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SUBJECT: Non-Substantive Change Request: 2019 National Survey of Early Care and Education (OMB#0970-0391) – Update to questionnaires to allow for summer data collection

OPRE is requesting OMB approval of non-substantive changes to three of the questionnaires for the 2019 National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) for implementation in the field no later than June 3, 2019.

Due to slow data collection progress to date, we anticipate needing to continue data collection activities into summer 2019. Based on analyses of 2012 NSECE data and consultation of school district calendars for the 2018-2019 school year, we wish to modify three of our questionnaires so that data collected once summer schedules start can be analyzed in conjunction with school year data.

Please note that the NSECE is approved for data collection through 10/31/19, so we are not requesting an extension. Our request is only for changes to the questionnaires that would allow us to collect high quality data that can support the research objectives of the 2019 NSECE.

This memorandum describes the NSECE data collection to date, our proposed revised timeline, and the specific questionnaire changes we are requesting to support a data collection extension.

Data collection status

The 2019 NSECE received approval from OMB for data collection to take place beginning in October 2018. Exhibit 11 of Supporting Statement Part A described a schedule in which we conducted mailings for household screening and some screening of center-based providers during November and December of 2018, then conducted field data collection from January through June of 2019, completing all field work no later than June 15. Within the June 15 overall end date, we anticipated staggered closedown of fieldwork across localities based on their school closing schedules.

Key data collection phases such as household mailings and provider mailings as well as the launch of field work in early January 2019 all took place as scheduled, but the yield from early data collection activities (such as mailings and telephone outreach to providers) was lower than experienced in 2012 and projected for 2019, leaving more production necessary to achieve through active interviewer outreach. Table 1 below documents our progress as of May 8, 2019, after approximately 17 weeks of active field work on the household sample, and 11 weeks of active interviewer outreach on the provider samples. Given approximately 5 full weeks remaining until June 15, it is apparent that we will very likely fall short of our targets if we stop data collection activities on June 15.

Table 1. Data collection progress as of May 8 (with 5 full weeks remaining in a 23 week field period)

Questionnaire	Cumulative completes	Targets from Exhibit 9 of Statement A	% of target completed
Household	6,283	10,600	59.3%
Unlisted Home-based	1,161	2,100	55.3%
Listed Home-based	2,635	4,000	65.9%
Center-based	3,369	7,800	43.2%
Workforce	1,844	6,100	30.2%

No single factor seems to explain the lags in production to date. A multiplicity of factors seems to all align toward more challenging data collection circumstances in 2019 versus 2012. One example is the change in mail response between the two years. Both times, we began our multi-mode data collection efforts with mailings inviting self-completion by web (for providers) or mail (for household screeners). The household, listed home-based, and center-based provider samples all experienced dramatically lower mail return in 2019 relative to 2012. Table 2 shows mail response differences for the two years.

Table 2. Mail response rates by sample type: 2012 and 2019

Sample Type	2019 mail response	2012 mail response
Household for screening	10%	20%
Listed home-based	4%	17%
Center-based	2%	10%

Additional data collection challenge examples include:

- Availability of telephone numbers for households and even providers is much lower than in 2012, inhibiting multi-mode contacts with households.
- More states declined to provide full contact information for listed home-based providers, resulting in inability to include almost 25 percent of that sample type in our initial mailings.
- While 2012 center-based screeners required on average fewer than 2 calls for completion, many centers this year require more than 5 calls and even in-person visits simply to determine eligibility.
- The number of school districts requiring research review before permitting data collection is also very high.

Other data collection challenges have included recruiting and maintaining temporary interviewing staff in a robust labor market. The contractor has supplemented the original staff of 700 field interviewers with more than a hundred additional individuals from additional recruitment as well as redeployment from other projects conducted by the contractor. It goes without saying that general societal trends

such as caller ID, webcam doorbells, locked and gated communities, and hesitation in immigrant communities are all additional hindrances.

Aside from data collection challenges, we have also experienced lower than expected eligibility rates, especially in the center-based provider sample, where an initially estimated 88 percent eligibility rate among known ECE addresses based on 2012 data has proven closer to a 76 percent eligibility rate, primarily due to sampled addresses no longer serving children birth through five years, not yet in kindergarten. This shortfall has been partially off-set by a higher than expected 30 percent eligibility rate among potential ECE addresses relative to our initial estimates of 15 percent eligibility. Because the potential ECE sample is much smaller than the known ECE sample, the off-set is modest.

Despite these difficulties, data collection is continuing at a brisk pace. Particularly promising indicators are that the refusal rates to date have been extremely low, especially for the provider samples, and that analyses of sample representativeness have indicated very few characteristics on which collected data seem to be biased relative to the full population.

The efforts to increase production have included activities such as additional staffing, securing of a variety of additional endorsement letters, extended email and mail outreach, traveling staff and sometimes multiple staff visiting sampled providers, and repeated contacts with entities from whom formal permission is required for data collection. The combination of these efforts has indeed resulted in strong production on provider samples, though not enough to likely complete data collection by the originally targeted June 15 date.

Request and Timeline

Because many households and many early care and education (ECE) providers change schedules, care practices, and payment arrangements between the school year and the summer, we believe it would be appropriate to make some modifications to the NSECE instruments to ensure that data collected toward the end of the data collection period can be properly analyzed in conjunction with data collected firmly within the school year. We are not proposing any adjustments to the data collection approach.

The NSECE samples households with children under age 13 as well as providers to children age five and under, not yet in kindergarten. School-age children by definition will have different weekly schedules of non-parental care during school vacations. A majority of home-based providers and 40 percent of center-based providers serve school-age children as well as younger children. Further, even providers serving only young children may have different practices during the summer months, for example, different prices, less instructional time, more recreational activities and staff, more erratic attendance, etc. 2012 data indicate that 45 percent of centers are open fewer than 48 weeks per year, with summer closings beginning the last week in May. **Anticipating data collection into July, we are eager to implement questionnaire edits no later than June 3** so that data collected in June and July can be combined appropriately with data collected earlier in the field period.

Questionnaire Edits Proposed

Table 3 summarizes our proposed questionnaire modifications. For the center-based and home-based provider questionnaires, we propose to ask respondents to report about their programs in the spring of 2019, and to clarify whether they have different practices in the summer. The additional questions on summer practices help to cue respondents not to report on those activities and instead to report for the

spring time frame, and will provide sensitivity checks during analysis in case there are concerns about individual cases and whether or not they reported about the appropriate time period. We have revised SSA to reflect the reduction in expected burden for the household sample.

Table 3. Summary of proposed modifications to NSECE instruments

NSECE questionnaire	Modification proposed	Impact on Burden Estimates
Center-based Provider Screener and Survey	Insert two questions to ask whether school year and summer practices differ, and an instruction to report about spring 2019 rather than current. (see page 9 of attachment 2)	No change
Home-based Provider Survey	Insert two questions to ask whether school year and summer practices differ, and an instruction to report about spring 2019 rather than current. (see page 6 of attachment 4a)	No change
Workforce Survey	No modifications requested	No change
Household Screener and Survey	Replace prior week calendar questions for children and adults with summary questions about usual schedules during school year. (see pages 30-38 and 49-52 of attachment 15a)	Revised instrument is estimated for an average of 45 minutes rather than 1 hour.

Edits to Center-based and Home-based Provider Surveys

We have drafted additional questions for both the Center-based and Home-based Provider questionnaires to provide additional safeguards during data analysis to ensure that school year data were not mixed with summer time data by respondents completing interviews late in the data collection period.

We propose to insert two questions and an instruction at the start of the Center-based and Home-based Provider Survey instruments as follows. Note that the final instruction below directs respondents to provide their responses to the remainder of the questionnaire as of spring 2019.

The NSECE is gathering information about the availability of early care and education in the winter and spring of 2019.

T1. Many providers make changes to their programming in the summer. Compared to your school year practices, do you do any of the following in the summer?

- a. serve different ages of children? Y N
- b. serve different numbers of children? Y N
- c. charge parents different prices for care? Y N
- d. have different staff? Y N
- e. have different staffing practices? Y N
- f. have different hours of care for children? Y N

T2. [If yes to any of T1a-f, ask]: On what date do your summer activities begin? _____

In answering the remainder of this questionnaire, please report your program's information as it was in the spring of 2019, before any changes for summer might have been made.

Edits to Household Questionnaire

A central component of the Household Survey is a prior-week calendar which collects information about children's time in non-parental care and parents' and guardians' time in work-related activities such as work, school, and training during the week prior to the interview. This calendar portion of the interview is of greatest concern in moving to late June data collection.

We have designed proposed edits to the household questionnaire to best support the research objectives of the NSECE, including comparisons between the 2012 and 2019 household surveys. Two analytic products that have used the calendar data from the 2012 household survey are *Early Care and Education and Households' Out of Pocket Costs: Tabulations from the NSECE* [OPRE Report #2016-09] and *Snapshot: Parent Work Schedules in Households with Young Children* [OPRE Report #2017-48]. We are proposing questionnaire changes that would allow replication of both of these products with the exception of estimates of irregular care in the first document.

Table 4 enumerates key ECE constructs derived from the Household Survey data and indicates that most will not change at all in the proposed restructuring, although the source questionnaire items will change for several.

Table 4. Overview of key ECE usage constructs

Construct	Construct availability in main household questionnaire	Construct availability under proposed edits to questionnaire
ECE usage by type of care	Asked directly of respondent and irregular arrangements constructed from calendar	Asked directly of respondent; irregular arrangements not available
Characteristics of providers	Asked directly of respondent for regular and irregular arrangements	Asked directly of respondent for regular arrangements
Weekly hours per arrangement	Regular and irregular arrangement hours constructed from calendar	Regular arrangement hours asked directly of respondent
Irregular arrangements in prior week	Constructed from calendar	Will not be available
Parental costs for each regular arrangement	Collected by arrangement	Collected by arrangement
Parental total hours of work	Last week hours constructed from calendar	Usual weekly hours asked directly of respondent
Each parent/guardian's standard/non-standard hours of work	Last week hours constructed from calendar	Usual hours asked directly of respondent; any work during non-standard times (evening, early morning, weekends)
Hours per arrangement when all parents are in work-related activity	Regular and irregular arrangements constructed from calendar data	Regular arrangements only asked directly of respondent
Hours per arrangement	Regular and irregular arrangements	Regular arrangements only asked directly

when at least one parent is not in work-related activity	constructed from calendar data	of respondent
Hours per arrangement when no parents are in work-related activity	Constructed from calendar	May not be consistently available

Information about summer activities would not be comparable to information collected during the school year for desired analyses of NSECE data. At the same time, the complexity of the calendar makes it unreasonable to ask respondents to report the same level of detail for a period 4 to 6 weeks prior, as we propose to do for the provider questionnaires. Rather, we propose to replace the calendar questions with simpler questions that will capture retrospective information about the most important analytic constructs derived from the calendar data. These are the enumeration of regular non-parental care arrangements during the spring of 2019 and basic information about the usual weekly schedule of those arrangements, and basic information about the usual weekly schedule of work-related activities of parents and guardians.

Table 5 summarizes the content of the Household Survey and indicates that we are requesting fewer than 10 new questions addressing existing constructs, and deleting the prior-week questions. The proposed questions have previously been fielded, including for a State of Vermont household survey in the Fall of 2018.

These edits to the household questionnaire allow us to continue fielding the household survey into the summer while collecting the analytically essential school-year usage of early care and education (not summer usage). Our proposal will allow us to create comparable variables across all interviews collected during the field period on questions of key importance to the NSECE.

Table 5. Proposed revisions to NSECE household questionnaire for summertime fielding

Questionnaire Section in 2019 NSECE HH Survey	Proposed Edits for Late Fielding	Specific Question Text Edits
A. Child demographics	No edits	
B. Respondent and household adults demographics	No edits	
C. Child Care: Types and Hours		
Providers used last week	Deleted	<p>C2_INTRO. Now I'd like to understand your child care schedule last week.</p> <p>C2. Please tell me about last week, even if it was an unusual week. I'll ask you other questions about your usual schedule later on. Thinking about last [DAY] (that is, [FILL DATE]), who cared for [CHILD NAME]? Do not include any parent of a child under 13 in this household or his or her spouse.</p> <p>C2A1. What time last [DAY] did [PROVIDER] start to care for [CHILD NAME]?</p> <p>C2D. When did the care with [PROVIDER] end last [DAY]?</p> <p>C2D_1. And who cared for him/her next that day?</p> <p>C2D2. Thinking about [CHILD NAME]'s schedule for last week, was any day's schedule last week the same as last [Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday/Saturday/Sunday]?</p> <p>C2A2. [IF NEEDED: Sometimes a child's schedule on a specific day is different from his/her regular schedule for that day of the week.] Was [CHILD NAME]'s schedule last [DAY SELECTED IN C2D2] identical to [ORIGINAL DAY] that week, or were there some differences in when or where s/he spent time those two days?</p> <p>C4c. Was (CHILD)'s schedule last Monday the same as another child's Monday schedule?</p>

		<p>C4C1. Which child had the same [DAY] schedule?</p> <p>C4C2. Was [CHILD NAME]'s schedule last [DAY] identical to [CHILD SELECTED- IN C4C1]'s schedule, or were there some differences in when or where s/he spent time last [DAY]?</p>
Regular providers not used last week	Revised to include all providers used regularly in early May	<p>C3. Did anyone else regularly care for [CHILD NAME] in early May? By regularly I mean at least five hours each week.</p> <p>C4. Who usually provided care for [CHILD NAME] in early May? NAME:</p> <p>C4a. Did that care usually take place at your home or somewhere else?</p> <p>C4b. How many hours per week did [C4 PROVIDER] usually care for [CHILD NAME]?</p> <p>CS_1. How many of those hours were between 8am and 6pm Monday through Friday?</p> <p>CS_2. About how many of the hours that [child] was with [C4 PROVIDER] were you (and your spouse/partner) in work-related activities such as work, school, training or commuting to these activities?</p>
Provider-specific characteristics	No edits	
ECE perceptions	No edits	
D. Respondent and spouse employment schedules		
Work-related activities last week	Deleted	<p>D1D. Next, I'd like to ask you about (your/his/her) day to day (work/school/training) schedule last week.</p> <p>D1D. Thinking about last [DAY], [FILL DATE], did you go to work/school/training?</p>

		<p>D1D_1. What time did you begin [work/school/training] on last [DAY]? (Please include time you spent commuting to and from [work/school/training] in your response.)</p> <p>D1D_2. What time did you end [work/school/training] on last [DAY]?</p> <p>D1D_3. And did you attend work/ school/ training any other time that day?</p> <p>D1D_C2. What day(s) last week is (are) the same as [your/his/her] [DAY OF WEEK] schedule last week for work, school or training?</p> <p>D1D_C3. Sometimes people's schedule on a specific day is different from their regular schedule for that day of the week. Thinking about last [DAY SELECTED IN D1D_C2] , was your/his/her schedule last [DAY SELECTED IN D1D_C2] identical to last [DAY D1D_C2 ASKED ABOUT] that week, or were there some differences in when you/he/she arrived at or left work, school, or training on those two days?</p>
<p>Reconciliation of adult and child schedules</p>	<p>Deleted: question reconciling adult and child calendar</p> <p>Added: new question about overlap of adult and child calendars</p>	<p>Deleted question:</p> <p>CHK3_M. It seemed that (CHILD) was not in any care and you (and your spouse/partner) were at work/school/training from [INSERT SPELL OF TIME]. Was (CHILD) with you (and/or your spouse/partner) at work/school/training, or did he/she care for himself/herself during that period of time?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child with r/r spouse/partner at work/school/training 2. Child with r/spouse/partner and r/spouse not at work/school/training 3. Child cared for him/herself 4. Child with sibling less than 18 98. Child with a parent who doesn't live in this HH 5. OTHER ARRANGEMENT → SPECIFY <p>Added questions:</p>

		<p>[IF DS_1>0 for R and R's spouse/partner]:</p> <p>DS_3. In a typical week in May, how many hours were both you and your spouse or partner at work or commuting at the same time?</p> <p>_____ hours [Range 0-168]</p> <p>[IF DS_3>0]:</p> <p>DS_4. How many of those hours were between 8am and 6pm Monday through Friday?</p> <p>_____ hours [Range <= DS_3]</p>
Other work-related information such as schedule, industry and occupation, and absences	Proposed additional questions to capture usual weekly hours of work by standard and non-standard times	<p>DS_1. In a typical week in May, how many hours did (you/[HHMEM]) spend working and commuting to and from work? Please enter 0 if you do not work any hours in a typical week.</p> <p>DS_2. How many of these hours were Monday through Friday between 8am and 6pm? ____</p> <p>2a. In May, did you usually work or commute to and from work any hours Monday through Friday before 8am?</p> <p>Y N</p> <p>2b. In May, did you usually work or commute to and from work any hours Monday through Friday after 6pm?</p> <p>Y N</p> <p>2c. In May, did you usually work or commute to and from work any hours on Saturdays or Sundays?</p> <p>Y N</p>
J. Nonparental care payment and subsidy to each provider	No edits	
F. Non-parental child care Search	No edits	
G. Household characteristics	No edits	
H. Parental consent to access administrative records	No edits	