

## SECTION B: COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

### 1. Universe of Respondents

The universe of respondents for this study includes staff in the 18 ECEPD projects funded in 2003, 2004, and 2005. Data collection will focus on the Project Directors for all 18 Partnerships. In a subset of up to nine ECEPD projects, selected for availability and rigor of evaluation data, additional staff will be asked to participate in interviews with the research team.

### 2. Procedures for Collection of Information

#### a. Data Collection

As noted earlier, Child Trends proposes to collect the data from all 18 ECEPD Project Directors and key members of up to nine ECEPD grantee project and evaluation teams using telephone interviewing.

Child Trends plans a comprehensive approach to data collection, tracking, and follow-up:

- (1) Prepare materials—letter and notification packet. The materials will include information about the telephone interviews with the directors as well as a brochure that provides more information about the evaluation.
- (2) Call all ECEPD Project Directors to confirm the receipt of the materials and to set up a time for telephone interviews.
- (3) Send email reminders to ECEPD Directors to confirm date and time of telephone interview and to provide copies of the Project Characteristics and Evaluation Description Forms.
- (4) Conduct telephone interviews with ECEPD Directors (including a discussion about how to complete the Project Characteristics Form and the Evaluation Description Form). At the end of these interviews, names and contact information are requested for key members of both the project and evaluation teams.
- (5) Initiate follow-up activities.
  - (a) With input from ED, Child Trends will select up to nine ECEPD projects that will be asked to participate in in-depth interviews with key project and evaluation team staff and from whom project materials will be requested.

- (b) Initial email contact will be made with key project and evaluation team members to find an appropriate time to set up a conference call/interview with each team. The brochure about the ECEPD evaluation will be attached to the email to provide orientation to the project and their role in it. Contact information for Child Trends' research team will be provided.
- (c) Telephone calls will be made to key staff who have not understood the process, do not have email, or need encouragement.
- (d) Email or phone call reminders will be sent prior to the conference call, which will include the call-in number for the conference call/interview.
- (e) Complete the In-depth Project Team and In-Depth Evaluation Team interviews at times convenient to the team members.
- (f) Project Directors for the programs selected for in-depth study will be sent the letter requesting additional project materials for review. Telephone reminder calls will be made to any Project Directors who do not send back the requested materials by the deadline noted in the letter.

During the Director Interview administration and follow-up activities, Child Trends will provide biweekly updates by email to the COR. Each update will list the number and percent of respondents by ECEPD grantee and will document each step that has been taken to assure that a minimum of 15 programs participate (though the goal is to secure participation among all 18 grantees). Child Trends will seek approval from the COR to begin coding data for analysis after when at least six Project Director Interviews have been completed so that selection of sites for the in-depth interviews can begin. When all interview data have been collected, Child Trends will prepare a summary on the quality of the data for the COR before qualitative analysis begins.

## **b. Data Analysis**

The ECEPD Evaluation uses a comparative case study design to examine the research questions described above in the Overview. The study relies primarily on data from interviews with key informants in ECEPD projects as well as from a review of select materials collected from each project. Data will be organized and analyzed using QSR N6 software for qualitative data analysis. Because the interview data gathered for the ECEPD Evaluation will be structured by the interview process itself (each interview will follow the same set of questions), initial coding of the data will be a straightforward entry of information by site and by interview question topic. In addition, using the data from the first few Project Director Interviews as a guide, further codes for emerging themes will be developed and applied to the data. One of the important features of N6 is the ability to modify and apply new coding of throughout the period of data analysis. Reliability meetings will be conducted frequently while coding is launched to ensure that

key themes are coded similarly across researchers. Once codes have been applied systematically to the data, N6 will be used to retrieve data on the evaluation questions and to facilitate analysis and writing. Senior researchers will look in particular for links between outcomes for educators and for children that vary by features of the project structure, implementation context and type(s) of professional development activity offered.

### **3. Method for Maximizing Response Rate**

Because of the small number of ECEPD projects (18) in the 2003, 2004 and 2005 cohorts, the evaluation team will employ a number of strategies to ensure that all ECEPD Project Directors participate in the first phase of the data collection and that those sites selected for further data collection (6-9 sites) continue to fully participate in the study. Prior to the onset of data collection, in June, 2007, the evaluation team will send notification materials to Project Directors that introduce the study and highlight the importance of full participation. One week after the delivery of notification materials, the Child Trends team will make personal phone calls to establish contact with the Project Directors and will follow up with electronic mail messages to Project Directors to encourage their participation. Reminders of interview dates and participants will be sent via email. All interview participants will receive an electronic copy of the interview prior to the interview date so that they can prepare responses and facilitate completion of the interview in a timely manner. If email contact is not effective in scheduling interviews, the Child Trends team will make phone calls offering to schedule the interviews at any time that is convenient for the respondent (including evenings and/or weekends, if necessary). Phone messages and electronic mail communication will be cordial and respectful and will convey appreciation of the time that is spent on the study.

### **4. Test Procedures**

The Project Director Interview, In-Depth Project Team Interview and In-Depth Evaluation Team Interview were piloted in March and April, 2007 with 4 individuals who are past or current ECEPD Project Directors, 1 Project Team and 1 Evaluation Team to test for the clarity of interview questions, adequacy of probes, and the length of the interviews. The pilot interviews were conducted by a senior member of the evaluation team who has experience conducting semi-structured interviews. Modifications were made to the interview protocol based on feedback from pilot participants and from a review of the responses. A memo on the pilot testing results is included in Appendix VII.

### **5. Names of Statistical Consultants**

The Evaluation of the ECEPD Program is being conducted by Child Trends. Dr. Martha Zaslow serves as Project Director, Dr. Kathryn Tout serves as Project Manager, and Dr. Tamara Halle serves as a Senior Task Leader on the Evaluation. The data collection instruments and data analysis plan were developed by the Child Trends' team. Child Trends has also consulted with Dr. Jodi Sandfort, Associate Professor at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs on the design and qualitative data analysis strategy used in the Evaluation.