive information on the children and families that Region XI Head Start serves during the fall of the program year. The brief provides information on: 1) Who Region XI Head Start is serving; 2) What are Region XI Head Start families' resources and needs; 3) How Region XI children are doing at the beginning of the program year; and 4) What are AI/AN Region XI Head Start children's home and community experiences.

*A Year in Region XI Head Start: Children's Growth and Opportunities to Foster It from AI/AN FACES 2015* describes the developmental progress of Region XI Head Start children as they complete a program year. The brief provides information on: 1) Region XI Head Start children's language, literacy, and math skills in fall and spring; and 2) Region XI Head Start children's social skills, approaches to learning, and problem behaviors in fall and spring.

*Descriptive Data on Region XI Head Start Children and Families: AI/AN FACES Fall 2015 Spring 2016 Data Tables and Study Design* provides information about the AI/AN FACES 2015 study, including the background, design, methodology, measures and analytic measures. It also provides detailed descriptive statistics in a series of tables on children, their families, and their classrooms, centers, and programs. The data provide descriptive information from parent surveys, direct child assessments, teacher-child reports, teacher surveys, classroom observations, and center and program director surveys.

*Psychometric Analyses of Child Outcome Measures with American Indian and Alaska Native Preschoolers: Initial Evidence from AI/AN FACES 2015* presents findings from analyses of how preschool cognitive and social-emotional measures performed in AI/AN FACES 2015. The findings provide initial evidence on the reliability and validity of the measures for AI/AN preschoolers.

A restricted use AI/AN FACES 2015 data set is available for additional analyses by qualified researchers in order to further provide critically needed information about Region XI Head Start programs and the children and families they serve. Information about the data set and how to apply for access is available at [www.researchconnections.org](http://www.researchconnections.org).

This project is led by Mathematica Policy Research (Elizabeth Malone) in partnership with the University of Colorado (Michelle Sarche).



# 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 ACF’s 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.

## 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. NSCAW 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. Recruitment of child welfare agencies and baseline data collection of participants is scheduled for spring 2019.

This project is led by RTI International (Melissa Dolan as Project Director).

## Supporting Evidence Building in Child Welfare

The overall purpose of this project is to support OPRE and the Children’s Bureau (CB) in increasing the number of evidence-supported interventions for the child

welfare population by conducting rigorous evaluations and supporting the field in moving toward rigorous evaluations. The project is focusing initially on interventions that have been fully implemented previously in at least one setting, undergone formative testing, and have shown some significant impacts through summative evaluation, rather than those that are in earlier stages of development and testing. Key project tasks include identification of priority areas and interventions ripe for moving to the next level of evidence; review of existing evidence and feasibility issues; rigorous impact evaluations of interventions (implementation of which will not be funded under this contract); and consultation around complex evaluation designs or statistical methods relevant for testing interventions in one or more sites. The results of the evaluations will be disseminated to meet the needs of ACF, CB, policymakers, practitioners, and other key stakeholders. They will also be published in peer-reviewed journals, for inclusion in appropriate evidence reviews.

This project is led by Urban Institute (Mike Pergamit as co-PI, Marla McDaniel as Program Director) in partnership with Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago (Mark Courtney as co-PI).

## Child Maltreatment Incidence Data Linkages

The Child Maltreatment Incidence Data Linkages (CMI Data Linkages) project aims to explore how enhancing and scaling innovative data linkage practices can improve our understanding of child maltreatment incidence and related risk and protective factors. CMI Data Linkages, which began in fall 2017, will (1) identify sites using linked administrative data to examine child maltreatment incidence and related risk and protective factors and (2) support the sites in scaling or enhancing those linkages. The project team will provide selected sites with access to experts to help solve any challenges and to support a collaborative learning network that facilitates communication and

information sharing. Through the design and execution of a multisite feasibility study, the project team will also examine factors that promote or impede the scaling and enhancement of integrated administrative data. These factors may include state and local contexts, resources, organizational capacity, peer support, training, and existing infrastructure. CMI Data Linkages intends to inform the accurate and ongoing surveillance of the incidence of child abuse and neglect and future prevention and treatment efforts.

This project is led by Mathematica Policy Research (Matthew Stagner, Cay Bradley) in partnership with Washington University in St. Louis (Melissa Jonson-Reid).

## Definitions and Policies Related to the Incidence of Child Abuse and Neglect

This project supports ACF in identifying federal, state, and/or local definitions and policies related to the surveillance of child maltreatment and related risk and protective factors. The project will compile meaningful information from selected definitions and policies to create variables and response categories. The objective is to create a database and files that can be used for quantitative analysis. The database and analytic files will be a resource for researchers and other analysts who are interested in examining differences in definitions and policies across states and localities as well as over time. The primary goal is to allow researchers to link the analytic files to other data sources in order to address important questions about how variations in these definitions and policies are associated with child welfare intake, screening practices, substantiation decisions, service provision, and ultimately child safety and well-being.

This project is led by Mathematica Policy Research (Elizabeth Weigensberg as Project Director, Matthew Stagner as Principal Investigator), with a subcontract to Child Trends.

## Understanding Postadoption and Guardianship Instability for Children and Youth Who Exit Foster Care

The Understanding Postadoption and Guardianship Instability for Children and Youth Who Exit Foster Care project was launched in 2017 to develop and execute one or more studies to generate knowledge on post-permanency instability for children and youth who exit foster care through adoption or guardianship. In preparation for developing the design options, the project included several key tasks that have been completed. Specifically, drawing upon input from experts and stakeholders as well as a comprehensive review of the existing literature, the project has developed a conceptual model that articulates key child, caregiver, family, and contextual factors that are thought to contribute to adoption and guardianship instability. In addition, the project has compiled existing state policies, procedures, and administrative data related to adoption and guardianship instability (e.g., available services and supports, average time in care, average age at placement). Lastly, the project team has assessed the extent to which existing survey data can be used to answer key questions about instability (e.g., rates of instability, risk and protective factors). In 2019, the project team will submit design options for studies that may include secondary analysis and new data collection and ACF will select design options to implement. The project will also support the creation of resources to help build the capacity of agencies at the federal-, state-, and/or local-level to obtain accurate and ongoing information on post-permanency instability among children and youth who exit foster care through adoption or guardianship.

The contract for this project was awarded to RTI international (Heather Ringeisen as Project Director, Leyla Stambaugh as ADP), with subcontracts to the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee (Nancy Rolock as PI), the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Mark Testa as PI), and Mathematica Policy Research.

## Understanding Judicial Decision-Making and Hearing Quality in Child Welfare

Juvenile and family court judges are responsible for deciding when children enter and exit out-of-home care and for ensuring children in the system achieve safety, permanency, and well-being. The quality of child welfare court hearings is important because each of the hearings provides judges with an opportunity to learn about the child and parent as well as the family's strengths, needs, and progress. While some research has been conducted on child welfare hearing quality, questions remain about how to support effective judicial decision-making and improve outcomes for children and families. This project will study judicial decision-making during the life of a child welfare case as well as the quality of child welfare court proceedings, the factors associated with decision-making and hearing quality, and the influence that decision-making and hearing quality may have on case planning and outcomes such as parent engagement in services and children's permanency outcomes. The project includes a comprehensive literature review and conceptual model as well as a compilation of methods, measures, and data sets that can be used to conduct research on judicial decision-making and hearing quality. Finally, design options will be developed and pre-testing and feasibility testing for the selected design(s) will be conducted.

This project is led by James Bell Associates (Anne Fromknecht as Project Director, Sophia Gatwoski as co-PI, Alicia Summers as co-PI), in collaboration with the American Bar Association.

## Building Capacity to Evaluate Child Welfare Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families

This project will support ACF's Children's Bureau (CB) in its work to advance the evidence around collaborative approaches to preventing child abuse and neglect. In 2018, CB funded four grants to states, communities, and Tribes to develop, implement, and evaluate proactive strategies that build on the strengths of families, including those at high risk for child maltreatment.

The initiative supports community-level mobilization around the development of multi-system collaboratives that provide a continuum of activities and services designed to prevent child abuse and neglect.

This project will support the CB effort through two primary components: 1) evaluation-related technical assistance to strengthen evaluation capacity in the four grantees to conduct site-specific outcome evaluations, and 2) a cross-site process evaluation to better understand how communities came together to develop and implement integrated approaches to preventing child maltreatment, including documenting project and organizational leadership approaches, integration and alignment strategies, and recruitment and assessment methods to identify and serve at-risk families.

This project is led by Abt Associates (Allison Hyra as Project Director) in partnership with Child Trends (Karin Malm as Principal Investigator) and consultant Sharon McGroder.



# SPOTLIGHT ON TITLE IV-E PREVENTION SERVICES CLEARINGHOUSE

The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) of 2018 requires HHS to conduct an independent systematic review of evidence to rate programs and services as promising, supported, and well supported practices. On June 22, 2018, HHS published a Federal Register Notice (FRN; 83 FR 29122) requesting public comment on initial criteria and potential services and programs to be considered for systematic review as part of the Title IV E Prevention Services Clearinghouse. The comment period closed on July 22, 2018. Over 360 responses were received, most containing multiple comments. Commenters included state and local administrators, service and program developers, foundations, non profit organizations, researchers and evaluators, and other stakeholders.

HHS considered public comments received and input from federal partners, as well as other key stakeholders including the California Evidence Based Clearinghouse when developing the revised initial criteria and selecting the first dozen services and programs. HHS released the State ACYF CB PI 18 09 FFPSA Prevention Program Instruction on November 30, 2018. Attachment C of the Program Instruction includes the revised initial criteria and the first dozen services and programs selected for systematic review by the Title IV E Prevention Services Clearinghouse.

The Title IV E Prevention Services Clearinghouse will:

- Develop and employ systematic, rigorous, and transparent standards and procedures to review programs and services and their associated

research studies. The Title IV E Prevention Services Clearinghouse Standards and Procedures will include (1) procedures for identifying programs and services and associated research studies for review or re review, (2) standards for assessing the design, execution, and findings of research studies and rating programs and services, and (3) definitions of key terms.

- Develop a website that is easily accessible and searchable. It will allow users to navigate the site and find evidence based programs and resources that meet their needs.
- Continue to seek input from the field to ensure it is relevant and responsive.

The Title IV E Prevention Services Clearinghouse is led by Abt Associates (Sandra Wilson as Project Director and Erin Bumgarner as Deputy Project Director), along with partners from the University of Denver (Suzanne Kerns, Principal Investigator) and the University of Colorado, Denver (John Fluke, Senior Advisor).



# HUMAN TRAFFICKING: IMPROVING SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS

Human trafficking involves both forced labor and sexual exploitation of minors and adults, of citizens and lawful permanent residents, and of men and women. To improve services for domestic victims of human trafficking, enhance performance measurement, and guide future evaluation, OPRE has partnered with the Children's Bureau (CB), the Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP), and the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB).

## Domestic Human Trafficking and the Child Welfare Population

The overall purpose of this project is to support ACF's Children's Bureau (CB) in its efforts to identify and better assist the children and youth served by its programs who are victims of, or are at risk of, domestic human trafficking. Specifically, this project seeks to summarize current understanding of human trafficking and resources addressing human trafficking in the child welfare population in order to inform a research agenda. Project activities include a literature review, a state-level compendium of policies and procedures, a critical review of current practices, a scan of existing data, and a Report to Congress. The project will also support practice-relevant research studies, currently in the design phase.

This project is led by RTI International (Deborah Gibbs as Project Director, Melissa Dolan as APD).

## Evaluation of Domestic Victims of 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.

In 2015, FYSB awarded three additional demonstration project grants. The intent of the grant program is to improve organizational and community capacity to deliver trauma-informed, culturally relevant services for domestic victims of human trafficking. The grantees are expected to build and sustain coordinated systems of agency services and partnerships with allied professionals in community-based organizations, such as runaway and homeless youth, domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking victim services programs.

Working closely with FYSB, OPRE is overseeing a cross-site process evaluation of these 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. OPRE released a report and a practice brief from the first cohort of demonstration projects in the summer of 2017. A report and a practice brief from the second cohort of demonstration projects is anticipated in early 2019.

This project is led by RTI International.

## Evaluation of Domestic Victims of Human Trafficking Program

Building off of the previous evaluation of the Domestic Victims of Human Trafficking Demonstration Projects, in 2016 ACF's Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) in conjunction with FYSB awarded thirteen cooperative agreement grants to implement the Domestic Victims of Human Trafficking (DVHT) Program. The DVHT Program is focused on providing comprehensive case management, direct services and assistance, and referrals to domestic victims of severe forms of human

trafficking. Services include, but are not limited to: long-term housing; substance abuse treatment; mental health counseling; educational opportunities; job training and skills; and legal and financial advocacy. Programs must integrate survivor engagement into their case management and service delivery strategies. The intent of the DVHT Program is to build, expand, and sustain organizational and community capacity to deliver trauma-informed, strength-based, and victim-centered services for domestic victims of severe forms of human trafficking through coordinated case management, a system of referrals, and the formation of community partnerships.

Working closely with OTIP, OPRE is overseeing an evaluation of the DVHT Program. Key objectives are to assess grantee site policies, practices, and services, including the focus of this grant program on access to long-term housing options, substance abuse treatment, and integration of survivor-informed services.

This project is led by RTI (Jennifer Hardison-Walters as Project Director, Kate Krieger as APD, Deborah Gibbs as PI).

## Evaluation of the National Human Trafficking Hotline Program

The primary objective of this project is to develop and execute an evaluation of the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH), a 24-hour toll-free line which provides assistance and service referrals to potential victims, service providers, law enforcement officials, and other individuals who contact the NHTH, and also provides time-sensitive tips to appropriate local, state, or federal law enforcement authorities.

Specifically, the evaluation will: describe the activities, procedures, and organization of the NHTH; describe the customer service of the NHTH; describe the immediate outcomes of the NHTH; and explore the creation of one or more new performance measures. Additionally, this project will explore design options and feasibility for a more extensive evaluation that involves follow-up data collection with callers to the NHTH, while protecting the safety and privacy of the callers.

This project is led by RTI (Jennifer Hardison-Walters as Project Director, Kate Krieger as APD).





# RECOGNIZING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

While a growing body of research has greatly advanced knowledge of child and family development, more needs to be learned about the diversity of cultural features (e.g., language) among families accessing federal resources and the implications for early care and education programs and policies. 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: 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 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (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 that will address questions of interest to Head Start and TANF programs locally. The University of the Virgin Islands is the recipient of the grant, and has worked closely in partnership with the human services leaders on the Islands. They have completed environmental scans of TANF and Head Start programs on the Islands, and are planning to update those scans given recent severe impact of hurricanes on the Islands' services.

## 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: (1) advancing a cutting-edge research agenda; (2) building research capacity; and (3) implementing an innovative communication and dissemination approach. The Center produced a number of reports, briefs, webinars and other resources this past year to inform the field, including national estimates of the job characteristics and work schedules of low-income Hispanic parents, analysis of the characteristics of early care and education providers serving a high proportion of Hispanic children, a synthesis of research about Hispanic children's access to early care and education, interactive data tools to support research on Hispanic families and households, and a guide for community-based organizations about developing culturally responsive approaches to serving diverse populations.

This project is led by Child Trends (Lina Guzman as co-PI) and Abt Associates (Michael Lopez as co-PI).

## Tribal Early Childhood Research Center

The Tribal Early Childhood Research Center (TRC) seeks to address gaps in early childhood research with American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities through partnerships with tribal Head Start, Early Head Start, child care, and home visiting programs. The goals of the research are: (1) to identify needs and/or develop effective practices for early childhood initiatives in tribal communities; (2) to identify, validate, and/or develop culturally meaningful measures of program practices and outcomes for AI/AN families; and (3) to establish peer-learning communities and provide training and professional development to facilitate interest and competencies in research relevant to early childhood initiatives in tribal communities. The TRC also engages in pilot research with AI/AN communities and secondary analyses of existing data on AI/AN children and families.

This project is led by the University of Colorado, Denver (Michelle Sarche).

# LINKS TO PROJECTS AND REPORTS

## Cross-Cutting Early Childhood Research

National Survey of Early Care and Education: 2012

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

National Survey of Early Care and Education: 2019

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/national-survey-of-early-care-and-education-2019-overview>

Variations in Implementation of Quality Interventions (VIQI)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/variations-in-implementation-of-quality-interventions-examining-the-quality-child-outcomes-relationship>

Infant and Toddler Teacher and Caregiver Competencies

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/infant-toddler-teacher-caregiver-competencies>

Supporting the Sustainability of the Q-CCIIT Observation Tool: Q-CCIIT Forward

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/supporting-sustainability-quality-caregiver-child-interaction-infants-toddlers-observation-tool-q-cciit-2018-2019-overview>

Professional Development Tools to Improve Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infant and Toddler Care (Q-CCIIT PD Tools)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/professional-development-tools-to-improve-the-quality-of-infant-toddler-care-q-cciit-pd-tools-2015-2020-overview>

Study of Coaching Practices in Early Care and Education Settings

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/study-of-coaching-practices-in-early-care-and-education-settings>

Creating a Culture of Continuous Quality Improvement in Child Care and Head Start Settings (CCL)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/creating-a-culture-of-continuous-quality-improvement-in-child-care-and-head-start-settings>

Assessing the Implementation and Cost of High Quality Early Care and Education, 2014-2019 (ECE-ICHQ)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/assessing-the-implementation-and-cost-of-high-quality-early-care-and-education-project-ece-ichq>

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships Study

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/early-head-start-child-care-partnerships-study>

Child Care and Early Education Research Connections

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/child-care-and-early-education-research-connections>

Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium

<https://www.researchconnections.org/content/childcare/federal/cceeprc.html>

National Research Conference on Early Childhood 2018

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/events/the-administration-for-children-and-families-national-research-conference-on-early-childhood-nrcec-2018>

Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance Cross-Systems Evaluation

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/early-childhood-training-and-technical-assistance-cross-system-evaluation-project-2015-2020-overview>

Network of Infant/Toddler Researchers

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/network-of-infant-toddler-researchers-nitr>

Human-Centered Design for Human Services (HCD4HS)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/human-centered-design-for-human-services-hcd4hs-2018-2021-overview>



Early Care and Education Data Archive

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/early-care-and-education-data-archive>

Early Care and Education Leadership Study (ExCELS), 2018-2023

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/early-care-and-education-leadership-study-excels-2018-2023-overview>

**Spotlight:** Executive Function Mapping Project Measures Compendium

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/executive-function-mapping-measures-compedium-measures-function-regulation-related-childhood>

- Untangling the Terms and Skills Related to Executive Function and Self-Regulation in Early Childhood

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/untangling-the-terms-and-skills-related-to-executive-function-and-self-regulation-in-early-childhood>

## Child Care: Raising Quality and Supporting Parental Employment

Child Care and Development Block Grant Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grants Phase I, Cohort 1

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/child-care-development-block-grant-cdbbg-implementation-research-evaluation-planning-grants-fy2016-phase-i-cohort-i>

Child Care and Development Block Grant Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grants Phase I, Cohort 2

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/child-care-development-block-grant-cdbbg-implementation-research-evaluation-planning-grants-fy2017-phase-i-cohort-2>

Child Care and Development Block Grant Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grants Phase II, Cohort 1

Child Care and Early Education Policy and Research Analysis

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

Supporting the Use of Administrative Data in Early Care and Education Research: Resource Series

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/supporting-use-administrative-data-early-care-education-research-resource-series>

Supporting the Psychological Well-Being of the Early Care and Education Workforce: Findings from the National Survey of Early Care and Education

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/supporting-psychological-well-being-early-care-education-workforce-findings-national-survey-early-care-education>

Market Rate Surveys and Alternative Methods of Data Collection and Analysis to Inform Subsidy Payment Rates

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/market-rate-surveys-and-alternative-methods-of-data-collection-and-analysis-to-inform-subsidy-payment-rates>

Validation of the Quality Ratings Used in Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS): A Synthesis of State Studies

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/validation-quality-ratings-used-quality-rating-improvement-systems-qr-is-a-synthesis-of-state-studies>

Early Care and Education Research Scholars: Child Care

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

Center for Supporting Research on Child Care and Development Block Grant Implementation, 2016-2021

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/center-for-supporting-research-on-child-care-and-development-block-grant-cdbbg>

Child Care Interstate Background Checks (CC-IBaCs)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/child-care-interstate-background-checks-cc-ibacs>

Assessing Models of Coordinated Services for Low-Income Children and their Families

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/assessing-models-of-coordinated-services-for-low-income-children-and-their-families-2018-2021-overview>

Integrated Approaches to Supporting Child Development and Improving Family Economic Security

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/integrated-approaches-supporting-child-development-improving-family-self-sufficiency>

**Spotlight:** Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Policies Database

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

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Policies Database Website

<https://ccdf.urban.org/>

The CCDF Policies Database Book of Tables

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/the-ccdf-policies-database-book-of-tables-key-cross-state-variations-in-ccdf-policies-as-of-october-1-2017>

Child Care Subsidies under the CCDF Program

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/child-care-subsidies-ccdf-program-overview-policy-differences-across-states-territories-october-1-2016>

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

Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Study 2018 and 2020

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/child-care-interstate-background-checks-cc-ibacs-2018-2021-overview>

Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey 2014-2017 and 2019

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

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Study

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/migrant-and-seasonal-head-start-study>

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

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

Early Care and Education Research Scholars: Head Start

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

Head Start University Partnership Grants: Dual-Generation Approaches

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

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

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

Early Head Start University Partnership Grants: Building the Evidence for Infant/Toddler Center-based Programs

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/early-head-start-university-partnerships-building-the-evidence-base-for-infant/toddler-center-based-programs-2015-2020>

Head Start Connects: Individualizing and Connecting Families to Comprehensive Family Support Services

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/head-start-connects-individualizing-and-connecting-families-to-comprehensive-family-support-services>

**Spotlight:** American Indian and Alaska Native Family and Child Experiences Survey (AI/AN FACES)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/american-indian-and-alaska-native-head-start-family-and-child-experiences-survey-faces>

Region XI American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start: A Portrait of Children and Families

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/region-xi-american-indian-and-alaska-native-head-start-a-portrait-of-children-and-families>

A Year in Region XI Head Start: Children's Growth and Development from AI/AN FACES 2015

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/a-year-in-region-xi-growth-development-american-indian-alaska-native-experiences-survey-2015-ai-an-faces-2015>

Descriptive Data on Region XI Head Start Children and Families: AI/AN FACES Fall 2015-Spring 2016 Data Tables and Study Design

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/descriptive-data-on-region-xi-head-start-children-and-families-ai-an-faces-fall-2015spring-2016-data-tables-and-study-design>

Psychometric Analyses of Child Outcome Measures with American Indian and Alaska Native Preschoolers: Initial Evidence from AI/AN FACES 2015

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/psychometric-analyses-of-child-outcome-measures-with-american-indian-and-alaska-native-preschoolers-initial-evidence>

## Promoting Child Welfare

National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being

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

Supporting Evidence Building in Child Welfare

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/supporting-evidence-building-in-child-welfare>

Child Maltreatment Incidence Data Linkages

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/child-maltreatment-incidence-data-linkages-cmi-data-linkages>

Definitions and Policies Related to the Incidence of Child Abuse and Neglect

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/definitions-and-policies-related-to-the-incidence-of-child-abuse-and-neglect-and-related-risk>

Understanding Postadoption and Guardianship Instability for Children and Youth Who Exit Foster Care

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/understanding-postadoption-and-guardianship-instability-for-children-and-youth-who-exit-foster-care-2017-2020-overview>

Understanding Judicial Decision-Making and Hearing Quality in Child Welfare

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/understanding-judicial-decision-making-and-hearing-quality-in-child-welfare-2018-2022-overview>

Building Capacity to Evaluate Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/building-capacity-to-evaluate-child-welfare-community-collaborations-to-strengthen-and-preserve-families-2018-2023-overview>

**Spotlight:** Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/title-iv-e-prevention-services-clearinghouse-2018-2023-overview>

Federal Register Notice (FRN; 83 FR 29122) <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/06/22/2018-13420/decisions-related-to-the-development-of-a-clearinghouse-of-evidence-based-practices-in-accordance>

## Human Trafficking: Improving Services for Survivors

Domestic Human Trafficking and the Child Welfare Population

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/domestic-human-trafficking-and-the-child-welfare-population>

Evaluation of Domestic Victims of Human Trafficking Demonstration Projects

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

Evaluation of Domestic Victims of Human Trafficking Program

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/evaluation-of-domestic-victims-of-human-trafficking-program>

Evaluation of the National Human Trafficking Hotline Program

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/evaluation-of-the-national-human-trafficking-hotline-program>

## Recognizing Cultural Diversity

Human Services Research Partnerships: Virgin Islands

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

National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families

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

National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families Website

<http://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/>

Publications from the National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families

<http://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/resources/publications/>

The Job Characteristics of Low-Income Hispanic Parents

<http://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/publications/the-job-characteristics-of-low-income-hispanic-parents/>