

Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES 2009)

**Pretesting of Evaluation Surveys
(OMB 0970-0355)**

Supporting Statement Part A

March 2009

A. JUSTIFICATION

The Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey 2009 Cohort (FACES 2009) is the fifth in a series of national longitudinal cohort studies of the children and families served by Head Start. The design of FACES 2009 and the procedures that are used to select the sample and conduct baseline and three rounds of follow-up data collection are for the most part the same as those used in FACES 2006 (OMB number 0970-0151). FACES 2009 proposes to make a few changes to sampling and consent procedures and to the direct child assessment. ACF requests permission to conduct pretesting with the purpose of evaluating (1) new procedures for identifying children and for obtaining parental consent and (2) the administration of new direct child assessment measures in combination with the measures used in FACES 2006. The information collected will be used for internal purposes only and will not be released to the public.

A.1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

FACES 2009 extends a currently approved data collection program that is scheduled to expire June 30, 2009 (OMB number 0970-0151) to a new sample of Head Start programs, families, and children. FACES 2009, like the four cohorts that preceded it, will collect information from a national probability sample of Head Start children, their parents, teachers, and program officials to ascertain what progress Head Start has made in meeting program performance goals. There are two legislative bases for the FACES data collection: the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-62), requiring that the Office of Head Start move expeditiously toward development and testing of Head Start Performance Measures, and the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-134), outlining requirements on monitoring, research, and standards for Head Start. FACES provides the mechanism for collecting these data on nationally representative samples of children and families served by Head Start, providing the Office of Head Start, other federal government agencies, local programs, and the public with valid and reliable national information. Successive samples provide ongoing descriptive pictures of the stability and change of the population served, staff qualifications, classroom practices and quality, and child and family outcomes.

A.2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

The design of FACES 2009, to include the sampling plan, instruments, and procedures draws heavily from the design of FACES 2006; few changes in approach or instruments are proposed. This pretest will evaluate those changes proposed to procedures for identifying classrooms and children to participate in the study as well as changes proposed to the measures conducted as part of the direct child assessment. The pretest will include 7 Head Start programs, 12 centers, and 36 classrooms. We will sample and work to obtain consent for about 430 children within those programs to participate in the pretest and will assess approximately 100 children.

Like the four earlier cohorts, FACES 2009 uses a multi-stage sample design with four stages: (1) Head Start programs; (2) centers within programs; (3) classrooms within centers; and (4) children within classrooms. The sample design for FACES 2009 is the same as the design used in FACES 2006. ACF proposes to increase the efficiency of the current procedures by

revising the way children within the classrooms are selected to participate. The information collected during the pretest will be used for the purpose of evaluating whether the new procedures for identifying and selecting classrooms and children at the latter two stages will reduce the burden on Head Start staff. Further, the data from the pretest of the child assessments will be used to understand the time required to administer new measures as well as the total battery to children from different age groups and language backgrounds. The information collected will inform the procedures for the FACES 2009 baseline data collection in fall 2009.

ACF proposes to streamline the classroom and child sampling procedures for FACES 2009 with a Field Enrollment Specialist (FES) visit. Program directors will be contacted by Mathematica Policy Research Inc. (MPR) senior staff to participate in the pretest. Program directors will identify two centers for the pretest and a staff member to serve as an on-site coordinator (OSC). The FES will visit sampled Head Start centers two to three weeks prior to the data collection site visit. As part of this three-day visit, the FES will conduct activities to facilitate identifying classrooms and children, using standard forms and following prepared instructions on a laptop. The FES will work with the OSC to obtain a list of classrooms and the number of children newly enrolled with Head Start within each classroom. A sample of classrooms will then be selected and sent to the FES while still on-site at the center. The FES will then collect rosters with children's names and date of birth for each classroom sampled to participate and input this information into a laptop, equipped with a program to generate the child-level sample. The FES will then facilitate obtaining consents from families of the children sampled, distributing packets (containing a consent form and a brochure describing the study) and following up with the OSC in subsequent weeks.

ACF then proposes to conduct the child assessment, focusing on the administration procedures for new measures. A trained FACES assessor will visit each program approximately two weeks after the FES visit. The child assessment will be administered in its entirety to evaluate how the new measures—the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT), the ECLS-B phonemic awareness/letter sounds items, and the executive functioning task, Pencil Tapping—work in combination with the sections that carry over from FACES 2006 in terms of timing and overall flow. The information gathered will assist with the development of training materials.

A.3. Use of Improved Information Technology and Burden Reduction

To reduce burden, the FES will use a laptop computer application to select children within the classrooms to participate while on location. This approach reduces the burden on Head Start staff by quickly and efficiently identifying the children chosen to participate in the study. By identifying the children early, the FES can facilitate the consent process immediately.

A.4. Efforts to Identify Duplication and Use of Similar Information

The purpose of the pretest is to evaluate the new procedures for identifying classrooms and children to test the FACES 2009 child assessments. The assessments have been used in part by other studies such as, FACES 2006, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (ECLS-B), and Universal Preschool Childhood Outcomes Study (UPCOS), but not in the combination which is proposed for FACES 2009.

A.5. Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities

No small businesses are impacted by the data collection in this project.

A.6. Consequences of Collecting the Information Less Frequently

Not applicable.

A.7. Special Circumstances Relating to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5

There are no special circumstances requiring deviation from these guidelines.

A.8. Comments in Response to the Federal Register Notice and Efforts to Consult Outside the Agency

The first Federal Register notice for ACF's generic clearance for pretesting was published in the Federal Register, Volume 73, no. 39, p. 21957) on April 23, 2008.

The second Federal Register notice was published in the Federal Register, Volume 73, no. 137, p. 44271) on July 30, 2008.

A.9. Explanation of Any Payment or Gift to Respondents

On-site coordinators and center staff are not paid for providing the information that is sought. The children will participate in a 45-minute child assessment during the pretest. We propose to offer participating children a book worth approximately \$6.

A.10. Assurance of Privacy Provided to Respondents

Program directors provide the names and addresses of two centers in their program. The same procedures that were used in FACES 2006 (OMB number 0970-0151) will be used to ensure the privacy of the information provided by program directors.

Parents will receive information about privacy protections when they consent for their child to participate in the pretest. We have crafted carefully worded consent forms that explain in simple, direct language the steps we will take to protect the privacy of the information each

sample member provides. Assurances of privacy will be given to each parent as he or she is recruited for the pretest data collection. The consent form makes it clear that parents may withdraw their consent at any time.

Data on laptop computers will be secured through hard drive encryption as well as operation and survey system configuration and a password. Any computer files that contain this information also will be locked and password-protected. Interview and data management procedures that ensure the security of data and privacy of information will be a major part of training. Additionally, all MPR staff will be required to sign a privacy statement (see Appendix A).

A.11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

There are no sensitive questions.

A.12. Estimates of Annualized Burden Hours and Costs

On-site coordinators will provide a list of classrooms, the rosters of the classrooms selected to participate, and speak with a study team member about the Head Start center. Parents will be asked to read and sign the consent form. These persons will not incur any expense other than the time spent answering the few questions.

The estimated pretest burden for parents and for children participating in the child assessment is listed in Table A.1. The total annual burden for this pretest activity is expected to be 100 hours.

TABLE A.1
ESTIMATED ANNUAL RESPONSE BURDEN AND ANNUAL COST

Instrument	Number of Respondents	Number of Responses Per Respondent	Average Burden Hours per Response	Total Burden Hours	Average Hourly Wage	Total Annual Cost
Child Assessment	105	1.0	.75	79	n/a	n/a
Parent review of consent form and study brochure	105	1.0	.20	21	\$15.47	\$324.87
Estimated Total				100		

A.13. Estimates of Other Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents and Record Keepers

There are no direct monetary costs to participants; they spend only their time to participate in the study.

A.14. Annualized Cost to Federal Government

The total cost to the federal government of contacting the seven Head Start programs, identifying classrooms and children, obtaining consents, and conducting child assessments under the terms of the pretest of the FACES 2009 contract is estimated to be \$343,882.

A.15. Explanations for Program Changes or Adjustments

The approach to evaluating the procedures for identifying children and obtaining parent consent is needed to develop an efficient approach to minimize burden on Head Start staff and to maximize study participation. It builds upon the approach that was used in FACES 2006 (OMB Number 0970-0151). Additional child assessment measures enhance the information collected on children's development. Pretesting is needed to assess the timing and flow of the combination of instruments as well as to identify areas of importance for training of data collection staff.

A.16. Plans for Tabulation and Publication and Project Time Schedule

There are no plans for tabulating and publishing the information gathered from this pretest process. The information that is collected will be for internal use only.

All contacts with program directors and on-site coordinators for the purpose of collecting basic information on Head Start centers will occur in spring 2009. Program directors will be contacted and called by a member of the study team beginning in mid May. Calls to on-site coordinators will occur on a rolling basis as these persons are identified during conversations with program directors. Site visits for identifying classrooms and children, obtaining parent consents, and conducting child assessments will occur during May 2009.

A.17. Display of Expiration Date for OMB Approval

The OMB number and expiration date will be displayed on the parent consent form.

A.18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

No exceptions are necessary for this data collection.