

# **Variations in Implementation of Quality Interventions**

**OMB Information Collection Request  
0970 - 0508**

## **Supporting Statement Part A**

**April 2021**

Submitted By:  
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation  
Administration for Children and Families  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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**Alternative Supporting Statement for Information Collections Designed for  
Research, Public Health Surveillance, and Program Evaluation Purposes**

## **Part A**

### **Executive Summary**

- **Type of Request:** This Information Collection Request is for an extension with changes. We are requesting 3 years of approval.
- **Progress to Date:** In February 2017, the Variations in Implementation of Quality Interventions (VIQI): Examining the Quality-Child Outcomes Relationship in Child Care and Early Education Project received approval under the Generic for Pretesting Activities (OMB #0970-0356) to collect information on existing services and populations served from staff responsible for Head Start and child care programs to better understand the landscape of early care and education programs and to aid in the refinement of the study design. The project subsequently received approval for a pilot study, impact study, and process study in May 2018 (OMB #0970-0508) and conducted a year-long pilot study in 2018-2019. Lessons learned from the pilot have informed the study design and updates to data collection instruments and installation activities focused on teacher professional development.

In September 2019, the study team began landscaping and recruitment activities for the Impact Evaluation and Process Study. However, in March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the closure of many businesses and organizations, including Head Start and community-based child care centers, which are the target of these landscaping and recruitment activities. In light of this, the study team decided to postpone the Impact Evaluation and Process Study to the 2021-2022 school year.

- **Timeline:** The revised plan for the Impact Evaluation and Process Study due to the COVID-19 pandemic requires adjusting the timeline for data collection activities planned by a full year.
- **Summary of changes requested:** The following changes are being requested:
  - A 3-year extension to complete data collection;
  - Updated burden estimates to accommodate a different sample size of centers, administrators, teachers, and coaches in order to achieve sufficient sample while centers are operating at reduced capacity due to COVID-19;
  - Revised data collection instruments and activities for the impact evaluation and process study in line with lessons learned during the pilot study;
  - Addition of a second timepoint of data collection for the teacher reports to questions about children, if COVID-19 precludes in-person data collection;
  - Addition of one new instrument to collect parent report of children's skills and behaviors, if COVID-19 precludes in-person data collection; and
  - Addition of one new instrument in anticipation of COVID-19 necessitating further information gathering to contextualize findings from the impact evaluation and process study.

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

- **Time Sensitivity:** Due to the timing of the 2021-2022 school year starting in August 2021 in some metropolitan areas, the approval is time sensitive.

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### **A1. Necessity for Collection**

The early childhood education (ECE) literature has identified several basic dimensions of classroom quality – such as structural, process (which we refer to as “interactional” henceforth) and instructional quality – that are hypothesized to promote child outcomes. Nonexperimental evidence portrays an intriguing pattern of correlational findings suggesting that quality may need to reach certain levels before effects on child outcomes become evident and that different dimensions of quality may interact with each other in synergistic ways to affect child outcomes. But, existing evidence has not pinpointed the exact levels that are consistently linked with child outcomes. Further, there is relatively little causal evidence showing that efforts to strengthen ECE quality will yield improvements in child outcomes. Without such rigorous evidence, it is difficult to draw policy and practice implications.

The field needs a stronger, causal evidence base that provides a better understanding of the quality-child outcomes relationship, the dimensions of quality that are most related to child outcomes, and the program and classroom factors that aid delivery of quality teaching and caregiving in ECE settings. VIQI aims to fill these gaps in the ECE literature. Primary data collection of implementation, classroom quality, child outcome measures, and drivers of implementation and classroom quality is needed, as no existing data sources reliably and uniformly capture these constructs.

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) launched the Variations in Implementation of Quality Interventions (VIQI): Examining the Quality-Child Outcomes Relationship in Child Care and Early Education Project in 2016. VIQI is a research study sponsored by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) and conducted through a contract with MDRC and its subcontractors, Abt Associates, RTI International, University of Virginia, and MEF Associates. 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 the VIQI project is to provide causal evidence on the quality-child outcomes relationship, the dimensions of quality that are most related to child outcomes, and the program and classroom factors that aid delivery of quality teaching and caregiving in ECE settings. To do so, the study employs a rigorous experimental study design testing two promising interventions that consist of curricular and professional development supports and target different dimensions of classroom quality to build evidence about the effectiveness of the interventions and investigate the relationship between classroom quality (and its dimensions) and children’s outcomes in mixed-aged ECE classrooms that serve both three- and four-year-old children.

The information collected will be published in a final report available to researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. The information may be used to better understand the types of interventions that can improve preschool classroom quality in Head Start and community-based programs and the quality-outcomes relationship. 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-

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maker, and is not expected to meet the threshold of influential or highly influential scientific information.

### *Research Questions or Tests*

The impact evaluation and process study of the VIQI project aims to address the following research questions:

#### Impact Evaluation Research Questions

- What are the effects of the interventions on different dimensions of quality, teacher, and child outcomes? For whom and under what circumstances are the interventions more or less effective?
- What are the causal effects of different dimensions of quality on children's outcomes?
- Are there thresholds in the effects of quality on child outcomes?
- Do the effects of quality on child outcomes differ, depending on child, staff and center characteristics, including centers that vary in their initial levels of quality?

#### Process Study Research Questions

- What are the characteristics of the participants at the center, staff, and child levels in the Impact Evaluation? Which of these characteristics are drivers of fidelity of implementation? How do these drivers relate with each other?
- What are the implementation systems (e.g., professional development, training, coaching, assessments) that support the delivery of the interventions in classrooms? How much variation is there in participation of these supports? What drivers seem to support or inhibit participation?
- To what degree are the interventions delivered in the classrooms as intended? How much variation is there in fidelity of implementation of the interventions? What drivers seem to facilitate or inhibit successful implementation and fidelity to the intended intervention model(s)?
- What is the relative treatment contrast achieved in teacher practices targeted by the intervention(s)?

### *Study Design*

VIQI is a three-group randomized controlled study where ECE centers are randomly assigned to one of two intervention conditions or a business-as-usual control condition. Intervention 1 takes a whole-child, global approach and targets structural and interactional quality, and Intervention 2 takes an integrated, domain-specific approach with scope and sequence and targets instructional quality. See sections B1 and B6 in Supporting Statement B for more details.

A conceptual framework (See Appendix A: Conceptual Framework) underlies the VIQI study design, highlighting (from left to right): there are varied setting, center, classroom and teacher characteristics that drive or influence not only how curricula and professional development supports are implemented but also how quality might affect child outcomes. We expect that implementation of these two interventions primarily will improve the targeted dimension of quality (bold line from an intervention to a quality dimension) and, in turn, will lead to improvements in children's developmental outcomes. In line with this framework, data collection instruments aim to collect data on: implementation drivers and

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inputs, fidelity of implementation, classroom quality, and child outcomes. With the exception of information on fidelity of implementation, which will be collected throughout the school year, all other data collection instruments will be collected at baseline (fall) and follow-up (spring). Data collection protocols are detailed in Table A2.1. For a description of changes in data collection protocols since our prior OMB approval, see Table B3.2 in Supporting Statement B.

### A2.1 Data Collection Protocols

| <i>Data Collection Activity</i>          | <i>Instruments</i>   | <i>Respondent, Content, Purpose of Collection</i>  | <i>Mode, Duration, and OMB approval status</i>   |
|--|--|--|--|
| Screening and Recruitment of ECE Centers | Landscaping protocol with stakeholder Agencies<br><br>Screening protocol for phone calls<br><br>Protocol for follow-up calls/in-person visits for screening and recruitment activities | <b>Respondents:</b> Head Start grantee and community-based child care agency staff; Head Start and community-based child care center staff<br><br><b>Content:</b> Program, center, classroom characteristics; changes in programming due to COVID-19<br><br><b>Purpose:</b> Assess eligibility of localities, programs, centers for inclusion in study | <b>Mode:</b> Phone or video conference calls, in -person if feasible<br><br><b>Duration:</b> 1.2 – 2 hours<br><br><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> No changes since previous approval |
| Baseline data collection                 | Baseline administrator survey  | <b>Respondents:</b> Center administrators<br><br><b>Content:</b> Demographics, background, characteristics of centers<br><br><b>Purpose:</b> Capture implementation drivers, influences on intervention impacts; describe sample   | <b>Mode:</b> web-based, paper-pencil<br><br><b>Duration:</b> 36 minutes<br><br><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> Some changes since previous approval                                  |
| Baseline data collection                 | Baseline teacher/ assistant teacher survey   | <b>Respondents:</b> Teachers<br><br><b>Content:</b> Demographics, background characteristics of teachers, classroom instruction<br><br><b>Purpose:</b> Capture implementation drivers, influences on intervention impacts; describe sample   | <b>Mode:</b> web-based, paper-pencil<br><br><b>Duration:</b> 36 minutes<br><br><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> Some changes since previous approval                                  |
| Baseline data collection                 | Baseline coach survey  | <b>Respondents:</b> Coaches<br><br><b>Content:</b> Demographics, background characteristics of coaches<br><br><b>Purpose:</b> Capture implementation drivers   | <b>Mode:</b> web-based, paper-pencil<br><br><b>Duration:</b> 36minutes<br><br><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> Some changes since previous approval                                   |
| Baseline data collection                 | Baseline classroom observation protocol (teacher   | <b>Respondents:</b> Teachers   | <b>Mode:</b> verbal questions  |

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| <i>Data Collection Activity</i> | <i>Instruments</i>  | <i>Respondent, Content, Purpose of Collection</i>  | <i>Mode, Duration, and OMB approval status</i>   |
|---------------------------------|---|--|--|
|                                 | burden)   | <p><b>Content:</b> Staffing, curricula used, how typical day was; classroom quality dimensions</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> Capture initial levels of quality and background information about observation day</p>                                   | <p><b>Duration:</b> 18 minutes</p> <p><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> Some changes since previous approval</p>   |
| Baseline data collection        | Baseline parent/ guardian information form  | <p><b>Respondents:</b> Parents/guardians</p> <p><b>Content:</b> Demographics, background of children and families</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> Describe sample, capture implementation drivers, influences on intervention impacts</p>               | <p><b>Mode:</b> web-based, paper-pencil</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 6 minutes</p> <p><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> Some changes since previous approval</p>                        |
| Baseline data collection        | Baseline protocol for child assessments (child burden)  | <p><b>Respondents:</b> Children</p> <p><b>Content:</b> Children's skills</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> Examine baseline equivalence, use as covariates in impact analyses, define subgroups of interest</p>   | <p><b>Mode:</b> in-person direct assessment, remote if needed</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 30 minutes</p> <p><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> Some changes since previous approval</p> |
| Baseline data collection        | Teacher reports to questions about children in classroom (administered as part of the baseline teacher survey)  | <p><b>Respondents:</b> Teachers</p> <p><b>Content:</b> Children's skills</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> Examine baseline equivalence, use as covariates in impact analyses, define subgroups of interest</p>   | <p><b>Mode:</b> web-based, paper-pencil</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 10 minutes/child</p> <p><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> New instrument since previous approval</p>               |
| Baseline data collection        | Administrator/teacher COVID-19 supplemental survey questions (administered as part of or in addition to administrator and/or teacher survey, to contextualize findings from impact evaluation and process study due to circumstances surrounding COVID-19 at the time of data collection) | <p><b>Respondents:</b> Administrators, teachers</p> <p><b>Content:</b> Center and classroom programming, admin/ teacher function given COVID-19</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> Contextualize findings from the impact evaluation and process study</p> | <p><b>Mode:</b> web-based, paper-pencil</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 15 minutes</p> <p><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> New instrument since previous approval</p>                     |
| Baseline data collection        | Parent/guardian reports to questions about children (administered as part of the  | <p><b>Respondents:</b> Parents/guardians</p> <p><b>Content:</b> Children's skills</p>  | <p><b>Mode:</b> web-based, paper-pencil</p>  |

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| <i>Data Collection Activity</i> | <i>Instruments</i>  | <i>Respondent, Content, Purpose of Collection</i>  | <i>Mode, Duration, and OMB approval status</i>  |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|
|                                 | baseline parent/guardian information form)                | <b>Purpose:</b> Examine baseline equivalence, use as covariates in impact analyses, define subgroups of interest   | <b>Duration:</b> 6 minutes<br><br><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> New instrument since previous approval  |
| Follow-up data collection       | Follow-up administrator survey                            | <b>Respondents:</b> Administrators<br><br><b>Content:</b> Characteristics of administrators and centers<br><br><b>Purpose:</b> Capture implementation drivers, influences on intervention impacts  | <b>Mode:</b> web-based, paper-pencil<br><br><b>Duration:</b> 30 minutes<br><br><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> Some changes since previous approval |
| Follow-up data collection       | Follow-up teacher/ assistant teacher survey               | <b>Respondents:</b> Teachers<br><br><b>Content:</b> Characteristics of teachers and classrooms<br><br><b>Purpose:</b> Capture implementation drivers, influences on intervention impacts   | <b>Mode:</b> web-based, paper-pencil<br><br><b>Duration:</b> 45 minutes<br><br><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> Some changes since previous approval |
| Follow-up data collection       | Follow-up coach survey                                    | <b>Respondents:</b> Coaches<br><br><b>Content:</b> characteristics of coaches<br><br><b>Purpose:</b> Capture implementation drivers  | <b>Mode:</b> web-based, paper-pencil<br><br><b>Duration:</b> 30 minutes<br><br><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> Some changes since previous approval |
| Follow-up data collection       | Follow-up classroom observation protocol (teacher burden) | <b>Respondents:</b> Teachers<br><br><b>Content:</b> Staffing, curricula used, how typical day was; classroom quality dimensions<br><br><b>Purpose:</b> examine intervention impacts on quality; understand context around classroom observations | <b>Mode:</b> verbal questions<br><br><b>Duration:</b> 18 minutes<br><br><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> Some changes since previous approval        |
| Follow-up data collection       | Follow-up protocol for child assessments (child burden)   | <b>Respondents:</b> Children<br><br><b>Content:</b> Children's skills<br><br><b>Purpose:</b> examine intervention  | <b>Mode:</b> in-person direct assessment, remote if needed<br><br><b>Duration:</b> 54 minutes   |

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| <i>Data Collection Activity</i> | <i>Instruments</i>  | <i>Respondent, Content, Purpose of Collection</i>   | <i>Mode, Duration, and OMB approval status</i>  |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
|                                 |   | impacts on child skills   | <b>OMB Approval Status:</b> Some changes since previous approval  |
| Follow-up data collection       | Teacher reports to questions about children in classroom (administered as part of the follow-up teacher survey) | <b>Respondents:</b> Teachers<br><br><b>Content:</b> Children's skills<br><br><b>Purpose:</b> examine intervention impacts on child skills   | <b>Mode:</b> web-based, paper-pencil<br><br><b>Duration:</b> 10 minutes/child<br><br><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> Some changes since previous approval |
| Follow-up data collection       | Parent/guardian reports to questions about children   | <b>Respondents:</b> Parents/guardians<br><br><b>Content:</b> Children's skills<br><br><b>Purpose:</b> examine intervention impacts on child skills  | <b>Mode:</b> web-based, paper-pencil<br><br><b>Duration:</b> 6 minutes<br><br><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> New instrument since previous approval      |
| Fidelity of Implementation      | Teacher/ assistant teacher log  | <b>Respondents:</b> Teachers<br><br><b>Content:</b> curriculum implementation<br><br><b>Purpose:</b> examine fidelity of implementation from teacher perspective                                    | <b>Mode:</b> web-based<br><br><b>Duration:</b> 15 minutes/log<br><br><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> No changes since previous approval                   |
| Fidelity of Implementation      | Coach log   | <b>Respondents:</b> Coaches<br><br><b>Content:</b> coaching and curriculum implementation by classroom on caseload<br><br><b>Purpose:</b> examine fidelity of implementation from coach perspective | <b>Mode:</b> web-based<br><br><b>Duration:</b> 15 minutes/log<br><br><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> Some changes since previous approval                 |
| Fidelity of Implementation      | Implementation fidelity observation protocol (teacher burden)   | <b>Respondents:</b> Teachers<br><br><b>Content:</b> curriculum implementation<br><br><b>Purpose:</b> examine fidelity of implementation from external   | <b>Mode:</b> verbal questions<br><br><b>Duration:</b> 18 minutes<br><br><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> No changes  |



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| <i>Data Collection Activity</i> | <i>Instruments</i>   | <i>Respondent, Content, Purpose of Collection</i>  | <i>Mode, Duration, and OMB approval status</i>  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|---|
|                                 |  | perspective  | since previous approval   |
| Fidelity of Implementation      | Interview/ Focus group protocol (administrator, teacher/ assistant teacher and coach burden) | <p><b>Respondents:</b> Administrators, teachers, coaches</p> <p><b>Content:</b> perceptions and experiences with training, coaching, curriculum</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> understand different staff experiences with the interventions</p> | <p><b>Mode:</b> phone or video conference call, in-person if feasible</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 1.5 hours</p> <p><b>OMB Approval Status:</b> No changes since previous approval</p> |

*Other Data Sources and Uses of Information*

When available, we will collect administrative data (e.g., children's attendance records) from participating centers that cannot be collected through active data collection with respondents as outlined above. This information will be used to understand the amount of curriculum dosage or exposure that children experience to inform the interpretation of impact results.

**A3. Use of Information Technology to Reduce Burden**

This study will use information technology, when possible, to minimize respondent burden and to collect data efficiently. Electronic data collection methods (e.g., emails to contact study participants, web-based survey instruments and logs) will be used to reduce burden on study participants when possible. Conducting the surveys and logs in this manner means that the respondent can answer questions on their own without coordinating with a member from the study team to complete the instrument. It also allows for efficient administration of a survey/log by using skip logic to quickly move to the next appropriate question, depending upon a respondent's previous answer. We also anticipate using mixed-mode delivery systems for surveys to allow for ease of completion by permitting respondents to complete the surveys using a paper and pencil format or a web-based system. In both cases, the surveys will be self-administered by the participant.

Electronic informed consent forms (ICFs) will be available to reduce burden on center staff in the distribution and collection of completed ICFs for teachers and parents/guardians. If email addresses are available, participants will receive an email with a link to an electronic version of the consent form. Otherwise, participants will receive cover letters with a link to an electronic version of the consent form that explains the research study and voluntary nature of participation. Participants will then be able to sign the ICF electronically indicating whether they agree to participate in the study.

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

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In the design of the planned data collection instruments and activities, attention has been paid to leveraging existing or administrative data sources whenever possible. However, as is often the case in ECE settings, there are limited or nonexistent administrative data sources that can reliably and consistently inform the constructs and processes of interest as delineated in the conceptual model underlying the design of the VIQI project. This is because extant data are collected at differing times of the year with methodologies and approaches that vary across states, localities, programs, and centers, making it difficult to collect consistent information across the pooled group of participating centers to address the guiding questions of the VIQI project. As such, we do not make many assumptions about our ability to fruitfully gather crucial information to successfully achieve the research aims and goals of the VIQI project without unique data collection activities.

Further, much of the information collected about centers during the recruitment process is informative for the process study. Our team has worked together to design protocols that will be complementary and informative for both recruitment efforts and the process study, which reduces the degree to which center staff are asked the same or very similar questions at both recruitment and the baseline data collection. We intend to streamline data collection from center staff to reduce duplicity across multiple data collection activities. For instance, if information about center or staff characteristics is collected during recruitment activities, that information will be fed into other protocols such as the baseline surveys or center administrator interviews. That way the same information will not be requested multiple times assuming the information remains the same.

### **A5. Impact on Small Businesses**

We expect some of the participating programs will be independent, small organizations. To minimize the burden of the study on staff, the study team will provide resources for each center to facilitate the designation of liaisons for the study. The study team also will work in partnership with the center staff to identify the best opportunities for administering and collecting information with the data collection instruments to minimize interruption of their routine programming by scheduling and planning visits and activities in conjunction with center leadership.

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

The planned data collection activities aim to gather information only as frequently as needed to achieve the aims of the study, typically being collected once or twice during the course of the study. Eliminating any of the proposed data collection items would compromise our ability to address key research questions. For instance, coach and teacher logs will be collected on an ongoing basis (up to weekly for teachers and after every coaching session for coaches) to monitor implementation of the interventions and to inform the process study. More frequent collection of logs allows for the strongest intervention possible because the real-time data can inform technical assistance, training, and coaching efforts. In addition, the inclusion of several data points allows for a more robust study of implementation, indicating how implementation changed over time as a result of technical assistance, training, coaching

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or environmental factors. Providing this level of detail increases the value added of the VIQI project to the ECE field.

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

**A8. 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 this information collection activity. This notice was published on January 6, 2021, Volume 86, Number 3, page 543, and provided a sixty-day period for public comment. During the notice and comment period, no comments were received.

*Consultation with Experts Outside of the Study*

An expert advisory panel has provided foundational guidance that informed the study design and analysis as well as data collection instruments, particularly the classroom observation tools and child assessments. Members of the expert panel are listed in Table A8.1

**Table A8.1 VIQI Expert Panel**

| <b>Name</b>     | <b>Affiliation</b>  |
|-----------------|---|
| Sandra Barrueco | Professor, Catholic University                                    |
| Karen Bierman   | Professor, Pennsylvania State University                          |
| Howard Bloom    | Consultant, MDRC  |
| Iheoma Iruka    | Professor, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill            |
| Luke Miratrix   | Associate Professor, Harvard University                           |
| Martha Zaslow   | Interim Executive Director, SRCD and Senior Scholar, Child Trends |

**A9. Tokens of Appreciation**

Participation in VIQI will place some burden on families and children. To offset this, we are requesting nominal monetary tokens of appreciation for parents/guardians and children. For parents/guardians, we propose a \$10 token of appreciation to be included with the parent/guardian baseline information form in Fall 2021 and a \$10 token of appreciation for completing the report to questions about their child in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022. In addition, we propose offering children stickers for attempting the child assessment in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022. Table A9.1 provides an overview of the proposed tokens of appreciation for data collection.

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**Table A9.1. Tokens of Appreciation by Research Activity**

| <b>Research Activity</b>                            | <b>Avg. Length Per Instrument</b> | <b>Amount</b> | <b>Timing</b>          |
|---|-----------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Baseline Parent/Guardian Information Form           | 6 min                             | \$10          | Fall 2021              |
| Parent/Guardian Reports to Questions about Children | 6 min                             | \$10          | Fall 2021, Spring 2022 |
| Baseline Protocol for Child Assessments             | 30 min                            | Stickers      | Fall 2021              |
| Follow-up Protocol for Child Assessments            | 54 min                            | Stickers      | Spring 2022            |

The goal of these data collections is to capture information regarding the skills and background information on as many children as possible to ensure that participating children and their families are representative of the children being served in participating centers. Thus, given the complex study design, high levels of participation among families and children in study activities are essential to maintain statistical power to detect meaningful effects when measuring participant outcomes. In addition, the integrity of the study's estimates requires maintaining similar response rates for the randomly assigned intervention and control groups and across demographic groups of interest to the study. Maintaining high response rates will be especially difficult in VIQI because a focus of this study is on children from families with low incomes and minority populations.

In the VIQI pilot, we did not provide a token of appreciation to families, and the response rate was much lower than the rate that will needed to have adequate statistical power in the impact evaluation. MDRC and its subcontractors engaged many of the same centers and localities from the VIQI Pilot in the ExCEL Quality Study, funded by Arnold Ventures, to provide a second year of implementation in the 2019-2020 school year. In that study, families received \$10 for completing the baseline parent/guardian information form, which substantially increased the response rates over those seen in the VIQI pilot, from 42% in the VIQI pilot to 68% without differential response across research conditions and demographic characteristics of the sample in ExCEL Quality.

Other similar studies of low-income families and children have successfully used tokens of appreciation to improve survey response. For example, FACES (OMB #0970-0151), which was also conducted in Head Start centers, included \$35 tokens of appreciation for 30-minute parent/guardian baseline information forms and 30-minute parent reports to questions about their children to participating families in the 2006, 2009, and 2019 cohorts. In FACES 2014-2018, parent tokens of appreciation were reduced to \$15 as a base (with add-ons for a potential of \$25 total), which resulted in a large decrease in response rates (from 93.1% to 77.5%) and differential response rates among different demographic groups. As a result, OMB approved an increase back to \$35 for FACES 2019. Given that the proposed instruments for the VIQI impact evaluation and process study are similar in nature, but shorter, a proportionately smaller token of appreciation is proposed. Similarly, the Project LAUNCH Cross-Site Evaluation (OMB #0970-0373) had a sample that included early care and education and preschool settings, and did not offer an tokens of appreciation to parents of young children completing a 30-minute, web-based survey, finding

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that early respondents were not representative of their communities. Minorities, individuals with lower incomes and those who worked part-time or were unemployed were underrepresented. Following OMB approval of a \$25 post-pay tokens of appreciation after data collection had started, completion rates and representativeness both improved (LaFauve et al., 2018).

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

#### *Personally Identifiable Information*

Personally identifiable information (PII) will be collected, such as contact information (e.g., name, address, phone numbers, e-mail address) for administrators, teachers, coaches, and parents and children (and in the case of the parent consent, additional contacts that could help the study team find the child/family). The collection of personal identifiers is necessary for participant tracking for follow-up surveys and to allow us to access and match administrative records data.

Information will not be maintained in a paper or electronic system from which data are actually or directly retrieved by an individuals' personal identifier.

#### *Assurances of Privacy*

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 (including any audio recording of interviews/focus groups) will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. See Section B4 in Supporting Statement B for more information on how this information will be conveyed. As specified in the contract, the Contractor will comply with all Federal and Departmental regulations for private information.

Due to the sensitive nature of this research (see A.11 for more information), the evaluation will obtain a Certificate of Confidentiality. The study team has been approved for this Certificate and it is attached in Appendix B. The Certificate of Confidentiality helps to assure participants that their information will be kept private to the fullest extent permitted by law. The study team has also received IRB approval for this study.

#### *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, subcontractors (at all tiers), and

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employees of each subcontractor, who perform work under this contract/subcontract, are trained on data privacy issues and comply with the above requirements.

As specified in the evaluator's contract, the Contractor shall use Federal Information Processing Standard compliant encryption (Security Requirements for Cryptographic Module, as amended) to protect all instances of sensitive 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/control system; establish a procedure to account for all laptop computers, desktop computers, and other mobile devices and portable media that store or process sensitive information. Any data stored electronically will be secured in accordance with the most current National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) 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 sensitive or PII that ensures secure storage and limits on access.

### **A11. Sensitive Information<sup>1</sup>**

Our baseline and follow-up surveys of teachers and administrators will contain questions on some sensitive topics, like salary, feelings about the workplace, and work-related stress and burnout. These questions will be answered in a self-administered format, which should minimize discomfort. The introductions to each survey will state that their participation is voluntary, they may skip any questions they do not wish to answer, their answers will be protected to the extent permitted by law, and that their responses will not affect their job. The sensitive questions included in the surveys are necessary for understanding the variability in center and staff characteristics that potentially influence implementation and quality levels achieved in the course of the study. The organizational climate and staff stress and burnout have been linked to lower levels of implementation and classroom quality in previous empirical studies (Han & Weiss, 2005) and, therefore, are critical constructs to measure as implementation drivers.

### **A12. Burden**

#### *Explanation of Burden Estimates*

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<sup>1</sup> Examples of sensitive topics include (but not limited to): social security number; sex behavior and attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close relationships, e.g., family, pupil-teacher, employee-supervisor; mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to respondents; religion and indicators of religion; community activities which indicate political affiliation and attitudes; legally recognized privileged and analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians and ministers; records describing how an individual exercises rights guaranteed by the First Amendment; receipt of economic assistance from the government (e.g., unemployment or WIC or SNAP); immigration/citizenship status.

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The estimated annual burden for respondents is shown in Table A12.1. We estimated burden for the landscaping and screening instruments by considering the number and type of questions in the protocol and by including some time to allow for respondents to ask questions. We estimated burden for all other protocols by considering the number and type of questions in the protocols. Estimates for the parent and teacher baseline instruments include time for respondents to read through the informed consent form. The estimated annual burden is 7,850 hours.

### *Estimated Annualized Cost to Respondents*

The estimated annual cost for respondents is shown in Exhibit A12.1. The source for the mean hourly wage information for each respondent type is Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2019.

- For administrators and coaches, the mean hourly wage of \$25.81 was used, based on the wage for education and childcare administrators in preschool and child care centers and programs (11-9031 Education and Childcare Administrators, Preschool and Daycare; <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes119031.htm>).
- For teachers/assistant teachers, we averaged the mean hourly wage for preschool teachers (\$16.66) and childcare workers (\$12.27), which yielded an estimated teacher/assistant teacher hourly wage of \$14.47 (25-2011 Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education; <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes252011.htm> and 39-9011 Childcare Workers; <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes399011.htm>). Further, this hourly wage has been adjusted for overtime pay 1.5 times the estimated average teacher/assistant teacher hourly wage to account for the fact that we anticipate teachers and assistant teachers to complete the data collection instruments in hours that fall outside of their typical, standard work hours, assuming that they are working full-time schedules. This brings the estimated average overtime teacher/assistant teacher hourly wage to be \$21.71/hour, which is the estimate that is used to determine the estimated pay for time required to complete each instrument.
- The federal minimum wage was used to calculate the hourly wage for parents/guardians.

The total estimated annual cost amount is \$124,974.30.

**Table A12.1. Annual Burden and Cost Estimates**

| 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 |
|---|--|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Instruments for Screening and Recruitment of ECE Centers for the Impact Evaluation and Process Study                          |  |   |                                     |                         |                          |                          |                              |
| Landscaping protocol with stakeholder agencies (staff burden in Head Start (HS) <u>grantee</u> and community-based child care | 120  | 1   | 1.50                                | 180                     | 60                       | \$25.81                  | \$1,548.60                   |

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|--|-------|---|-----|-------|-----|---------|------------|
| agencies)  |       |   |     |       |     |         |            |
| Screening protocol for phone calls (staff burden in HS grantees and community-based child care agencies)   | 132   | 1 | 2.0 | 264   | 88  | \$25.81 | \$2,271.28 |
| Screening protocol for phone calls (HS and community-based child care center staff burden)   | 336   | 1 | 1.2 | 403   | 134 | \$25.81 | \$3,458.54 |
| Protocol for follow-up calls/in-person visits for screening and recruitment activities (staff burden in HS grantees and community-based child care agencies) | 610   | 1 | 1.5 | 915   | 305 | \$25.81 | \$7,872.05 |
| Protocol for follow-up calls/in-person visits for screening and recruitment activities (HS and community-based child care center staff burden)               | 950   | 1 | 1.2 | 1140  | 380 | \$25.81 | \$9,807.80 |
| Baseline Instruments for the Impact Evaluation and Process Study   |       |   |     |       |     |         |            |
| Baseline administrator survey  | 175   | 1 | 0.6 | 105   | 35  | \$25.81 | 903.35     |
| Baseline teacher/assistant teacher survey  | 1,050 | 1 | 0.6 | 630   | 210 | \$21.71 | \$4,559.10 |
| Baseline coach survey  | 59    | 1 | 0.6 | 35    | 12  | \$25.81 | 309.72     |
| Baseline classroom observation protocol  | 420   | 1 | 0.3 | 126   | 42  | \$21.71 | \$911.82   |
| Baseline parent/guardian information form  | 6,300 | 1 | 0.1 | 630   | 210 | \$7.25  | \$1,522.50 |
| Baseline   | 4,200 | 1 | 0.5 | 2,100 | 700 | --      |            |



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|--|-------|-----|------|--------|-------|----------|--------------|
| protocol for child assessments                                     |       |     |      |        |       |          |              |
| Baseline teacher reports to questions about children in classroom  | 420   | 10  | 0.17 | 714    | 238   | \$21.71  | \$5,166.98   |
| Administrator/teacher COVID-19 supplemental survey questions       | 980   | 1   | 0.25 | 245    | 82    | \$20.14  | \$1,651.48   |
| Parent/guardian reports to questions about children                | 6,300 | 1   | 0.1  | 630    | 210   | \$7.25   | \$1,522.50   |
| Follow-Up Instruments for Impact Evaluation and Process Study      |       |     |      |        |       |          |              |
| Follow-up administrator survey                                     | 140   | 1   | 0.5  | 70     | 23    | \$25.81  | \$593.63     |
| Follow-up teacher/assistant teacher survey                         | 840   | 1   | 0.75 | 630    | 210   | \$21.71  | \$4,559.10   |
| Follow-up coach survey   | 47    | 1   | 0.5  | 24     | 8     | \$25.81  | \$206.48     |
| Follow-up classroom observation protocol                           | 420   | 3   | 0.3  | 378    | 126   | \$21.71  | \$2,735.46   |
| Follow-up protocol for child assessments                           | 4,200 | 1   | 0.9  | 3,780  | 1,260 | --       |              |
| Follow-up teacher reports to questions about children in classroom | 420   | 10  | 0.17 | 714    | 238   | \$21.71  | \$5,166.98   |
| Parent/guardian reports to questions about children                | 6300  | 1   | 0.1  | 630    | 210   | \$7.25   | \$1,522.50   |
| Fidelity of Implementation Instruments for the Process Study       |       |     |      |        |       |          |              |
| Teacher/assistant teacher log                                      | 840   | 36  | 0.25 | 7,560  | 2,520 | \$21.71  | \$54,709.20  |
| Coach log  | 47    | 108 | 0.25 | 1,269  | 423   | \$25.81  | \$10,917.63  |
| Implementation fidelity observation protocol                       | 80    | 1   | 0.3  | 24     | 8     | \$21.71  | \$173.68     |
| Interview/Focus group protocol                                     | 236   | 1   | 1.5  | 354    | 118   | \$24.44* | \$2,883.92   |
| Total  |       |     |      | 23,550 | 7,850 |          | \$124,974.30 |

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\*Note: Interview/focus group will be conducted with administrators, teachers, and coaches and therefore the estimated average hourly wage rate is averaged across those 3 estimated wage categories.

### A13. Costs

OMB previously approved honoraria for administrators and teachers for the VIQI project under our approved package (OMB #0970-0508). As in our prior approval, we will provide payments to centers based on the amount of time that staff are expected to coordinate schedules with the research team, support and facilitate data collection activities, and complete research activities, and estimated wages for staff at different levels.

The honoraria under our approved package (OMB #0970-0508) have been updated to reflect increases in the estimated wages of program administrators and teachers since 2016. Using estimates from the 2019 Bureau of Labor Statistics National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates, the program or center administrator's wage is \$25.81/hour, so we are requesting increases to honoraria in accordance with that amount. As in our prior approval, we estimate that one 8-hour day a month for 10 months, for a total of 10 days (estimated to be about \$2,065/administrator) will be required to coordinate with the research team.

Up to an additional \$1,020 per center would be paid in installments upon completion of certain teacher research activities as denoted in Table A13.1. As in our prior approval, we estimate that a maximum of 7.33 hours per lead teacher and 4 hours per assistant teacher will be required to complete research activities. All of the proposed amounts are either the same as those that were previously approved or based on the same formulas for new instruments. The total amount provided to any given center would be adjusted depending on which teacher research activities are completed and the total number of teachers that completed them. Centers can decide how to distribute these honoraria.

**Table A13.1. Honoraria Provided to Respondents**

| Research Activity  | Length                 | Honorarium Amount                          | Timing    | Estimated Pay for Time Required to Complete Instrument (Based on an Estimated Hourly Wage of \$21.71/hour) | Previously Approved? |
|--|------------------------|--|-----------|--|----------------------|
| Baseline Teacher/ Assistant Teacher Survey                             | 30 min                 | \$10/survey                                | Fall 2021 | \$10.86/survey   | Yes                  |
| Baseline Lead teacher reports to questions about children in classroom | 100 min (10 min/child) | \$4/child (est. 10 children per classroom) | Fall 2021 | \$3.62/child   | No (new instrument)  |

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|--|------------------------|--|--|----------------|---------------------|
| Teacher/Assistant Teacher COVID-19 Supplemental Survey Questions | 15 min                 | \$5/survey                                 | Fall 2021 or Winter 2021/2022, depending on circumstances surrounding COVID-19 | \$5.43/survey  | No (new instrument) |
| Teacher/Assistant Teacher log                                    | 15 min per log         | \$10/month                                 | Monthly (assumed to be collected for 10 months)                                | \$10.86/month  | Yes                 |
| Follow-up Teacher/Assistant Teacher Survey                       | 45 min                 | \$15/survey                                | Spring 2022  | \$16.28/survey | Yes                 |
| Lead teacher reports to questions about children in classroom    | 100 min (10 min/child) | \$4/child (est. 10 children per classroom) | Spring 2022  | \$36.18        | Yes                 |

**A14. Estimated Annualized Costs to the Federal Government**

| <b>Cost Category</b>                       | <b>Estimated Costs</b> |
|--|------------------------|
| Instrument Development and OMB Clearance   | \$200,000              |
| Field Work                                 | \$16,000,000           |
| Analysis                                   | \$600,000              |
| Publications/Dissemination                 | \$900,000              |
| <b>Total costs over the request period</b> | <b>\$17,700,000</b>    |
| <b>Annual costs</b>                        | <b>\$5,900,000</b>     |

**A15. Reasons for changes in burden**

The following are key reasons for program changes in burden. These adjustments are being made based upon insights from the pilot study, as well as due to COVID-19 circumstances:

- A different sample size of centers, administrators, teachers, and coaches in the impact evaluation and process study in order to achieve sufficient sample sizes of children;
- Addition of a second timepoint of data collection for the teacher reports to questions about children, if COVID-19 precludes in-person data collection;
- Addition of one new instrument to collect parent report of children's skills and behaviors, if COVID-19 precludes in-person data collection; and
- Addition of one new instrument in anticipation of COVID-19 necessitating further information gathering to contextualize findings from the impact evaluation and process study.

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**A16. Timeline**

Table A16.1 provides the anticipated time schedule for this information request. Additional time may be required, if data collection is delayed or additional cohorts of data are needed to fulfill the study aims, due to COVID-19. As such, this request is for a three-year extension.

**Exhibit A16.1 Anticipated Timeline**

| <b>Activity</b>                        | <b>Anticipated Start Date</b> | <b>Anticipated Duration after OMB approval</b> |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Baseline instruments                   | August 15, 2021               | 3 months                                       |
| Follow-up instruments                  | March 1, 2022                 | 3 months                                       |
| Fidelity of implementation instruments | August 15, 2021               | 9 months                                       |
| Conduct analyses                       | March 1, 2022                 | 9 months                                       |
| Report/brief                           | July 1, 2022                  | 12 months                                      |
| PUF/RAF                                | January 1, 2023               | 16 months                                      |

**A17. Exceptions**

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.

**Attachments**

*Appendices*

Appendix A: Conceptual Framework

Appendix B: Certificate of Confidentiality

*Instruments*

Instrument 1: Landscaping Protocol with Stakeholder Agencies and Related Materials

Instrument 2: Screening Protocol for Phone Calls and Related Materials

Instrument 3: Protocol for In-person Visits for Screening and Recruitment Activities and Related Materials

Instrument 4: Baseline Administrator Survey

Instrument 5: Baseline Teacher Survey

Instrument 6: Baseline Coach Survey

Instrument 7: Baseline Protocol for Classroom Observations

Instrument 8: Baseline Parent/Guardian Information Form

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Instrument 9: Baseline Protocol for Child Assessments  
Instrument 10: Baseline teacher reports to questions about children in classroom  
Instrument 11: Administrator/teacher COVID-19 supplemental survey questions  
Instrument 12: Parent/guardian reports to questions about children  
Instrument 13: Follow-up Administrator Survey  
Instrument 14: Follow-up Teacher Survey  
Instrument 15: Follow-up Coach Survey  
Instrument 16: Follow-up Classroom Observation Protocol  
Instrument 17: Follow-up Protocol for Child Assessments  
Instrument 18: Follow-up Teacher Reports to Questions about Children in Classroom  
Instrument 19: Teacher Log  
Instrument 20: Coach Log  
Instrument 21: Implementation Fidelity Observation Protocol  
Instrument 22: Interview/Focus Group Protocol