

# **Early Head Start The Family and Child Experiences Survey (Baby FACES)**

## **The Research Team**

Since its founding in 1995, Early Head Start has provided program services for low-income pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers based on a foundation of rigorous research combined with an emphasis on continuous program improvement. The Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Study (Baby FACES) is the next step in a comprehensive research agenda aimed at maintaining an up-to-date, extensive knowledge base to support Early Head Start policies and programs.

Baby FACES is a periodic, longitudinal study designed to be a reliable source of data for describing the experiences of Early Head Start children and their families. *Your program is invited to participate in this national study sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families.*

The study will be conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), a respected, independent policy research organization whose studies of early childhood and education initiatives, and other programs, have been used to inform national policymakers for more than 35 years. MPR is consulting with nationally recognized experts in early childhood and early head start programs including Tammy Mann, Zero to Three, Judith Jerald, Save the Children, and Brenda Jones Harden, University of Maryland.

To meet the challenges and realize the full promise of Baby FACES, MPR has assembled an exemplary team with knowledge of and experience in Early Head Start and early childhood research and practice. Our study design will ensure both high-quality and timely Baby FACES data and enhance its potential to provide a profile of the Early Head Start program and its participants. We are committed to translating research findings into formats that programs and policymakers can use.

## **Selecting Programs**

The study will include 90 randomly selected, nationally representative Early Head Start programs that meet eligibility criteria. *Programs' eligibility will be determined from the most recently available Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) database (program year 2006–2007).* Programs must directly provide Early Head Start services to children to be included in the study.

## **Selecting Families**

We will select a representative sample of families with children in two age cohorts (perinatal and age 1).

## **Collecting Information**

Baby FACES will use a comprehensive set of data collection instruments designed to assess program services and implementation, children's growth and development, and parent-child relationship and home environment quality. A team of Mathematica staff will gather the data through direct child assessments and interviews with parents, teachers, home visitors, and program directors. The study will also include observations of child care center classrooms, home visits, and the home environment, and information on services that families receive throughout the year (provided by program staff).

**On-Site Assistance**

We will establish a cooperative partnership with an On-Site Coordinator (OSC) from each program. We will ask the OSC to help with getting consent from families to participate in the study, scheduling child assessments, setting up parent interviews, and helping to collect information on services families receive. Our plan will detail procedures for scheduling make-up visits for children who were absent during the data collection week, for interviewing in person, or by telephone, parents who could not be interviewed during our main visit to the site, and completing family services tracking information.

**Confidentiality**

MPR is committed to respecting privacy of respondents and maintaining the confidentiality of the data entrusted to us. Having conducted many studies involving disadvantaged populations, MPR is experienced in implementing stringent security procedures. Study results will be reported only in group form; we will not present data on child performance by teacher, by class, or by program. In this way, the confidentiality of children and families, teachers and programs, will be carefully guarded. At the beginning of the study, we will inform parents about the study and our confidentiality policies; we will also distribute consent forms that allow parents to remove their child from the study if they so choose. The survey director will be responsible for making sure that interviewers and assessment staff understand the necessity of maintaining strict confidentiality. All staff involved with the study will sign confidentiality pledges.

**To Find Out More**

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