Infant and Toddler Teacher and Caregiver Competencies Study

OMB Information Collection Request
0970 - New Collection

Supporting Statement
Part A

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Submitted By:
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Part A

Executive Summary

- **Type of Request:** This Information Collection Request is for a new request. We are requesting two years of approval.

- **Description of Request:**

  This is a primary data collection request to examine, using qualitative case studies, different approaches to implementing competency frameworks and assessing competencies of teachers and caregivers of infants and toddlers who work in group early care and education (ECE) settings (centers and family child care homes). Each case study will focus on a specific competency framework used by states, institutions of higher education, professional organizations, or ECE programs. This study aims to present an internally valid description of the implementation of competency frameworks and assessment of competencies for up to seven purposively selected cases, not to promote statistical generalization to different sites or service populations.

  We do not intend for this information to be used as the principal basis for public policy decisions.

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A1. Necessity for Collection

Although the early care and education (ECE) field has in recent years embraced the use of competency frameworks as a tool to improve the quality of care provided to infants and toddlers (I/Ts), little is known about the processes and practices that facilitate successful use of the frameworks and how competencies in those frameworks are assessed. Because these frameworks are in use nationwide, this information is necessary to inform the ECE field about how to successfully use these frameworks for enhancing the support provided to the early childhood workforce through early childhood systems and programs and improving the quality of care provided to I/Ts in group settings, such as centers and family child care (FCCs) homes.

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

A2. Purpose

Purpose and Use

The purpose of this information collection is to conduct qualitative research (case studies) on a range of approaches currently being used to implement competency frameworks and assess competencies for I/T teachers and caregivers. We define a competency as a piece of knowledge, a skill, or an attribute essential to the practice of teaching and caring for infants and toddlers, and a competency framework as a compilation of competencies. This study—the Infant and Toddler Teacher and Caregiver Competencies (ITTCC) study—will provide lessons that can help those who work at a system level to create structures (for example, quality improvement systems, credentialing systems, career ladders) for implementation of competency frameworks and assessment of competencies, those who work with I/T teachers and caregivers to improve their competencies on a day-to-day basis, and the I/T teachers and caregivers themselves who directly support young children. Ultimately, these results are intended to inform efforts by both system-level and program-level stakeholders to leverage competency frameworks and improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers in group-based settings (centers and FCC homes). Notably, results describing promising strategies and lessons learned are intended to support ACF in its efforts to improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers in community-based child care and Early Head Start settings. We will purposively select cases that vary on key elements of implementation. More details about the purposive selection criteria are available in Section B2 of Part B under *Respondent Recruitment and Site Selection*.

The information collected is meant to contribute to the body of knowledge on ACF programs. It is not intended to be used as the principal basis for a decision by a federal decision-maker and is not expected to meet the threshold of influential or highly influential scientific information.

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Research Questions or Tests

Exhibit 1. Research questions guiding the ITTCC data collection

Research questions
1. How have competency frameworks been developed? 2. How have competency frameworks been implemented? 3. How have competencies been assessed? 4. How do program/center directors and FCC providers use competency frameworks? 5. How do I/T teachers and caregivers use competency frameworks? 6. What are key lessons learned related to the implementation of competency frameworks and assessment of I/T teacher and caregiver competencies? 7. How can competencies help build the capacity of the I/T workforce and support quality improvement?

Research sub-questions are included in Appendix A.

Study Design

The ITTCC study will conduct up to seven purposively selected case studies using qualitative methods. Each case will focus on a specific competency framework focused on I/T teachers and caregivers in group ECE settings.

In these one-time case studies, we will implement qualitative, semistructured telephone interviews with up to 120 people across the cases who are involved with implementing a competency framework and assessing competencies. Additional information about the type of people that we will interview is available in Section B1 of Part B under *Study Objectives*. We will purposively select these people to ensure they bring the range of perspectives needed to fully answer the study's research questions. We will also gather documents relevant to implementing competency frameworks and assessing competencies.

To identify cases for the ITTCC data collection, we will start by gathering publicly available information about how up to 25 competency frameworks are implemented and information on people connected to each framework. Based on this information, we will narrow the pool to 10 possible cases that vary along key criteria (see Part B for more information). Following OMB's approval, we will conduct an initial screening call with one to four people associated with each of the 10 possible cases to (1) gather additional information to inform final case selection, (2) ask about their interest in participating, and (3) ask for recommendations for other respondents involved with implementing the case at the system and program levels. More information about how we will identify the initial 25 frameworks, narrow the pool of frameworks to 10 possible cases, and make final case selections is available in Section B2 of Part B, under *Respondent Recruitment and Site Selection*.

We have proposed a purposive sample and qualitative approaches to collecting data, as these methods provide the flexibility needed to fully understand various approaches to implementation currently in use. The study's key potential limitation is that our cases might not ultimately include the full range of approaches currently in use and, thus, might not entirely address the information needs of the range of stakeholders implementing competency frameworks and assessing competencies. This limitation will be

acknowledged when sharing findings from the study. More details about the rationale of our study deign are available in Section B1 of Part B under *Appropriateness of Study*.

Design and Methods for Planned Uses.

Table A.1. Data collection activities

Data Collection Activity	Instrument(s)	Respondent, Content, Purpose of Collection	Mode and Duration
System-level screening	System-level screening protocol (Instrument 1)	**Respondents**: system-level staff (lead developer(s) and/or adopter(s) of the competency framework) **Content**: select aspects of implementation of competency frameworks and assessment of competencies, interest in study, potential system- and program-level sites and respondents, request for relevant documents **Purpose**: inform selection of the final set of cases, support the identification of system- and program-level site(s) and respondents	**Mode**: Telephone **Duration**: 35 minutes
System-level semistructured interviews	System-level master semistructured interview protocol (Instrument 2)	**Respondents**: system-level staff (lead developers, lead adopters, administrators for state/local quality improvement initiatives, administrators of licensing and/or credentialing agencies, higher education stakeholders, other training and technical assistance providers, state-level oversight of federal programs) **Content**: system-level research questions (see Exhibit 1), request for relevant documents, potential respondent recommendations (each respondent will receive a subset of the questions OR select modules relevant to their role) **Purpose**: to understand the development and implementation process of the competency framework at the system level and approaches to assessment of competencies	**Mode**: Telephone **Duration**: 90-minute interview

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Data Collection Activity	Instrument(s)	Respondent, Content, Purpose of Collection	Mode and Duration
Gathering program-level respondent nominations from system-level staff	Nominations for programs protocol (Instrument 3)	**Respondents**: system-level staff knowledgeable about program-level use of competencies (staff involved with workforce development in ECE) **Content**: potential program-level sites and respondents **Purpose**: inform selection of the final set of programs for each case and the identification of respondents within those programs	**Mode**: Telephone **Duration**: 20 minutes
Program-level screening	Program-level screening protocol (Instrument 4)	**Respondents**: program-level staff (center director or the director of the larger organization/program the center is part of and FCC providers) **Content**: confirm use of competency framework, interest in study, request for relevant documents, potential respondent recommendations **Purpose**: inform selection of the final set of programs for each case and identify respondents within those programs	**Mode**: Telephone **Duration**: 35 minutes
Program-level semistructured interviews	Program-level master semistructured interview protocol (Instrument 5)	**Respondents**: program-level staff (program and/or center directors, professional development coordinators/managers, center-based teachers/caregivers, FCC providers) **Content**: program-level research questions (see Exhibit 1) (each respondent will receive a subset of the questions OR select modules relevant to their role) **Purpose**: to understand the implementation of competency frameworks and assessment of competencies at the program level	**Mode**: Telephone **Duration**: 60-minute interview for directors and FCC providers; 30-minute interview for teachers/caregivers

Other Data Sources and Uses of Information

We will draw potential cases and information about the case selection criteria from a scan of competency frameworks and a scan of measures aligned with competencies that were previously conducted as part of the ITTCC study. We will also draw on information from expert consultation and stakeholder engagement.

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A3. Use of Information Technology to Reduce Burden

The data collection plan is designed to efficiently obtain information and minimize respondent burden. When feasible, we will gather information from existing data sources.

We will email respondents to ask them to provide electronic copies of relevant documents to us by email. None of the documents will include personally identifiable information (PII) or other sensitive information. If respondents have any concerns, however, we will suggest they send documents using an encrypted email, or we can provide a secure File Transfer Protocol site.

We will interview people by telephone. After we obtain permission from each participant, we will record all interviews to ensure that we capture information accurately at one time point.

A4. Use of Existing Data: Efforts to reduce duplication, minimize burden, and increase utility and government efficiency

Our examination of work in this area has not identified other current or planned efforts to collect information on how competency frameworks are being implemented or how competencies are being assessed to support the quality of care provided to infants and toddlers in group ECE settings.

None of the study instruments ask for information that can be obtained from alternative data sources (including administrative data). We will use publicly available information as much as possible to identify and select potential cases, sites, and respondents at the system level and program level. The design of the study instruments ensures minimal duplication of data collected across instruments and does so only in cases for which we require the perspective of more than one type of respondent to answer specific research questions.

A5. Impact on Small Businesses

Some of the program-level respondents will be part of small organizations, including community-based organizations and other nonprofits (that is, most center-based child care settings and FCC homes). We will schedule all telephone interviews at times that are convenient for the respondents selected to be interviewed.

A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection

All interviews are a one-time data collection activity. These data collection activities are necessary for ACF to gain a better understanding of the various approaches to competency framework implementation and assessment of competencies intended to improve the quality of care provided to I/Ts in group ECC settings (centers and FCCs).

A7. Now subsumed under 2(b) above and 10 (below)

A8. Consultation

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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 this information collection activity. This notice was published on September 3, 2020, Volume 85, Number 172, page 55014-55015, and provided a sixty-day period for public comment. During the notice and comment period, we received one comment from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (NYC OCFS). NYS OFSC was concerned about burden participating in this data collection while they are stilling dealing with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will not be changing our data collection plans as a result of this comment, but we will not include NYS OSC in any of our data collection activities.

Consultation with Experts Outside of the Study

We consulted with experts to complement the knowledge and experience of the team (Table A.2). Consultants included researchers with expertise in competencies for I/T teachers and caregivers and efforts to improve competencies of this workforce. Consultants provided input on the study's research questions, types of respondents that would be of value to the study, and the approach to data collection. Throughout the study, we will continue to work with expert consultants.

Table A.2. ITTCC expert advisors

Name	Affiliation
Claire Vallotton	Michigan State University
Kelley Perkins	ICF International, State Capacity Building Center
Sara Vecchiotti	Foundation for Child Development
Allyson Dean	ZERO TO THREE, National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning
Debi Mathias	BUILD Initiative
Maureen Sroczynski	Farley Associates, Inc.
Juan Sanchez	Florida International University
Rena Hallam	University of Delaware
Robin Hill-Dunbar	Ford Family Foundation
Sonja Howard	University of Southern Maine
Jennifer Boss	ZERO TO THREE, National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning

A9.   Tokens of Appreciation

There are no tokens of appreciation proposed for respondents in this data collection.

A10.   Privacy: Procedures to protect privacy of information, while maximizing data sharing

Personally Identifiable Information

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We will be collecting individual contact information to schedule interviews and send honorarium to participants. Information will not be maintained in a paper or electronic system from which data are actually or directly retrieved by an individual's personal identifier.

Assurances of Privacy

We will inform all respondents of all planned uses of data and that their participation is voluntary. We will also inform respondents that future reports will identify the competency framework associated with their case. At the system-level, we will tell respondents that future reports could acknowledge their agency's or organization's participation but will not attribute specific quotes or comments to them. However, due to the number of sites and information provided about their role and responsibilities it is possible they could be identified. Information about program-level respondents will be kept private (they and their agency or organization will not be acknowledged by name in future reports), and we will tell program-level respondents that their information will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. Interviews for all respondents will be recorded with the permission of the respondents, and no one besides the research team will listen to the recording. If respondents want to say anything that they prefer not to be recorded, they can ask the interviewer to pause the recorder. Recordings and interview notes will be destroyed after the study. In order to ensure respondents feel comfortable sharing information, they may be provided with the opportunity to review the report prior to release to correct any inaccuracies in the information they provided. As specified in the contract, the Contractor will comply with all Federal and Departmental regulations for private information.

Data Security and Monitoring

As specified in the contract, the Contractor 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 Safety and Monitoring Plan that assesses all protections of respondents' PII. The Contractor shall ensure that all of its employees who perform work under this contract are trained on data privacy issues and comply with the above requirements.

As specified in the contract, the Contractor shall use Federal Information Processing Standard compliant encryption (Security Requirements for Cryptographic Module, as amended) to protect all instances of respondents' PII (contact information) during storage and transmission. The Contractor shall securely generate and manage encryption keys to prevent unauthorized decryption of information in accordance with the Federal Processing Standard. The Contractor shall ensure that this standard is incorporated into the Contractor's property management or control system and establish a procedure to account for all laptop computers, desktop computers, and other mobile devices and portable media that store or process respondents' PII (contact information). Any data stored electronically will be secured in accordance with National Institute of Standards and Technology requirements and other applicable Federal and Departmental regulations. In addition, the Contractor must submit a plan for minimizing to the extent possible the inclusion of sensitive information on paper records and for the protection of any paper records, field notes, or other documents that contain respondents' PII (contact information) that ensures secure storage and limits on access.

A11.   **Sensitive Information**

No sensitive information collected.

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A12.   **Burden**

Explanation of Burden Estimates

Table A.3 provides an estimate of time burden for the data collections, broken down by instrument and respondent. These estimates are based on our experience collecting information and interviewing system-level and program-level staff. We expect the total annual burden to be 103 hours. The study team based average hourly wage estimates for deriving total annual costs on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Employment Statistics* (2020). For each instrument included in Table A.3, the team calculated the total annual cost by multiplying the annual burden hours by the average hourly wage.

The mean hourly wage of $25.96 for education administrators of preschool and child care centers or programs (occupational code 11-9031) is used for ECE program and center directors. The mean hourly wage for childcare workers (occupational code 39-9011) of $11.83 is used for both center-based teachers and FCC providers. The mean hourly wage of $53.47 for Education administrators, postsecondary (occupational code 25-9033) is used as a proxy for system-level staff. Tables from which these wages were drawn are available at the following links:

- Program director/center director: https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes119031.htm

- Center-based teachers and FCC providers: https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes399011.htm

- System-level staff: https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes119033.htm

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Table A.3. Estimated annualized cost to respondents

Instrument	No. of Respondents (total over request period)	No. of Responses per Respondent (total over request period)	Avg. Burden per Response (in hours)	Total Burden (in hours)	Annual Burden (in hours)	Average Hourly Wage Rate	Total Annual Respondent Cost
System-level screening protocol (Instrument 1)	30	1	.58	17	9	$53.47	$481.23
System-level master semistructured interview protocol (Instrument 2)	60	1	1.5	90	45	$53.47	$2,406.15
Nominations for programs protocol (Instrument 3)	15	1	.33	5	3	$53.47	$160.41
Program-level screening protocol (Instrument 4)	70	1	.58	41	21	$25.96	$545.16
Program-level master semistructured interview protocol (Instrument 5): **Directors**	20	1	1	20	10	$25.96	$259.6
Program-level master semistructured interview protocol (Instrument 5): **FCCs**	20	1	1	20	10	$11.83	$118.30
Program-level master semistructured interview protocol (Instrument 5): **Center-based teachers**	20	1	0.5	10	5	$11.83	$59.15
Total					103		$4,030.00

A13.   Costs

We propose to offer respondents at the system level and program level an honorarium to acknowledge their contribution to a timely and complete data collection. Across all system-level and program-level respondents, we expect that participating in interviews will disrupt their schedules.

At the system level, we will offer a $75 honorarium to each respondent in recognition of the time and expertise provided to the information collection. The unique perspective of each system-level respondent is critical to fully address the study's research questions; for each case, only a limited number of people at the system level are in a position to provide information about the aspects of competency framework implementation and assessment of competencies that address the study's research questions.

At the program level, we will offer a $50 honorarium to the program director for each center-based and FCC program, to use or distribute as desired. For center-based programs, we will likely require the assistance of the director in identifying appropriate respondents and scheduling and arranging to cover teachers' child care responsibilities during the interview. In FCC homes, providers tend to work longer hours than center staff and might not have the support of another adult in their setting so it will be more challenging for them to set aside the time to participate in the interviews (Moiduddin et al. 2015). At the program level, we will also offer a $20 honorarium for each center-based teacher respondent.

To develop honoraria amounts, we considered the length of the data collection activities, and the potential disruption to the schedules of the targeted respondents for participation.

A14.   Estimated Annualized Costs to the Federal Government

Table A.6. Estimated annualized costs to the federal government

Cost Category	Estimated Costs
Instrument Development and OMB Clearance	$260,964
Field Work	$314,730
Analysis	$148,825
Publications and Dissemination	$205,295
Total costs over the request period	$929,814
Annual costs	$464,907

A15.   Reasons for changes in burden

This is a new information collection request.

A16.   **Timeline**

Table A.7. ITTCC study timeline

Activity	Timing
Recruitment	
Case selection (including system-level screening)	To begin immediately after OMB's approval and extend for 3 months
System-level respondent identification and recruitment	To begin immediately after OMB's approval and extend for 6 months
Program-level respondent identification and recruitment	To begin 7 months after OMB's approval and extend for 3 months
Data collection	
System-level interviews	To begin 2 months after OMB's approval and extend for 5 months
Program-level screening and interviews	To begin 8 months after OMB's approval and extend for 5 months
Analysis	
System-level analysis and site-specific memos	To begin 8 months after OMB's approval and extend for 3 months
Program-level analysis and summary	To begin 13 months after OMB's approval and extend for 3 months
Reporting	
System-level report	To begin 12 months after OMB's approval and extend for 4 months
Program-level report	To begin 16 months after OMB's approval and extend for 4 months
Study briefs on specific topics	To begin 16 months after OMB's approval and extend 8 months

A17.   **Exceptions**

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.

Attachments

Instruments:

Instrument 1: System-level screening protocol

Instrument 2: System-level master semistructured interview protocol

Instrument 3: Nominations for programs protocol

Instrument 4: Program-level screening protocol

Instrument 5: Program-level master semistructured interview protocol

Appendices:

Appendix A: Study Research Questions

Appendix B: Case Selection Criteria

Appendix C: Study Recruitment Materials

References:

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. "Occupational Employment Statistics."
[www.bls.gov/oes/]. March 2020.

Moiduddin, Emily, Elizabeth Cavadel, Yange Xue, and Owen Schochet. "A Portrait of Early Educators in
First 5 LA's Workforce Development Programs: Their Characteristics and Views on Professional
Development." Issue brief submitted to Frist 5 LA. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research,
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