



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

TO: [DIRECTOR NAME]
FROM: Patricia Brown, Acting Director, Office of Head Start
DATE: [DATE]
RE: Program Director Notification

I am writing to let you know that your Head Start program has been selected to participate in an important upcoming study, known as FACES 2009. The Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) is designed to provide descriptions of the characteristics, experiences, and outcomes for children and families served by Head Start and to observe the relationships among family and program characteristics and outcomes. The programs, children and families selected to participate in prior rounds of FACES in 1997, 2000, 2003 and 2006 have provided a tremendous service to all children and families of Head Start through their participation. The study has taught us a great deal about Head Start classrooms, staff, families, and children. It is very important to the Office of Head Start and the Administration for Children and Families to continue to collect information about the children and families who attend Head Start and the programs serving them.

Therefore, I am pleased to announce that a new round of FACES (FACES 2009) will begin in the fall of 2009, with a nationally representative sample of approximately 3,500 3- and 4-year-old children and their families from approximately 60 different Head Start programs. **Your program has been randomly selected as one of the study sites** to participate in this important effort with national implications for the continuation and improvement of the Head Start program. I know that the programs that participated in the first four rounds of FACES found the experience to be a very positive one, without undue intrusion on program operations.

FACES 2009 is being conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., assisted by Juarez and Associates and Educational Testing Service. The current plan is to assess children in the fall and spring of their first year in Head Start, again in the spring of their second Head Start year (if applicable), and finally in the spring when they are in kindergarten. On-site visits are expected to last about one week per program. Similar to the first four rounds of FACES, children will be assessed, staff will be interviewed, primary caregivers of the children will be interviewed, and teachers in selected classrooms will be asked to complete ratings on the study children on their own time. Classrooms with children in the study will be observed in the spring 2010 and 2011. Participants will be provided thank you gifts and gifts will be given to each participating classroom.

All of the data collection for FACES will be conducted by a visiting team of professional Mathematica data collectors over the course of one week. Out of your entire program, only about six teachers and approximately 60 children will be included in the study.

All information collected in the course of the FACES Study will be kept completely private. All staff members conducting the study are carefully trained in privacy procedures and have each

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signed forms pledging to protect the privacy of participants and the information they collect. Programs, staff and families will not be identified by name in any reports of the study's findings.

Mathematica is sending their own letter providing more details on the assistance we will need from you and your staff. Members of the research staff will call you soon afterwards to explain the study in more detail and answer any questions you may have.

On behalf of the Office of Head Start, I would like to thank you in advance for agreeing to participate in this extremely important study of our families and programs. Should you have any concerns regarding the participation of your program in the study, please contact the study's Project Officer, Maria Woolverton (202-205-4039), at OPRE, ACF, DHHS.

MEMORANDUM

TO: <<Head Start Program Director>>

FROM: Jerry West, Project Director

DATE: 2009
FACES-204

SUBJECT: Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) 2009

Recently, you were notified in an email from the Office of Head Start that your program has been selected to participate in an important upcoming study, the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey, or FACES 2009. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), is conducting FACES 2009 under contract with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). ACF first launched the FACES study in 1997 as a mechanism for obtaining longitudinal information on the characteristics and experiences of, and outcomes for, children and families served by Head Start. FACES has collected data from four successive nationally representative cohorts in 1997, 2000, 2003, and 2006 and has disseminated the information to ACF, the Office of Head Start, Congress, and the early childhood research community through a series of reports. The study focuses on children's development, family involvement, and program quality to identify strategies for improving program effectiveness.

MPR will *not* judge or report on the performance of individual programs, staff, or children. We are a policy research firm that has extensive experience in conducting Head Start and other early childhood research. The information that is provided by the staff, families, and children in your program will be combined with information from all other FACES 2009 participants and summarized in descriptive reports.

Your program was selected to participate in FACES 2009 through a random process. While participation is not mandatory, it is very important for all of the sampled programs to participate in the research in order to ensure the accuracy of the data. As described below, we will randomly select approximately three classrooms from each of two centers in your program for the study, and then will randomly select a sample of children who are new to Head Start to participate. We will work with staff from your program to invite the families of these children to participate in FACES 2009. All participating parents, children, and classrooms will be paid or given a gift for participating.

A FACES coordinator will be calling you within the next two weeks to discuss your program's participation in this research and to answer any questions you may have. This memo describes the activities we would like to complete during our visit to your program, and the process we will follow to work with you to schedule and prepare for the visit.

MEMO TO: Head Start Program Director
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SITE DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

A team of Mathematica staff will visit the sampled centers and collect the data for this study starting this fall. In both the fall and spring of 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, staff will spend about one week at each program to administer an assessment to each selected child whose parents have agreed to let him/her participate. We will interview the child's parent or guardian at the program or by phone, whichever is most convenient for them. We will also interview the child's classroom teacher. In the fall, MPR staff will interview you, the center directors and the program's education coordinator. In the spring of 2010 and 2011, staff will conduct observations in the study classrooms.

In the box below, we provide an overview of the site-visit activities and an estimate of how much time we will need to complete each one. We have also enclosed a FACES 2009 brochure and a FACES 2009 fact sheet with additional information about the study.

SITE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Child Assessment Battery. During the visit, we will administer a 45-minute assessment to approximately 60 newly enrolled children in each program. The assessment is intended to measure important knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are typical of Head Start children. These assessments are administered individually to each child by a trained MPR staff member.

Individual Staff Interviews. MPR staff will conduct individual 30-minute interviews with the center director and education coordinator, and a 45-minute interview with the teachers of the sampled classrooms and children (45 minutes). We will talk with these staff about their employment and educational background, program goals and philosophy, and curriculum and classroom activities.

Teacher Child Reports. Teachers will complete short checklists about each sampled child's cognitive and social development. These can be completed using paper questionnaires or on the Web. Each child report requires about 10-15 minutes to complete.

Parent Interview. We will also conduct a 45-minute interview with one parent of each study child. This interview will focus on parent and child activities, experiences with community agencies, health care, and parents' feelings and attitudes about themselves. These interviews will be conducted by phone or by appointment at the center.

Classroom Observations (Spring 2010 and Spring 2011 Only). Site visitors will conduct observations in the study children's classrooms to measure classroom practices and instructional content. Each observation will take approximately 3 hours.

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All Information is Private. All of the information collected during the site visit will remain private; we will not quote any staff member or person by name. The reports we prepare will describe the range of experiences of Head Start children and their families and a range of views and classroom practices across programs. Opinions and practices will not be attributed to specific individuals or programs.

NEXT STEPS IN PLANNING THE VISIT

The FACES coordinator responsible for working with your program will contact you soon to answer any questions you have about the study and begin planning the visit to your program. During that conversation, we will discuss the process for selecting centers and children to participate in the study. We will also ask you to identify someone from your program to work with MPR's FACES coordinator to help organize the data collection. We call this person the On-Site Coordinator (OSC).

Choosing an On-Site Coordinator. The OSC will help us put together the information we need to select our samples of classrooms and children, schedule visits to Head Start centers, and obtain parental consent for children to participate in the study. The OSC will also assist in identifying the staff to interview at each center and scheduling the best times to conduct these interviews.

If the randomly selected centers are not in close proximity to one another, it may be necessary to identify two coordinators. We suggest that you identify a back-up person, regardless of the size of your program, to ensure that there are at least two staff to fulfill the role of the OSC. The OSC will receive an honorarium of \$500 for helping us in fall 2009. If there are two coordinators, each will receive \$250. OSC's will receive \$250 for each subsequent round of data collection at the Head Start centers.

Selecting Centers and Classrooms. As a first step in selecting centers and classrooms, we will ask you during our call for the following information:

- The program option(s) you offer (full-day, part-day, center, and home-based)
- The names and zip codes of your centers and/or home visitors
- Your best estimate for the number of newly entering 3 to 5 year old children you will serve at each of the centers in your program in the fall of 2009.

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If your program also offers a home-based option, we will select children from the home visitors' caseloads to be part of the study. Therefore, we will also need information about these caseloads.

The next step in the process involves the random selection of centers or home-based caseloads. Two centers per program will be selected based on the information you provided to us. Once a center or home visitor is randomly selected, we will, with your permission, inform them of their selection and describe their participation in the study.

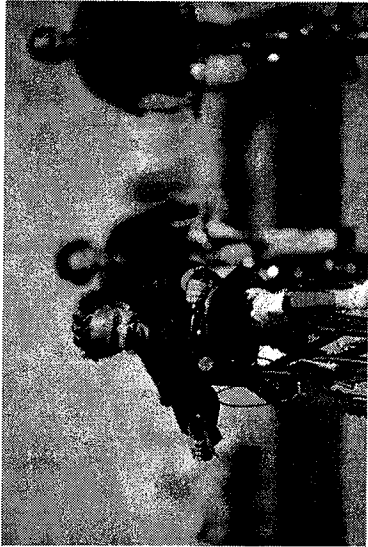
After the centers have been selected and have agreed to participate, approximately three classrooms per center will be randomly selected. This process will be facilitated by a FACES enrollment specialist (FES) who will visit each center, a few weeks prior to the start of data collection. We will ask the OSC to provide the enrollment specialist with a list of its eligible classrooms and the number of eligible children in each. If a center has three or fewer classrooms, we will include all of them. Classrooms with no newly entering 3 or 4 year olds will not be eligible to participate in the study.

Selecting Children. A multistep process is used to select the children who will participate in the study, and this will also require the assistance of the OSC and center staff. After classrooms have been sampled, the FES will ask the OSC to provide a list of all newly enrolled 3 and 4 year olds in the selected classrooms. Children will be randomly selected for the study from these classroom rosters. Approximately 10 children from each class will be invited to participate.

Obtaining Consent. Once children have been sampled, MPR will work in partnership with the OSC to gain parental cooperation. While the FES is still on-site, they will distribute informational materials to selected families. The FES will be available to discuss the study with parents in person

Scheduling the Visit. We hope to conduct all of our assessments and interviews at your program within a one-week time frame. As a first step in scheduling, we would like to discuss your program's operating schedule and how our visit can fit within it. We will make every effort to conduct the visit at a convenient time for your program.

We are looking forward to visiting your program and learning about your experiences with Head Start. Your participation will be important for helping the Office of Head Start assess how well the system is fostering children's school readiness. If you have questions about the site visit before we call you, please contact [FACES COORDINATOR] at MPR [xxx-xxx-xxxx, EMAIL ADDRESS]. The FACES coordinator will work with you to schedule the site visits.



Over 12,000 families and children from Head Start programs across the nation participated in the first four rounds of FACES.

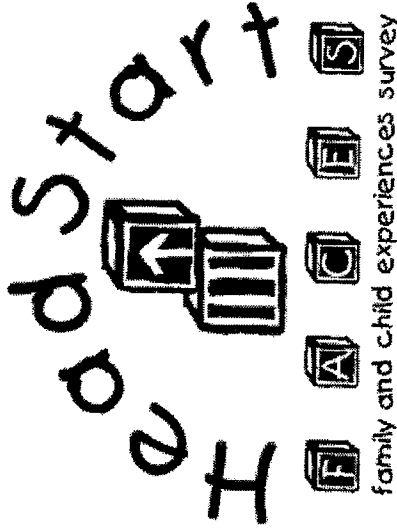
We hope you will be one of the families helping us now, in FACES 2009.



Thank you for your participation!

Your help is valuable to us and to all Head Start children and families!

Family and Child Experiences Survey



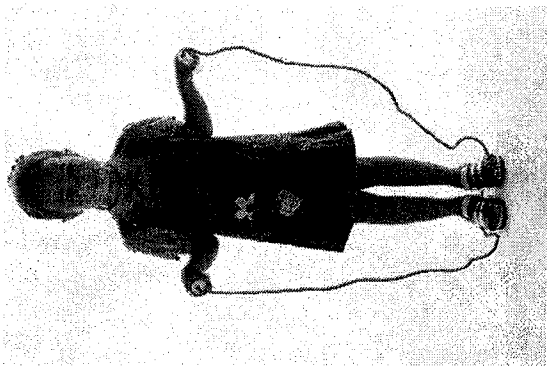
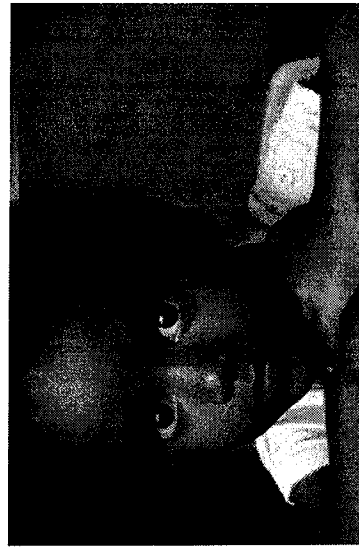
FACES 2009
Experiences in Head Start



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families

The Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) is the largest national study of Head Start ever undertaken to gather information about the children and families served by Head Start. The national Head Start program and your local Head Start program are working hard to improve services—FACES is helping us learn how we are doing.

To understand Head Start better, the FACES research team collects information in many different ways. We will ask to interview you in the fall and spring of your child's first year in Head Start and each following spring through their kindergarten year. We will ask you questions about yourself, your family, and your experience with Head Start.



participation at Head Start.

Parents will receive \$35 at the end of each interview. We will also meet with your child and ask him or her to do a set of activities so that we can learn about children's development. The activities we will ask your child to do are the kinds of things children do at Head Start. And you will receive a gift for your child.

All the answers you and your child give are private. They will never be shared with anyone from Head Start. The decision to take part in the study is yours. However, if you decide not to be part of FACES (even though we hope you will), it will not affect your or your child's

FACES is sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families, the government agency which oversees Head Start. The work is being conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR). All staff members working on FACES have lots of experience doing research with young children and their families, and have been fully trained for this project.



If you have any questions about FACES, you may call Mathematica's toll-free number 1-800-395-1995 between 9 A.M. and 9 P.M. Eastern Time. After these hours you may leave a message and we will return your call.

Head Start: The Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) 2009

Since its founding more than four decades ago, Head Start has served as the nation's premier federally funded early childhood intervention. Focusing on children in the years before formal schooling, often from families with multiple risks, it has served as a natural and national laboratory for a wide range of basic, prevention, early intervention, and program evaluation research¹. The Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES), first launched in 1997 as a periodic, longitudinal study of program performance, remains Head Start's ongoing flagship research initiative. FACES is designed to be a reliable source of data for describing the experiences of Head Start children and their families. This national study is sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families.

The Research Team

The study is being conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), a respected, independent policy research organization whose studies of education initiatives and other programs have been used to inform national policymakers for 40 years. Researchers from Juarez and Associates and Educational Testing Service are assisting MPR in this effort.

To meet the challenges and realize the full promise of FACES, MPR has assembled an exemplary team with knowledge of and experience in Head Start and early childhood research and practice. Our study design will ensure both high-quality and timely FACES data and enhance its potential to provide a profile of the 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 includes 60 Head Start programs from around the country; the programs are selected from the most recent available Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) database for program year 2007–2008. All Head Start programs in the 50 states and the District of Columbia meeting eligibility criteria are included. Early Head Start programs and any programs not directly providing Head Start services to children (grantees that provide only administrative services to their delegate agencies) are excluded.

Selecting Students

We will work closely with program staff to select children and families randomly for the study. Assignment by lottery ensures that all newly enrolled 3- and 4-year-old children will have a chance to be part of the study.

Collecting Information

A team of Mathematica staff will visit the programs and collect the data for this study. In both the fall of 2009 and the spring of 2010 and the spring of 2011 staff will spend about one week in each program to administer an assessment to each study child. In the spring of 2010 and the spring of 2011, staff will observe each of the study classrooms. During the fall visit, staff will interview the center directors, education coordinator, and study teachers. Head Start teachers will also be interviewed in spring 2010 and spring 2011. We will also ask teachers to complete a brief form about each child's social and cognitive development. The parent or guardian of each child will be interviewed at each data collection point.

On-Site Assistance

We will establish a cooperative partnership with an On-Site Coordinator (OSC) from each Head Start program. We will ask the OSC to help with getting consent from families for their children to participate in the study, scheduling child assessments and parent interviews. MPR staff will work with the OSC to create a document that details the logistics of our site visit as well as procedures for scheduling make-up visits for children who were absent during the data collection week.

Privacy

MPR is committed to respecting the privacy of respondents and theof 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 privacy 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 privacy policies; we will also distribute consent forms that allow parents to remove their child from the study if they so choose. MPR senior project staff will be responsible for making sure that interviewers and assessment staff understands the necessity of maintaining strict privacy of the information they collect. All staff involved with the study will sign privacy pledges.

To Find Out More

Contact Dr. Jerry West, the project director, at Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., (202) 484-4516, jwest@mathematica-mpr.com. More information about FACES 2006 can be found by accessing the ACF FACES website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/hs/faces>.

¹J.M. Love, L.B. Tarullo, H. Raikes, and R. Chazan-Cohen, "Head Start: What Do We Know About Its Effectiveness? What Do We Need to Know?" in *Handbook of Early Childhood Development*, ed. K. McCartney and D. Phillips (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006).

HEAD START FAMILY AND CHILD EXPERIENCES SURVEY
Program Director Information Call and Script

INTRODUCTION

My name is _____. I am calling from [Mathematica Policy Research/Juarez and Associates] to talk about your program's participation in the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES). We are calling about [PROGRAM NAME], which is GRANTEE NUMBER [#] and DELEGATE NUMBER [#]. We recently sent you a letter informing you that your program was selected to be part of a research project for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We included a brochure and fact sheet with information about the study. Did you receive a letter from Dr. Jerry West about the visit and the other materials? [HAVE LETTER AVAILABLE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION IF PERSON IS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE STUDY]

Is this a good time to talk? I would like to answer any questions you may have about FACES, and discuss the logistics of the study with you. I would also like to speak with you about your identifying an on-site coordinator (OCS) for your program. This person will work with the project team to plan the visits to the centers in your program. I would also like to explain more about how centers and children will be selected for the study.

[ALLOW TIME FOR QUESTIONS, RESPOND OR DEFER UNTIL LATER IN THE CALL WHEN THE TOPIC IS PRESENTED].

SITE VISIT PURPOSE AND BASIC ACTIVITIES

First, I would like to review some of the details about the purpose and design of FACES that we included in the letter, and some of the activities that will take place when we visit Head Start centers in your program. Please stop me at any time if you have questions.

- The purpose of FACES is to provide descriptive information about Head Start children and families, and Head Start classroom practices and quality.
- We will interview Head Start staff and conduct classroom observations. We will also interview the parents of Head Start children and administer a battery of child assessments to children participating in the study.
- The information that comes from FACES will be used to identify strategies for improving program effectiveness and by ACF and the Office of Head Start to obtain longitudinal information on the characteristics and experiences of, and outcomes for, children and families served by Head Start.

Site Visit Details:

- We will send a team of 5 to 6 people to spend about one week in your program. They will divide their time between the 2 centers selected for the FACES study.
- We will work with the OSC to limit any disruption caused by our visit.
- During the visit, we would like to interview the center director, the education coordinator, and the teachers and home visitors of the study children.
- We will administer a child assessment battery to children in the study. The assessment measures a range of areas that are covered by the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. The assessments will be administered by our staff that have been specially trained to assess children for FACES.
- Teachers from each selected class will be asked to supplement this information by completing brief forms about the social and emotional development of each child. This questionnaire will be available both as a web-based and hard copy instrument. Teachers will receive a small payment for each of the forms they complete.
- We will also interview parents of the children participating in the study, ideally at the Head Start center or by telephone. Parents will be given \$35 for taking part in the interview and will be given a gift for the child each time he or she participates.

Privacy: Please be assured that everything that staff and families tell us during our visit is private. No individual program or center will be identified and no individual will be quoted by name. Our reports on the Head Start programs will describe the range of practices identified by staff and families across programs, but comments will not be attributed to specific individuals or programs. All staff are required to sign a privacy agreement as a condition of employment

Field Staff Requirements: Criminal Background Checks for Field Staff

To ensure the safety of our field staff and respondents, MPR hiring policy requires all newly hired and rehired field staff to pass a background check. Mathematica has selected Sterling Testing Systems to conduct the background checks, which include Social Security trace, criminal conviction search, sex offender database search, and a Department of Motor Vehicles report. For more information on Sterling Testing Systems, visit its website <http://www.sterlingtesting.com/>.

Information is not for accountability or monitoring: We want to assure you that the information collected during this visit will not be used for program accountability or monitoring purposes. It will be reported in aggregate with information from all of the 60 Head Start sites; it will not be reported by program, center, or child.

Do you have any questions so far?

Next, I want to confirm and collect some basic information about your Head Start program. [CONFIRM AND/OR UPDATE THE FOLLOWING INTO THE FACES DATA BASE OR ON THE CONTACT SHEET FOR LATER DATA ENTRY]:

- **CONFIRM CONTACT INFORMATION:** Would you mind confirming the following information? I want to be sure I have the correct information and spelling for each: (program director name, physical and mailing addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers, email addresses)
- **PROGRAM OPTION:** Is your program center-based, home-based, a combination, or is it locally designed?
- If center-based: How many centers do you have? Could you give me the name of each Head Start center in your program as well as their address and/or zip code. [IF THIS IS A LARGE PROGRAM, ASK IF THEY CAN EMAIL OR FAX YOU THE INFORMATION. FOR NOW YOU CAN COLLECT JUST CENTER NAME AND ZIP CODE].
- The FACES sample is composed of newly enrolled (first year) Head Start children. Can you give me an estimate of the number of newly enrolled 3- and 4-year olds at each Head Start center this fall? Fall 2009? [ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THIS MAY BE VERY PRELIMINARY].
- What is the estimated percent of Dual Language Learners in each center?
- What days of the week do you operate the children's classrooms? Is it five days a week, four, or some other schedule? Does it vary by center? [SOME PROGRAMS DO NOT HAVE CLASSES ON MONDAYS OR FRIDAYS].
- IF SOME OR ALL HOME BASED: What is the name of each home visitor and the center out of which s/he is based? Can you give me an estimate of the number of newly enrolled 3- and 4-years olds in each of your home visitors' caseloads for fall 2009? [ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THIS MAY BE VERY PRELIMINARY]
- What is the estimated percent of Dual Language Learners for each of your home visitors?
- When does your program start and end the program year?

Identify On-Site Coordinator (OSC)

We will need to work with the On-site coordinator (OSC) from your program to assist us with our preparations. This can be one person or two depending on your preference. This person will be responsible for. . .

- working with a FACES Enrollment Specialist (FES) to identify eligible classrooms and children to be sampled for the study,
- helping us to obtain parental consent and tracking the receipt of consent forms,
- helping coordinate the visit to each center, and

- scheduling the child assessments, on-site parent interviews and staff interviews.

We have budgeted \$500 per program for the fall 2009 round of data collection for this person's help. OSC's will receive \$250 for each subsequent round of data collection at the Head Start centers. The payments for this help can be provided in cash or as a gift certificate, according to your program's preference. We assume that most of the work can be done outside of regular work hours so that it will not take this person's time away from his or her normal duties.

- Do you know who you would like this person [these people] to be or do you want to think about it some more? I can call you at another time to discuss this if your are not sure. [ENTER THIS PERSON'S NAME INTO THE FACES DATABASE. BE SURE TO HAVE A CONTACT PERSON OTHER THAN THE OSC JUST IN CASE!]
- If your program or any of your centers include children who are not funded by Head Start, will this person [those people] be able to distinguish those children so they are excluded from the sample? Is the "funding stream" always clear and will the OSC know this?

With your permission, I would like to contact this person to discuss our FACES procedures and what is expected of the OSC. [GET THE OSC'S NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION, BUT WAIT FOR PERMISSION TO CONTACT THEM]

It is important that we establish a close working partnership between the OSC and the FACES project—the OSC is the person we will work with to ensure that we develop a data collection plan that conforms to your local requirements and minimizes the burden on your program. I will work with the OSC to develop such a plan. We will send you a copy of the plan after it is drafted. The plan will include:

- a schedule for the preliminary visit to the program by the FES for selecting the sample of classrooms and children
- the procedures for obtaining parental consent
- a schedule for the data collection week
- arrangements for testing and interview locations

CENTER, CLASSROOM, AND CHILD SELECTION

Finally, I would like to explain to you the way that we will chose the centers, classrooms and children that will be asked to participate in the study.

- **Center Selection.** Two centers that are projected to have newly enrolled 3- and/or 4-year olds in the fall will be randomly selected from each program. If a programs has only two centers, both will be included in the study.
- **Classroom Selection.** Three classrooms will be randomly selected taking into account whether it is center based or home based and whether or not it operates on a full-day or half-day schedule. If a center has 3 or fewer classrooms, we will include them all. Classrooms with no newly enrolled 3- or 4-year olds will not be eligible for the sample.
- **Child Selection.** The FES will ask for lists of newly enrolled 3- and 4 year olds in the selected classrooms. We will select approximately 10 children per classroom and will invite these children and their families to participate.

NEXT STEPS

- Once we establish who the OSC will be, with your permission, I would like to send the OSC detailed information about the study. I would like to contact her/him to arrange a time for us to discuss the responsibilities of the OSC. I would like to do this as soon as possible.
- I will need to conduct a brief interview with you later in the year. What is usually the best time to reach you? Is this the best number to reach you?
- In case I need to follow up with you for any other reason, which is the easiest way to reach you—by phone or e-mail? [CONFIRM THAT THIS PERSON IS THE ONE WHO SHOULD BE YOUR REGULAR CONTACT].
- Do you have any questions at this point? If questions or concerns come up, please feel free to contact me at [PHONE or E-MAIL ADDRESS].

Thank you for participating in this important study. We appreciate your cooperation, and I look forward to working with your program.



MATHEMATICA
Policy Research, Inc.

P.O. Box 2393
Princeton, NJ 08543-2393
Telephone (609) 799-3535
Fax (609) 799-0005
www.mathematica-mpr.com

FACES-

DATE, 2006

Dear [OSC]:

Thank you for agreeing to help us conduct the Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) 2009. The Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services contracted with Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), an independent policy research organization, to conduct the survey, which will focus on children's development, family involvement, and program quality to identify strategies for improving program effectiveness.

Your program director has selected you to work with us, to ensure that we can gain consent from the parents of selected children and effectively schedule the data collection. In fall 2009 and spring 2010 and again in spring 2011, MPR staff will spend two to three days in each center to administer a 45-minute assessment to each study child. During the first fall visit, staff will interview your program's education coordinator, the center directors and the teachers of the two or three classrooms in your center selected for the study. In spring 2010 and spring 2011, staff will observe the study classrooms. A parent or guardian of each child will also be interviewed at each program visit.

Your role is integral to the success of the study and will require that you spend some time outside of your regular duties assisting us. In recognition of this effort, we have budgeted \$500 per program for the fall 2009 round of data collection for your help. You will receive \$250 for each subsequent round of data collection at the Head Start centers.

This letter and the attached FACES fact sheet provide details on the study activities. The following are the core activities in which we will need assistance from you with an approximate schedule for each:

LETTER TO:
FROM:
DATE:
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YEAR ONE OF THE STUDY (FALL 2009–SPRING 2010)

Sample Selection Activities

1. **Center Selection.** On average, two centers that were expected to have newly enrolled 3- and/or 4-year-olds in the fall were randomly selected from each program in the study.
2. **Classroom Selection.** An MPR field enrollment specialist (FES) will visit your program about 3 weeks prior to your data collection week. We will ask you to provide classroom lists of all newly enrolled 3 through 5 year old Head Start children. In a typical center, three classrooms will be randomly selected based on the ages of the children, and whether the class meets for a full-day or half-day.
3. **Child Selection.** After classrooms have been sampled, children will be randomly selected for the study. Approximately 10 children from each class will be invited to participate.
4. **Obtaining Consent.** Once children have been sampled, MPR will work in partnership with you to gain parental cooperation. While the FES is still on-site, they will distribute informational materials to selected families. The FES will be available to discuss the study with parents in person.

Data Collection Activities

5. **Fall 2009: Interview the Education Coordinator, Center Director and Teachers.** In the fall, the education coordinator interview will take about 30 minutes. We will talk with them about their background, program goals and philosophy, and curriculum. The teacher interviews and the center director interviews will take about 30 minutes each. These interviews collect background information, as well as information on professional experience, program practices and classroom activities. We will need to schedule time for our team leader to conduct these interviews. Teachers will also be asked to complete short checklists for each selected child. These take about 10-15 minutes and can be completed on the Web or on paper forms. Teachers are expected to complete the checklists on their own time and are paid for doing so. Teachers will receive \$7 for each checklist they complete on the web. If they prefer paper forms, they will receive \$5 for each checklist they complete.
6. **Fall 2009 and Spring 2010: Administer Assessments to the Children in the Study.** In the fall and again in the spring, a trained member of MPR's team will administer a 45-minute assessment to each child. Assessments will be conducted over the course of several days. The FACES team leader will work with you to arrange the assessment schedule.

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7. ***Fall 2009 and Spring 2010: Interview Parents or Guardians.*** In the fall we would like to interview a parent or guardian for each child. We will interview parents by telephone, or in person at the Head Start center. We would like your help in scheduling appointments with parents in the afternoon or evening during the week of our visit. In the spring we will conduct interviews by telephone to reduce the burden on the families. Parents will receive payments of \$35 per interview, as well as a gift book worth \$10 for their child.
8. ***Spring 2010: Observe Sampled Classrooms.*** In the spring, a trained member of MPR's data collection team will observe each of the sampled classrooms. When possible we will do this during the morning session. The center staff and teachers should do nothing special to prepare for these observations. We will work with you to schedule the observations. Each classroom will receive a thank-you gift for its participation.

YEAR TWO OF THE STUDY (SPRING 2011)

9. ***Activities with Children.*** The second year of the study will replicate the first, except that we will be assessing only those children who participated in the study in the first year. No new children will be enrolled in the study. We will assess the FACES students still in your program at their Head Start centers. Because we follow children through their kindergarten year, we will also assess those FACES students who have moved on to Kindergarten. The kindergarten assessments will take place in the child's home.
10. ***Interview with Teachers.*** As in the first year, we will return to interview the teachers of the classrooms that contain the FACES children that are still enrolled in your program. Teachers will also be asked to complete a short checklist for each selected child.
11. ***Interview with Parents or Guardians.*** Parent interviews will be conducted by telephone with parents or guardians of FACES children who are still in your program or are enrolled in kindergarten. The interview will be about half an hour.
12. ***Observe Sampled Classrooms.*** In spring 2011, we will again observe a portion of the morning session of classrooms that contain FACES children.

YEAR THREE OF THE STUDY (SPRING 2012)

13. ***Activities with Kindergarten Children.*** There will be no on-site data collection at the Head Start centers during year three. This last round of the study will involve the final set of FACES children who have moved on to kindergarten. These kindergarten assessments will take place in the child's home.

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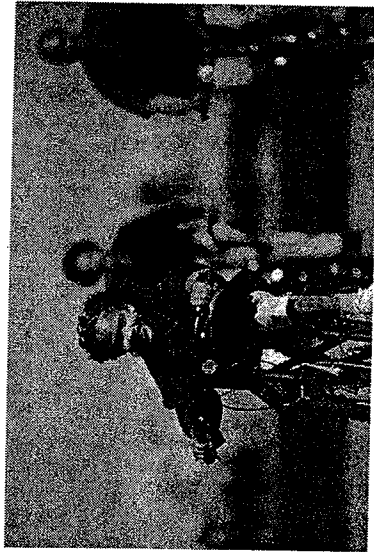
14. *Interview with Teachers.* In spring 2012, we will contact the kindergarten teachers of FACES children and ask them to complete a teacher survey and a short checklist for each selected child.

15. *Interview with Parents or Guardians.* Parent interviews will again be conducted by telephone with parents or guardians of the kindergarten students. The interview will be about half an hour.

I will call you within the next few days to discuss the study and answer any questions you may have. You may also contact me at [xxx-xxx-xxxx or EMAIL]. We very much appreciate your support and cooperation with this important study, and welcome any input you'd like to provide. More information about FACES 2009 can be found by accessing the ACF FACES website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/hs/faces>.

Sincerely,

[FACES Study Coordinator]



Over 12,000 families and children from Head Start programs across the nation participated in the first four rounds of FACES.

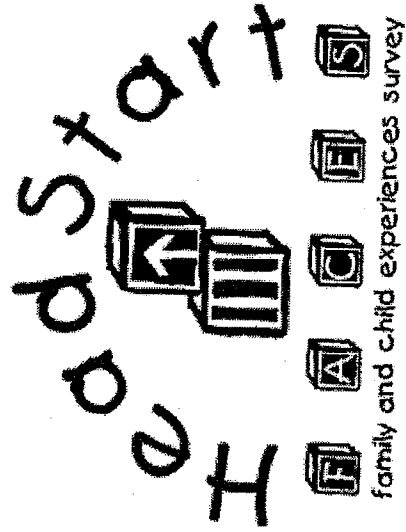
We hope you will be one of the families helping us now, in FACES 2009.



Thank you for your participation!

Your help is valuable to us and to all Head Start children and families!

Family and Child Experiences Survey



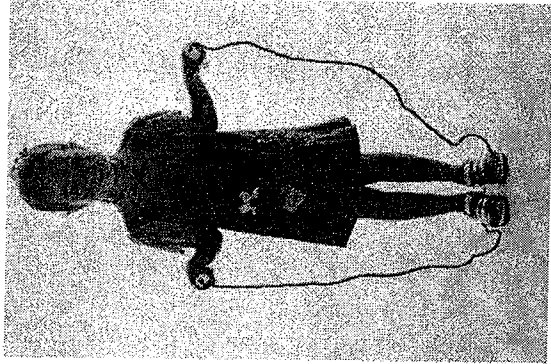
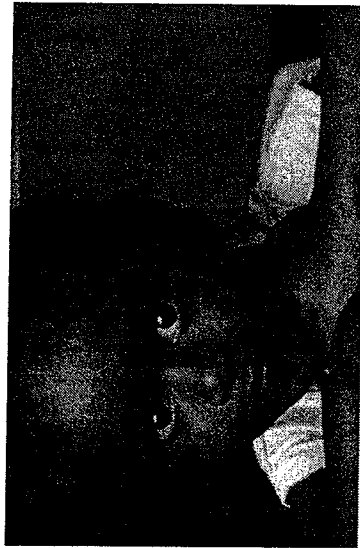
FACES 2009
Experiences in Head Start



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families

The Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) is the largest national study of Head Start ever undertaken to gather information about the children and families served by Head Start. The national Head Start program and your local Head Start program are working hard to improve services—FACES is helping us learn how we are doing.

To understand Head Start better, the FACES research team collects information in many different ways. We will ask to interview you in the fall and spring of your child's first year in Head Start and each following spring through their kindergarten year. We will ask you questions about yourself, your family, and your experience with Head Start.



participation at Head Start.

Parents will receive \$35 at the end of each interview. We will also meet with your child and ask him or her to do a set of activities so that we can learn about children's development. The activities we will ask your child to do are the kinds of things children do at Head Start. And you will receive a gift for your child.

All the answers you and your child give are private. They will never be shared with anyone from Head Start. The decision to take part in the study is yours. However, if you decide not to be part of FACES (even though we hope you will), it will not affect your or your child's

FACES is sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families, the government agency which oversees Head Start. The work is being conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR). All staff members working on FACES have lots of experience doing research with young children and their families, and have been fully trained for this project.



If you have any questions about FACES, you may call Mathematica's toll-free number 1-800-395-1995 between 9 A.M. and 9 P.M. Eastern Time. After these hours you may leave a message and we will return your call.

Head Start: The Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) 2009

Since its founding more than four decades ago, Head Start has served as the nation's premier federally funded early childhood intervention. Focusing on children in the years before formal schooling, often from families with multiple risks, it has served as a natural and national laboratory for a wide range of basic, prevention, early intervention, and program evaluation research¹. The Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES), first launched in 1997 as a periodic, longitudinal study of program performance, remains Head Start's ongoing flagship research initiative. FACES is designed to be a reliable source of data for describing the experiences of Head Start children and their families. This national study is sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families.

The Research Team

The study is being conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), a respected, independent policy research organization whose studies of education initiatives and other programs have been used to inform national policymakers for 40 years. Researchers from Juarez and Associates and Educational Testing Service are assisting MPR in this effort.

To meet the challenges and realize the full promise of FACES, MPR has assembled an exemplary team with knowledge of and experience in Head Start and early childhood research and practice. Our study design will ensure both high-quality and timely FACES data and enhance its potential to provide a profile of the 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 includes 60 Head Start programs from around the country; the programs are selected from the most recent available Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) database for program year 2007–2008. All Head Start programs in the 50 states and the District of Columbia meeting eligibility criteria are included. Early Head Start programs and any programs not directly providing Head Start services to children (grantees that provide only administrative services to their delegate agencies) are excluded.

Selecting Students

We will work closely with program staff to select children and families randomly for the study. Assignment by lottery ensures that all newly enrolled 3- and 4-year-old children will have a chance to be part of the study.

Collecting Information

A team of Mathematica staff will visit the programs and collect the data for this study. In both the fall of 2009 and the spring of 2010 and the spring of 2011 staff will spend about one week in each program to administer an assessment to each study child. In the spring of 2010 and the spring of 2011, staff will observe each of the study classrooms. During the fall visit, staff will interview the center directors, education coordinator, and study teachers. Head Start teachers will also be interviewed in spring 2010 and spring 2011. We will also ask teachers to complete a brief form about each child's social and cognitive development. The parent or guardian of each child will be interviewed at each data collection point.

On-Site Assistance

We will establish a cooperative partnership with an On-Site Coordinator (OSC) from each Head Start program. We will ask the OSC to help with getting consent from families for their children to participate in the study, scheduling child assessments and parent interviews. MPR staff will work with the OSC to create a document that details the logistics of our site visit as well as procedures for scheduling make-up visits for children who were absent during the data collection week.

Privacy

MPR is committed to respecting the privacy of respondents and theof 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 privacy 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 privacy policies; we will also distribute consent forms that allow parents to remove their child from the study if they so choose. MPR senior project staff will be responsible for making sure that interviewers and assessment staff understands the necessity of maintaining strict privacy of the information they collect. All staff involved with the study will sign privacy pledges.

To Find Out More

Contact Dr. Jerry West, the project director, at Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., (202) 484-4516, jwest@mathematica-mpr.com. More information about FACES 2006 can be found by accessing the ACF FACES website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/hs/faces>.

ⁱJ.M. Love, L.B. Tarullo, H. Raikes, and R. Chazan-Cohen, "Head Start: What Do We Know About Its Effectiveness? What Do We Need to Know?" in *Handbook of Early Childhood Development*, ed. K. McCartney and D. Phillips (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006).

HEAD START FAMILY AND CHILD EXPERIENCES SURVEY 2009
OSC Setup Call and Script

INTRODUCTION

My name is _____. I am calling from [Mathematica Policy Research/Juarez and Associates] to talk about your program's participation in the Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES). We received authorization from [PROGRAM DIRECTOR] to contact you and I recently sent you a brochure and a letter about this research project for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Did you receive the letter and brochure? [HAVE LETTER AVAILABLE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION IF PERSON IS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE STUDY].

Is this a good time to talk? I would like to answer any questions you may have about FACES, and discuss logistics and your assignment as the on-site coordinator (OSC) so that we can begin planning the visit to your program. I would also like to explain more about how the classrooms and children will be selected for the study.

ALLOW TIME FOR QUESTIONS, RESPOND OR DEFER UNTIL LATER IN THE CALL WHEN THE TOPIC IS PRESENTED.

SITE VISIT PURPOSE AND BASIC ACTIVITIES

First, I would like to review some of the details about the purpose and design of FACES that we included in the letter, and some of the activities that will take place when we visit Head Start centers in your program. Please stop me at any time if you have questions.

- The purpose of FACES is to provide descriptive information about Head Start children and families, and Head Start classroom practices and quality.
- We will interview Head Start staff and conduct classroom observations. We will also interview the parents of Head Start children and administer a battery of child assessments to children participating in the study.

Site Visit Details:

- We will send a team of 5 to 6 people to spend about one week in your program. They will divide their time between the 2 centers selected for the FACES study.
- We will work with you to limit any disruption caused by our visit.
- During the visit, we would like to interview the center directors, the education coordinator, and the teachers/home visitors of the study children.
- We will administer a child assessment battery to children in the study. The assessments will be administered by our staff that has been specially trained to assess children for FACES.

- Teachers from each selected class will be asked to supplement this information by completing brief forms about the social and emotional development of each child. This questionnaire will be available both as a web-based and hard copy instrument. Teachers will receive a small payment for each of the forms they complete.
- We will also interview parents of the children participating in the study, ideally at the Head Start center or by telephone. Parents will be given \$35 for taking part in the interview and will be given a gift for the child each time he or she participates.

All Information is Private: Please be assured that everything that staff and families tell us during our visit will be kept private. No individual program or center will be identified and no individual will be quoted by name. Our reports on the Head Start programs will describe the range of practices identified by staff and families across programs, but comments will not be attributed to specific individuals or programs. All of our staff are required to sign an agreement to protect the privacy of all information as a condition of employment.

Field Staff Requirements: Criminal Background Checks for Field Staff

To ensure the safety of our field staff and respondents, MPR hiring policy requires all newly hired and rehired field staff to pass a background check. Mathematica has selected Sterling Testing Systems to conduct the background checks, which include Social Security trace, criminal conviction search, sex offender database search, and a Department of Motor Vehicles report. For more information on Sterling Testing Systems, visit its website <http://www.sterlingtesting.com/>.

Information is Not for Accountability or Monitoring: We want to assure you that the information collected during this visit will not be used for program accountability or monitoring purposes. It will be reported in aggregate with information from all of the 60 Head Start programs selected for the study; it will not be reported by program, center, or child.

Do you have any questions so far?

Next, I want to confirm and collect some basic information about the centers in your program. [CONFIRM AND/OR UPDATE THE FOLLOWING INTO THE FACES Sample Accrual System OR ON A DATA SHEET FOR LATER DATA ENTRY]:

- **CONTACT INFORMATION:** Would you mind confirming the following information? I want to be sure I have the correct information and spelling for each: (OSC full name, address, phone/fax, e-mail address; center director names, physical and mailing addresses, phone/fax and emails for centers)
- **OPERATING SCHEDULE:** What days of the week do you operate the children's classrooms? Is it five days a week, four, or some other schedule? Does it vary by center? [IF INCLUDES HOME VISITORS: What is the home visitor's schedule? What day(s) do(es) the home visitor(s) visit the center (with and without children in her caseload)] [NOTE: SOME PROGRAMS DO NOT HAVE CLASSES ON MONDAYS OR FRIDAYS].
- What is the start and end date for each center for this program year (2009-2010)?

On Site Coordinator (OSC):

We will need to work with you to assist us with our preparations. It is important that we establish a close working partnership— you are the [person/people (IF MORE THAN ONE OSC)] who will ensure that our data collection plan conforms to your local requirements. Together we will work to minimize the burden on your program. Together, we will develop such a plan which will then be submitted to your program director for comments. [IF OSC IS ALLOWED PAYMENT: We have budgeted \$500 per program for the fall 2009 round of data collection for your help. You will receive \$250 for each subsequent round of data collection at the Head Start centers. The payments for this help can be provided in cash or as a gift certificate, according to your program's preference.] We assume that most of the work can be done outside of regular work hours so that it will not take time away from your normal duties. You will be responsible for:

- Coordinating the FES visit three weeks prior to on-site data collection
- Providing the FES with lists of all Head Start class sessions/home visitors and lists of eligible (newly enrolled 3 through 5 y/o old) children at each selected center
- Obtaining parental consent for the sampled children and tracking the receipt of the consent forms,
- Helping coordinate the on-site data collection visit at each center, and
- Scheduling times and locations for the child assessments, parent interviews, and staff interviews

CLASSROOM AND CHILD SELECTION

Finally, I would like to explain to you the way that we chose the classrooms and children that will be asked to participate in the study.

- ***Classroom Selection.*** Approximately three classrooms will be randomly selected in each center, taking into account whether it is center or home based and whether it operates on a full or half-day schedule. If a center has 3 or fewer classrooms, we will include them all. Classrooms with no newly enrolled 3- or 4-year olds will not be eligible for the sample.
- ***Child Selection.*** The FES will ask for lists of newly enrolled 3- and 4 year olds in the selected classrooms. We will select approximately 10 children per classroom and will invite these children and their families to participate.

NEXT STEPS

- Now that we have laid the groundwork for our tasks ahead, tell me which is the easiest way to reach you—by phone or e-mail? [CONFIRM THAT THIS PERSON IS THE ONE WHO SHOULD BE YOUR REGULAR CONTACT].
- I would like to find out about your availability in order to begin crafting the data collection plan for your program. When is the best time to reach you? Do you have any dates that you will not be available?
- Do you have any questions at this point? If questions or concerns come up, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for participating in this important study. We appreciate your assistance, and I look forward to working with you and your program.