

# **Formative Data Collections for Culture of Continuous Learning Project: A Breakthrough Series Collaborative for Improving Child Care and Head Start Quality**

**OMB Information Collection Request  
0970-0356**

## **Supporting Statement**

### **Part A**

**March 2017**

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## **A1. Necessity for the Data Collection**

The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), seeks approval to conduct discussions with a convenience sample of Head Start and child care staff in order to inform the development of a research project entitled *Creating a Culture of Learning* (CCL Project). The goal of the CCL Project is to study the feasibility of supporting children's social and emotional learning using a continuous quality improvement methodology called the Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC). Under this generic clearance, OPRE will collect information from early childhood care and education providers to better understand the capacity of programs to implement the BSC and engage actively in the accompanying research protocols. OPRE proposes using a variety of techniques including semi-structured discussions and telephone or in-person interviews, in order to achieve these goals. The information collected will be used for internal purposes only. Permission to collect information for this limited purpose is requested under ACF's generic clearance for Formative Data Collection for Informing Policy Research (OMB Number 0970-0356). These activities fulfill the following goals of the formative generic: (1) inform the development of OPRE research, and (2) maintain a research agenda that is rigorous and relevant.

### ***Study Background***

A challenge for current efforts to improve the quality of early care and education (ECE) programs is to produce sustained changes in practices that support positive outcomes for children and families. The field is seeking innovative models that can be tailored for and tested in ECE systems. The Culture of Continuous Learning (CCL) Project, funded by the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, will assess the feasibility of implementing and evaluating a Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) in child care and Head Start settings.

The BSC differs from other ECE quality improvement initiatives. Rather than supporting changes in individual practice through a single coach or consultant, it supports change by building capacity and recognizing leaders across an organization. The model promotes change through collaborative teams that include staff (at all levels) and families; it engages teams in problem-solving that takes local context into account. A goal is to spread and sustain change in the use of evidence-based practices. The BSC model has supported practice and process improvements in the health, child trauma, and child welfare fields, but has not been widely tested in ECE.

The data collected under this formative generic clearance will inform the development of the main phase of the CCL project. During the main phase of the CCL project, staff (i.e., OPRE's contractors) will implement the BSC with ECE programs in a sample of convenience for approximately 12-15 months. The BSC will focus on improvements in practices to support children's social and emotional learning. ECE programs in a constrained geographic area will apply to participate in the BSC, and project staff will identify team members within each Head Start or child care program to participate in Collaborative Learning Teams. Team members will attend three or four in-person learning sessions with content experts and quality improvement

specialists over the course of the year. Between each learning session, teams will test the practices and processes they identify primarily using a plan-do-study-act (PDSA) improvement cycle approach to test small adjustments in practice as they strive to implement, spread, and sustain the improvements across their organization. CCL project staff in charge of evaluation of the BSC model will gather information throughout the implementation of the BSC to assess the feasibility and potential effectiveness of the model. Research questions will address both implementation processes and proximal outcomes of the BSC model. Findings will inform quality rating and improvement systems, child care and Head Start training and technical assistance, and professional development for early care and education. OPRE will also use this information to inform future child care and early education research planning.

The current information request is to plan for the implementation of the BSC model and the accompanying data collection. Specifically, information will be gathered to inform the types of supports necessary for ECE programs to actively participate in the BSC and accompanying data collections.

### ***Legal or Administrative Requirements that Necessitate the Collection***

There are no legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. ACF proposes this information collection at the discretion of the agency.

## **A2. Purpose of Survey and Data Collection Procedures**

### ***Overview of Purpose and Approach***

The information collected under this formative generic clearance will be used to help OPRE make decisions about necessary supports for programs to implement the BSC model, to inform the plan for the CCL research study. The contractors plan to conduct in-person or telephone interviews with staff from up to 20 early care and education (ECE) sites, using a sample of convenience in a limited geographic area.

The interviews to be conducted under this formative generic clearance will allow for the collection of in-depth information and follow-up questions to assess and gauge the extent to which the ECE sites are ready and capable of implementing the Breakthrough Series Collaborative change framework, including active engagement with the research and data collection protocols. The CCL project team also proposes to hold information sessions with child care program directors, Head Start center managers, quality improvement consultants, content trainers, and teachers. The purpose of these sessions is to educate the local ECE community about the BSC so that they can accurately report on their strengths and needs in order to participate in this type of quality improvement activity. Both data gathering activities are designed to explore the preparedness of ECE sites and staff members for quality improvement efforts around social and emotional learning.

## **Research Questions**

The questions that will be explored for this formative clearance include:

- (1) What will the BSC look like in early care and education settings, and what is its potential for quality improvement in this context?
- (2) What are the needs of programs for support in social and emotional learning practices?
- (3) What are programs' capacity for doing the type of work involved in implementing a BSC and engaging in accompanying research protocols?

## **Study Design**

For this formative portion of the CCL study, we will be doing extensive outreach with staff from up to 40 early care and education (ECE) sites in a constrained geographic area. A member of the CCL project team will use administrative lists of programs to identify child care centers and Head Start programs that already have been trained in the CSEFEL Pyramid model.<sup>1</sup> The identified sites will be contacted via email outreach (see Appendix A for the outreach email). This initial email will be used to invite them to participate in a semi-structured discussion with other potential participants. Programs who respond to the invitation will receive a follow-up email with further information about attending the discussion (see Appendix B for the confirmatory email script). In the event that more than 20 ECE sites respond to the initial outreach, participation in the semi-structured discussions will be limited to the first 20 sites that respond.

The CCL project team anticipates conducting two to three of these semi-structured discussions in order to accommodate various schedules and availability of participants from interested sites. One of the discussions will be scheduled using a video/telephone conference call format. The other one or two semi-structured discussions will be conducted in-person at a central location convenient for participants from multiple sites to attend. The semi-structured group discussion will be used to share information about the use of the BSC methodology and gauge interest and capacity of ECE sites to participate in this type of quality improvement activity to support children's social and emotional learning.

The CCL project team will lead the semi-structured discussions. They will use a set of standard talking points to frame and guide the discussion (see Appendix C). At the conclusion of the semi-structured discussions, the CCL project team will ask participants to complete a standard Strengths and Needs Assessment to assess capacity to participate in the BSC (see Appendix D). The Strengths and Needs Assessment includes a series of questions to understand more about the capacity of the ECE programs to engage in the BSC activities.

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<sup>1</sup> The Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) developed the Pyramid model intervention (Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, & Strain, 2003) to provide early educators with guidance on how to support young children's social-emotional development and address challenging behavior. The Pyramid model has been extensively studied in early childhood and early childhood special education settings, and is used widely in child care and Head Start programs. For more information, see <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>.

In general, we expect that information collections conducted under this clearance will involve a minimum of 10 respondents and a maximum of 20 respondents over a three-month period. The outreach efforts are strengths of the project, as they will allow the CCL team to gather more in-depth information about the local context and tailor the ultimate research design and recruitment approach to accommodate the strengths and needs of ECE sites.

### ***Universe of Data Collection Efforts***

The universe of data collection efforts includes semi-structured discussion session talking points, and a Strengths and Needs Assessment completed by interested sites. Supplementary documents include an outreach email and a confirmation email.

### **A3. Improved Information Technology to Reduce Burden**

Whenever possible, advanced technology will be used to gather and process information to reduce respondent burden and make data processing and reporting more timely and efficient. To reduce burden, we will communicate with all participants through email. The telephone contact information of the project team will also be made available in the outreach materials in case a site wishes to call a member of the CCL project team. We will conduct the in-person semi-structured discussions in an easily-accessible, central location. We will email a reminder with the date and time of the semi-structured group discussion unless participants indicate a preference to receive this information in another format. In addition, we will conduct one semi-structured discussion via conference call. The conference call will be conducted using a webinar platform; however, those interested in attending only need to have access to a telephone. It will not be required to connect using a computer and video.

### **A4. Efforts to Identify Duplication**

This research does not duplicate any other work being done by ACF. The purpose of this clearance is to determine the feasibility of implementing a Breakthrough Series Collaborative in child care and Head Start settings to support children's social and emotional development and inform the design of a research study of this implementation effort. The BSC model has supported practice and process improvements in the child trauma, and child welfare fields, but has not been widely tested in ECE. We have conducted a thorough literature review and consulted experts in the field about implementing a BSC in ECE settings. Our literature review yielded little evidence pointing to wide use of a BSC in this context; additionally, technical experts we have consulted agree that the field lacks information about this kind of process improvement approach and that a research study examining the feasibility of such a method would be valuable.

### **A5. Involvement of Small Organizations**

This study may involve small businesses. Center-based child care programs that participate in the in-person or telephone interviews and attend the information session may be privately owned corporations, partnerships, or sole proprietorships. Head Start programs will also participate in the study but they are not considered small business because they receive federal funding and are considered service agencies.

We will attempt to reduce any negative impact on small center-based child care programs by conducting outreach by email and scheduling the information sessions at a time and location that would be convenient to them. Information collected under this generic clearance will assist the CCL team in identifying the types of outreach and support that may best support small businesses' participation in the BSC and research project.

#### **A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection**

This is a one-time formative data collection; participants will be asked to attend a single group discussion session and to share some initial information in the Strengths and Needs Assessment.

#### **A7. Special Circumstances**

There are no special circumstances for the proposed data collection efforts.

#### **A8. Federal Register Notice and Consultation**

##### ***Federal Register Notice and Comments***

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 5 CFR Part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995), ACF published a notice in the Federal Register announcing the agency's intention to request an OMB review of the generic clearance for information collection. This notice was published on September 15, 2014, Volume 79, Number 178, page 54985, and provided a sixty-day period for public comment. The second notice was published on January 9, 2015, Volume 80, Number 6, page 1420, and provided a thirty-day period for public comment. ACF did not receive any comments.

##### ***Consultation with Experts Outside of the Study***

The CCL Project will benefit from consultation with experts who will serve on an expert panel to provide guidance on this project and specifically the development of the project plan and feasibility study. Experts include:

- Lindsey Allard Agnamba, School Readiness Consulting
- Karen Bierman, Penn State University
- Paula Jorde Bloom, McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National Louis University
- Debi Mathias, BUILD Initiative
- Megan McClelland, Oregon State University
- Allison Metz, National Implementation Research Network
- Pamela Morris, New York University
- Yvette Rodriguez, Vice President, Head Start & Children Services; Action for Boston Community Development
- Andrea Urbano, University of Massachusetts, Donahue Institute
- Adam Winsler, George Mason University

In addition, the following experts have agreed to provide one-on-one consultation to the CCL Project, as necessary, given their content expertise:

- Anthony Bryk, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
- Jason Downer, University of Virginia
- Steven Ellis, Independent consultant on evaluation methodology
- Walter Gilliam, Yale University
- Sabrina Selk, National Institute for Children’s Health Quality (NICHQ)

The expert consultants and technical expert panel members, however, are not involved in reviewing or consulting on the formative information collection under this generic clearance request.

#### **A9. Incentives for Respondents**

No incentives for respondents are proposed under this generic clearance.

#### **A10. Privacy of Respondents**

Information collected will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. Respondents will be informed of all planned uses of data, that their participation is voluntary, and that their information will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. This project falls outside of IRB requirements because the project does not constitute research (i.e., the information gathered will not develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge).

The contractor performing the data collection shall protect respondent privacy to the extent permitted by law and will comply with all Federal and Departmental regulations for private information. The Contractor has developed a Data Security Plan that protects respondents’ personally identifiable information (see Appendix E). The Contractor shall ensure that all of its employees, subcontractors (at all tiers), and employees of each subcontractor, who perform work under this contract/subcontract, are trained on data privacy issues and comply with the above requirements.

As noted in Section A11, there is no sensitive information collected in this study.

#### **A11. Sensitive Questions**

There are no sensitive questions in this data collection.

#### **A12. Estimation of Information Collection Burden**

##### ***Newly Requested Information Collections***

The total hours for this data collection activity is estimated to be 40 hours, including time for outreach, scheduling, and participation in the semi-structured discussion and completing the Strengths and Needs Assessment.

**Total Burden Requested Under this Information Collection**

The proposed information collection does not impose a financial burden on respondents. Respondents will not incur any expenses other than the time spent in conversation with the contractor. We will invite representatives of 40 child care and/or Head Start sites in a constrained geographic area to participate in the semi-structured group discussion sessions. We anticipate up to 20 participants will attend the semi-structured group discussions and complete the strengths and needs assessment.

Instrument	Total Number of Respondents		Number of Responses Per Respondent	Average Burden Hours Per Response	Annual Burden Hours	Average Hourly Wage	Total Annual Cost
Semi-Structured Discussion	20		1	1.5	30	\$20.22	\$606.60
Strengths and Needs Assessment	20		1	0.33	7	\$20.22	\$141.54
<b>Estimated Annual Burden Sub-total</b>					<b>40</b>		<b>\$748.14</b>

**Total Annual Cost**

To calculate the annualized cost to respondents for the hour burden, we assume that the typical respondent will be Head Start grantee staff (including Head Start collaboration managers/administrators) and child care service providers (both directors and teachers). Based on data on our expected respondents from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, we use a mean hourly wage of \$20.22<sup>2</sup>. There will be no direct cost to the respondents other than their time to participate in the outreach materials.

**A13. Cost Burden to Respondents or Record Keepers**

There are no additional costs to respondents.

**A14. Estimate of Cost to the Federal Government**

The total estimated cost to the Federal Government for the data collection activities under this current request will be \$29,331. This includes personnel effort (50 hours for a Class I Senior staff, 34 hours for a second Class I Senior staff, and 108 hours for a Class IV Junior staff) plus other direct costs and indirect costs.

**A15. Change in Burden**

No program changes are expected.

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<sup>2</sup> This is an average of the mean hourly wages for preschool and childcare workers (\$17.63), state preschool and childcare workers (\$19.15), and federal preschool and child care workers (\$23.90).



**A16. Plan and Time Schedule for Information Collection, Tabulation and Publication**

The timeline for the project is provided in the chart below. The outreach process could take place over the course of three months. As a part of the outreach process, an initial email will be sent to child care and Head Start sites in a constrained geographic area. The initial email will include a brief description of the project and will announce the timing of the semi-structured discussion(s). A reminder email will be sent to sites that do not RSVP to attend a semi-structured discussion. The reminder email will contain the same information as the initial email. See appendices A-F for outreach materials.

	2017		
	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3
Initial email announcement			
Conduct semi-structured discussions			
Semi-structured discussion attendees complete Strengths and Needs Assessment			

**A17. Reasons Not to Display OMB Expiration Date**

All instruments will display the expiration date for OMB approval.

**A18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions**

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.