

APPENDIX A-5

**LETTER TO CENTER DIRECTOR
(PROGRAMS FOR CHILD-LEVEL DATA COLLECTION)**



MATHEMATICA Policy Research

1100 1st Street, NE, 12th Floor
Washington, DC 20002-4221
Telephone (202) 484-9220
Fax (202) 863-1763
www.mathematica-mpr.com

FACES-

DATE

Dear [Center Director]:

Thank you for agreeing to help us conduct the Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) 2014–2018. The Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services contracted with Mathematica Policy Research, 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 the effectiveness of Head Start.

To accomplish these goals, we will be working with an on-site coordinator (OSC) enlisted by the program director. The OSC selected by your program director is [FILL OSC NAME]. The OSC will help coordinate activities between your center and our staff and will facilitate the work of the Mathematica team assigned to collect the data for the study.

Data Collection Activities

FACES 2014–2018 involves collecting data at three points in time: fall 2014, spring 2015, and spring 2017. In the fall of 2014 and spring of 2015, Mathematica staff will spend about a few days at your center to administer an assessment to each selected child whose parents have agreed to let him/her participate. No data collection is planned for the 2015-2016 program year; however, in the spring of 2017, we will conduct classroom observations and staff surveys only. In 2014 and 2015, the child’s parent or guardian will be invited to complete a survey on the web or by phone, whichever the parent finds most convenient. We will also ask the child’s classroom teacher to complete a report about the child. In the spring of 2015, you and selected teachers will be asked to complete a survey on the web. Also in the spring of 2015, research staff will observe selected classrooms. Each of the observations will take about three hours.

Sample Selection Activities

1. **Classroom selection.** Approximately two classrooms will be randomly selected in each center. If your center has two or fewer classrooms, we will include all of them. A Mathematica field enrollment specialist (FES) will visit your center about three weeks before our fall data collection begins. The FES visit will last approximately 2 days per center. During the fall 2014 FES visit, the FES will ask you to provide a list of all classrooms in your center. The FES will visit again just prior to our spring 2017 data collection.

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2. ***Child selection (Fall 2014 only).*** After classrooms have been chosen for the sample, children will be randomly selected for the study. The FES will ask for a list of the name and date of birth for each child in the selected classrooms. We will select approximately 12 children per classroom and will invite these children and their families to participate.
3. ***Obtaining consent (Fall 2014 only).*** Once children have been selected, Mathematica will work with The OSC and the teachers to gain parental consent. While the FES is still on site, he or she will distribute informational materials to the families who have been selected. The FES will be available to discuss the study in person with teachers and parents.

Data Collection Activities

Fall 2014 and Spring 2015

1. ***Administer assessments to children in the study.*** In the fall and again in the spring, a trained member of Mathematica's team will administer a 45-minute assessment to each child. The assessments are designed to measure important school readiness skills identified by Head Start's Child Development and Early Learning Framework. Assessments will be conducted over the course of several days.
2. ***Ask classroom teachers to complete reports on each child.*** Teachers will be asked to complete short checklists for each selected child in their classroom. Each will take 10 minutes and can be completed on the web or on paper forms. Teachers are expected to complete the checklists on their own time and will be paid \$10 for each form they complete.
3. ***Survey parents or guardians.*** In the fall and spring we want to survey a parent or guardian for each study child—via the web or over the telephone (whichever the parent finds more convenient). Parents will receive \$25 for completing the survey on the web or \$10 for completing it by telephone. Also, parents will be given a children's book worth \$10.

Spring 2015 and Spring 2017

1. ***Surveys for the program director, center directors, and classroom teachers.*** The program director, center directors, and teachers of each selected classroom will each be asked to complete a short survey. These surveys will collect background information as well as information on professional experience, program practices, and classroom activities.
2. ***Conduct classroom observations.*** Mathematica staff will conduct observations in selected classrooms to collect information on classroom practices and instructional content. We will work with you to schedule them. Each observation will take

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approximately three hours. The center staff and teachers should make no special preparations for them. Each classroom will receive a gift for participating.

You may contact me at [xxx-xxx-xxxx or EMAIL] if you have questions about the study or your center's participation. We very much appreciate your support and cooperation with this important study, and welcome any input you would like to provide. More information about FACES 2014–2018 can be found by accessing the Administration of Children and Families FACES website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/hs/faces>.

Sincerely,

[FACES study liaison]

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To accomplish these goals, we will be working with an on-site coordinator (OSC) enlisted by the program director. The OSC selected by your program director is [FILL OSC NAME]. The OSC will help coordinate activities between your center and our staff and will facilitate the work of the Mathematica team assigned to collect the data for the study.

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

Classroom Selection

Two classrooms will be randomly selected in each center. If your center has only one or two classrooms, we will include all classrooms. A Mathematica field enrollment specialist (FES) will visit your center at the start of each data collection period. Both FES visits, during spring 2015 and spring 2017, will last one half day.

Data Collection Activities

1. **Staff surveys.** The program director, center directors, and teachers of each selected classroom will each be asked to complete a short survey. These surveys will collect background information as well as information on professional experience, program practices, and classroom activities.
2. **Conduct classroom observations.** Mathematica staff will conduct observations in selected classrooms to collect information on classroom practices and instructional content. We will work with you to schedule them. Each observation will take

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[FACES study liaison]