

**REPORT: USE OF PRETESTING GENERIC CLEARANCE
(0970-0355) FROM 2008-2011**

January 2012

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

7th Floor, West Aerospace Building
370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW
Washington, D.C. 20447

In October 2008, OMB approved ACF's request for a generic information collection for pre-testing of evaluation surveys (0970-0355). This report describes the use of the generic IC during the first three years, including the number of hours used, as well as the nature and results of the activities completed under this generic clearance.

The original generic IC was approved for three years, during which time ACF requested four generic ICs for pretesting. During the first year of use, two projects used the generic IC to pre-test survey instruments, using a total of 175 burden hours. To accommodate pre-testing questionnaires to inform a national study, the number of respondents and burden hours requested was increased in the third year. This national study collected information from 3,330 respondents, using 891 burden hours. A final generic IC was approved in the third year, increasing the total burden hours in the third year to 1,161 hours. Over the three years, information was collected from 3,605 respondents requiring 1,336 hours of burden.

Date	Project	Type of Requests	Respondents	Burden Hours
5/5/2009	FACES 2009	Pre-test survey instruments	105	100
8/31/2009	Evaluation of Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Approaches	Pre-test survey instruments	50	75
Total Year 1			155	175
1/21/2011	National Survey of Early Care and Education	Pre-test Questionnaires	3,330	891
10/3/2011	Permanency Innovations Initiative	Pre-test Family Assessment Battery	120	270
Total Year 3			3,450	1,161
Total over 3 Years			3,605	1,336

The use of the pre-testing generic IC has been beneficial to the development of instruments for these research studies. The following highlights some of the activities completed under this generic clearance. Under the terms of clearance for this generic IC, all of the methods and the data approved in the following ICs were limited to informing OPRE and ACF's internal decision-making, research planning, and contextualization of research findings. The information collected was used for internal purposes only and was not released to the public.

FACES 2009

In March 2009, ACF requested permission to conduct pretesting of the sampling and consent procedures and the direct child assessment for The Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey 2009 Cohort (FACES 2009). ACF submitted a generic Information Collection Request (ICR) for 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 generic clearance allowed us to test a new approach to sampling children for FACES and obtaining parental consent through use of a Family Enrollment Specialist (FES). This strategy allowed us to

complete the sampling/consent process sooner (before the start of formal data collection) and with less stress on Head Start programs. With respect to the direct child assessment, the generic clearance primarily allowed us to assess the feasibility of incorporating a new measure of expressive vocabulary to the assessment battery. This measure is a conceptually scored measure, so there was particular need to determine how it worked (including administration time) with Spanish/English bilingual children.

National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE)

In early 2011, ACF requested permission to use the Generic Clearance for information collection for the field test activities of the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE). The NSECE is the first national survey of early child care and education in America in twenty years, during which the use and funding of early care and education as well as before- and after-school care has changed dramatically. Data from the NSECE will be able to provide a current picture of the supply and demand for child care and early education programs and fill a gap in our understanding of the factors influencing parents' choice of care for their children.

The field test was a multi-faceted test that mirrored the design of the primary NSECE study and was necessary to test data collection strategies, validate questionnaires and sampling procedures and review analysis plans to ensure these were most likely to function well in the main study. The availability of the Generic Clearance allowed us to conduct a comprehensive field test in the context of a very tight timeline, allowing for implementation of the main study to address the urgent need for information to be gathered for policymakers at the national and state levels. Findings from the field test generated revisions in many aspects of the main study, including: survey questionnaire items, length of questionnaires, incentive amounts for respondents, target respondents in program, timing of data collection, and many other key decisions. The field test conducted under the Generic IC was critical to getting the main study in the field on time, with the key information needed for successful implementation.