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Date: February 17, 2021

Subject: Assessing the Implementation and Cost of High Quality Early Care and Education:
Comparative Multi-Case Study (OMB#: 0970-0499)

This memo requests approval of nonsubstantive changes to the approved information collection, Assessing the Implementation and Cost of High Quality Early Care and Education: Comparative Multi-Case Study (OMB: 0970-0499).

Background

The goal of the Implementation and Cost of High Quality Early Care and Education (ECE-ICHQ) study is to create a technically sound, feasible, and useful instrument that will provide consistent and systematic measures of the implementation and costs of quality to help fill the knowledge gap about the cost of providing and improving quality in early care and education (ECE). The approved information collection is for a field test to validate the tools created under earlier information collections (same OMB number)

In October 2019, the study team began preparing for a field test of the new measures and launched the field test for three weeks in March 2020 until it needed to cease due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Beginning in March 2021, the study will conduct a feasibility study under the current approval to learn how our instruments and measures of implementation and cost are able to capture the service changes that are occurring across the child care industry due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study team consulted with external experts and OPRE gathered input from ACF program offices to guide next steps. We are planning to return to select centers from data collection conducted in 2018 (under the first approval of this control number) to understand (1) how centers' implementation of activities that support quality have changed since the COVID-19 pandemic; (2) how centers' costs of operation have changed since the COVID-19 pandemic; and (3) whether and how the implementation and cost measures we developed reflect changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We consider this a feasibility test for the field test. The information from this work will help us prepare the field test of the measures and, in the short-term, guide supports that could help the child care industry recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Overview of Requested Changes

We revised the study materials and instruments in line with the approach described above and are now requesting approval of these non-substantive changes. The table below describes the revisions we made.

Attachment or Instrument	Description of revisions
Attachment B: Advance Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will not use advance letters and emails for mass outreach in this data collection (B.1 and B.2) • The study brochure (B.3) is replaced with a flyer about the time use survey • We revised language in the frequently asked questions (B.4) in line with revisions described for Attachment C
Attachment C: Email and Letter to Selected Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised the purpose of the study and why a center should participate to reflect our goals for this data collection • Revised language to note that we are recruiting centers that participated in the previous round of data collection • Removed reference to the site visits and classroom observations, and content related to both activities; emphasizing that all data collection activities will be conducted remotely • Updated language relating to the time-use survey to match current plans for data collection (including the addition of a COVID-19 related question and removing reference to the paper version of the survey since data collection will be done remotely)
Attachment D: Implementation Interview Email	No changes
Attachment E: Cost Workbook Email	No changes
Attachment F: Time Use Survey Outreach	<p>In Attachments F.1-F.4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised language throughout the materials in line with revisions described for Attachment C • Added language about new COVID-19 time comparison items in the survey • Updated incentive language to reflect provision of an electronic gift code rather than gift card • Removed references to study brochure <p>In Attachment F.5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added general description of time-use survey • Provided clarifying example of task • Removed question about calculating hours per year • Added question clarifying timeframes discussed in the survey • Added question about the timeframe for activities that occur less frequently than weekly • Added question about incentive • Added question providing study contact information
Instrument 1: Recruitment Call Scripts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised language throughout the materials in line with revisions described for Attachment C
Instrument 2: Engagement Call Script for Centers	We made revisions to confirm a center's eligibility, confirm center characteristics, and understand operations during the

Attachment or Instrument	Description of revisions
	<p>COVID-19 pandemic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added interviewer language to indicate when the question should be phrased differently based on the information we already have on file for the center. • Removed question about how long the center has been in operation • Added questions about the center’s operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, including questions that will determine the center’s eligibility for this data collection • Added questions about changes in operations during the COVID-19 pandemic • Removed questions asking about the number of classrooms serving infants, toddlers, and preschoolers • Removed questions about days of the week, hours of operation, and months of the year the center serves children • Removed question asking whether there have been major changes to the center’s operations in the last two years
Instrument 3: Implementation Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised question wording for clarity (A5e, A5f, C9, F2, F4a, F4b, F6, M3, M4, R2a, R2b, R2c, R2d, U3, W2, X2_pe, AD9) • Revised introduction text to acknowledge that we have added questions about the COVID-10 pandemic • Revised interviewer instructions at the top of Section AF to reflect that this section is at the beginning of the protocol • Added or improved probes or definitions for questions (N2b1, U3, AA6, AD1, AD14, AE3) • Added or improved guidance for interviewer (B1a, B1b, B1d-B1h, B3, E3_1, E3_2, L1ab-L5a, M2a-M1, R2a, W2, X2_sp-X2_pe, AC2, AA11, AD4c, AD7, AD17ab) • Added, removed, or revised a response category (A5b, C8, H1a, M2a, M2, M1, M6, R2a, S2, S2b, U3, X2_sp, X2_qi, X2_pe, X6, Z3, AA2, AA6, AD1, AD4ab, AD10ab, AD17ab, AD24ab, AD31ab, AE3) • Added questions focused on understanding the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (AF1, AF2, AF3, AF5, A5g, L6, L7, M5c, M7, M8, M9, S2c, S7, AC7, AA3a, AA6a, AE4, AE5) • Revised question to support alignment between implementation interview protocol, time use survey, and cost collection (A5a, A5b, A5c, A5d, A5e, A5f, S2, S2b, T2_1, T6, AA2, AA5, AA6, AE1, AE2) • Changed question order (D1, D2) • Removed lower priority questions to maintain level of burden (A6, E4_1, E4_2, G1, H2, K4, J10, N4a, R2, T2_2, T4, U1, Y2, AA8) • Revised response codes to use “99” for “Other (specify)” responses (throughout)

Attachment or Instrument	Description of revisions
Instrument 4: Cost Workbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added new worksheet with table to capture resources required to be prepared to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic (B1) • Updated or added reporting period and/or removed references to year or fiscal year for reporting period (A7, E1, F6, H2a; Worksheet G instructions; Worksheet K instructions) • Added new question and dropdowns to capture changes in resource use during the COVID-19 pandemic (I1, D1, E2, F7, G1, H2b, H3b) • Added new open-ended question on how expenditures changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic (C4, D3, E4, F9, G8, H6, I4, J7) • Revised questions on the age of the children teachers work with and added question on whether teachers work with school-aged children (C1) • Added labels to age ranges of children—infants, toddlers, preschoolers, school-age (C1, K2, K3, K4)
Instrument 5: Time Use Survey Roster	Removed a reference to collecting phone number and changed letter case to match other materials
Instrument 6: Time Use Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added information describing the new items in the introduction text • Added questions on if they were working at the center and their role during Oct. 2017-May 2018 and June 2018-March 2020 (A1e-f) • Added question about if care was given in person or virtually in past month (A1d) • Added question on if number of hours worked per week changed after the COVID-19 pandemic (A2a) • Updated language asking about a “typical work week” to asks about a “typical work week over the past month” (throughout) • Added clarification from FAQ: “Please only count the hours for which you are paid to work, regardless of where you do the work.” (A4) • Added items to compare a typical work week over the past month to a typical work week before COVID-19 (A4a-j) • Added item about time spent on “COVID-19 health and safety protocols” (A4k) • Updated language asking about activities “in the past year” to “since September 2020” (throughout) • Added clarification from FAQ: “Please only count the hours for which you are paid to work, regardless of where you do the work.” (A5) • Added items to compare activities “from September 2020 to March 2021” to “from September 2019 to March 2020”

Attachment or Instrument	Description of revisions
	<p>(A5a-j)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Added item about time spent on “Planning or coordinating COVID-19 health and safety protocols” (A5k)• Removed items asking about pursuing specific degrees or credentials (B1-B1.c)• Added language about where we will send the electronic gift card and provide information on how to contact us for changes. (at end)
Instrument 7: Classroom Roster for Observations	No changes; we will not use this instrument in this data collection