

# **Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships Sustainability Study**

**OMB Information Collection Request  
0970 - 0471**

## **Supporting Statement Part A**

**July 2021**

Submitted By:  
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Administration for Children and Families  
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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 (ICR) is for a reinstatement with change. We are requesting three years of approval.
- **Progress to Date:** This proposed collection of information is a follow-up to the 2016 National Descriptive Study (NDS) of Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships (OMB 0970-0471, approved December 18, 2015) that obtained information about the Early Head Start (EHS) programs, community-based child care centers, and family child care providers participating in the federal grants supporting the implementation of Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCPs). Data collection for the NDS was completed in 2017.
- **Timeline:** This proposed follow-up data collection, titled the Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships Sustainability Study, is planned to take place during the winter of 2022.
- **Summary of changes requested:** The current ICR will follow up with EHS programs and child care providers who participated in the NDS to understand whether and how partnerships have been sustained or dissolved, and which features of partnerships support or impede sustainability. We do not intend for this information to be used as the principal basis for public policy decisions.
- **Time Sensitivity:** Due to possible issues with recall and potential changes in staffing between the NDS and the current study, it will be ideal to begin data collection as soon as possible. The study team plans to begin data collection upon receiving OMB approval.

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

The Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships Sustainability Study (“the Sustainability Study”) is a follow-up study of the 2016 National Descriptive Study (NDS) of Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships (OMB 0970-0471, approved December 18, 2015) that obtained information about the Early Head Start (EHS) programs, community-based child care centers, and family child care providers participating in the federal grants supporting the implementation of Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCPs). Since the NDS, no comprehensive information is known about how the EHS-CCPs are faring or why. Filling this gap in knowledge would improve program planning, technical assistance, and future research. This information collection will help provide this information by providing nationally descriptive, longitudinal data on partnerships between EHS programs and child care providers. No legal or administrative requirements necessitate this collection. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is undertaking the collection at the discretion of the agency.

### **A2. Purpose**

#### *Purpose and Use*

The Sustainability Study will involve a follow-up study with respondents from the NDS to understand whether and how partnerships have been sustained and which features of partnerships support sustainability. Through surveys with EHS program directors as well as surveys and interviews with child care providers in partnerships that have been sustained (herein, sustained partnership providers) and child care providers in partnerships that have been dissolved (herein, dissolved partnership providers), the study will examine how partnerships from the NDS are faring and the features of current partnerships (including those that are new since the NDS was fielded, and regardless of whether they are funded through an EHS-CCP grant). Information collected can deepen understanding of barriers to sustaining the partnerships, as well as practices common among partnerships that are sustained. In turn, this can inform policy to better support the partnerships, as well as training and technical assistance for EHS programs and child care providers that partner with them. Secondary data users will be able to use archived data to explore their own research questions about this important investment in the supply and quality of infant and toddler care. 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 it is not expected to meet the threshold of influential or highly influential scientific information.

#### *Research Questions or Tests*

The study will address the following five research questions:

1. **Are partnerships sustained?** How and why do partnerships change over time?
2. **After partnerships end, what are the characteristics of the child care providers and the services they offer?**
3. **For partnerships that are sustained, how do features of the partnerships change over time?**
4. **What factors support or impede the partnerships’ sustainability?** Are there differences between sustained and dissolved partnerships in program structures/characteristics, initial partnership quality, or other features?
5. **Do any of the factors associated with Research Questions 1–4 differ between partnerships that are center based child care providers and those that are family child care providers?**

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*Study Design*

The study team expects there are many factors and features of partnerships that impact their sustainability. To gain an understanding of what has supported and impeded the sustainability of the partnerships, the study team proposes a longitudinal, descriptive study of the EHS-CCP programs and providers from the NDS. The study will utilize quantitative and qualitative data collection strategies: (1) quantitative data in the form of web-based surveys of EHS program directors and sustained and dissolved partnership providers, and (2) qualitative data in the form of semi-structured interviews to provide more in-depth information from purposively selected sustained and dissolved partnership providers.

The Sustainability Study will involve one round of data collection to begin following OMB approval. Table A.1 summarizes the data collection instruments.

**Table A.1. Summary of data collection activities**

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Mode and duration</b>
Early Head Start Program Director Survey	Directors of EHS programs receiving EHS-CCP grants awarded in 2015	We will ask program directors about their agency; the status of partnerships that were active in 2016 (at the time of the NDS) as well as any partnerships formed since this period; factors that contributed to the sustainment or dissolution of partnerships; and the activities programs and providers engage in to deliver services to children and families.	To learn about the status of partnerships, the activities programs and providers engaged in as part of those partnerships, and the factors that may contribute to their sustainability or dissolution. The survey will also help identify respondents for the semi-structured interviews.	<b>Mode:</b> web-based with telephone option  <b>Duration:</b> 35 minutes
Sustained Partnership Provider Survey	Directors/ managers of providers who were selected to participate in the NDS and are still partnering with the program	We will ask directors/managers about their child care business; the factors that have helped sustain their partnership; the funding they receive through the partnership; and partnership activities, including those to support the delivery and quality of services provided to children and families.	To learn about the activities programs and providers engage in as part of the partnerships, and the factors that may contribute to or hinder their sustainability. The survey will also help identify respondents for the semi-structured interviews.	<b>Mode:</b> web-based with telephone option  <b>Duration:</b> 30 minutes
Dissolved Partnership Provider Survey	Directors/ managers of providers who were	We will ask directors/managers about their child care	To learn about the activities programs and providers	<b>Mode:</b> web-based with telephone option

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	selected to participate in the NDS and whose partnerships have dissolved	business; the factors that influenced the dissolution of their partnership; and the activities they engage in to support the quality of services provided to children and families.	engaged in as part of the partnerships, and the factors that may contribute to or hinder their sustainability. The survey will also help identify respondents for the semi-structured interviews.	<b>Duration:</b> 30 minutes
Dissolved Partnership Provider Semi-structured Interview Protocol	Subsample of directors/ managers of providers who completed the dissolved partnership provider survey	We will ask respondents to elaborate on survey responses related to the factors that may have contributed to the dissolution of the partnership and about changes in operations or services occurred after the dissolution of the partnership. We will also ask respondents questions about how their businesses were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.	The interview will provide greater detail on survey responses to help us understand the factors that contribute to dissolution of a partnership. . Additionally, the interviews will allow us to better understand providers' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.	<b>Mode:</b> semi-structured telephone interview  <b>Duration:</b> 50 minutes
Sustained Partnership Provider Semi-structured Interview Protocol	Subsample of directors/ managers of providers who completed the sustained partnership provider survey	We will ask respondents to elaborate on survey responses related to the factors that may have contributed to the sustainment of the partnership. We will also ask about partnership champions or opinion leaders, staff turnover, and periods without partnership enrollment slots. Finally, we will also ask respondents questions about how their businesses were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.	The interview will provide greater detail on survey responses to help us understand what is working well in sustained partnerships and why. Additionally, the interviews will allow us to better understand providers' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.	<b>Mode:</b> semi-structured telephone interview  <b>Duration:</b> 50 minutes

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### *Other Data Sources and Uses of Information*

During data analysis, we will incorporate program characteristics from the most recent Head Start Program Information Report (PIR),<sup>1</sup> including program size, location, and population served. There is no burden to study participants associated with using PIR data for the Sustainability Study.

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

The data collection will use a variety of information technologies to reduce the burden of participating on respondents. Program director surveys and sustained and dissolved partnership provider surveys can be completed as a web-based survey or can be administered using computer-assisted telephone interviewing to reduce respondent burden and data entry errors.

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

Wherever possible, we will use existing administrative information from the PIR about EHS program characteristics to prevent duplication, minimize burden, and increase efficiency. To reduce respondent burden for NDS participants, we will preload the provider information they provided in 2016 so they only need to confirm or make minor updates. No study instruments ask for information that is available from alternative data sources, including administrative data.

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

Most of the EHS programs and child care providers in the study will be small organizations, including community-based organizations and other nonprofits, as well as small businesses. We will minimize burden for respondents by restricting the length of the surveys and interviews as much as possible; providing instruments in a web-based format; and conducting survey interviews (if requested) and semi-structured interviews via telephone at times that are convenient to the respondent.

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

No comprehensive information has been collected on EHS programs and child care providers since the conclusion of the NDS. This data collection would provide valuable information on how the partnerships have fared since the NDS collected survey data in 2016.

### **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 April 21, 2021, Volume 86, Number 75,

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<sup>1</sup> The PIR is an administrative data system for the Head Start program as a whole, which includes data collected annually from all programs. Head Start programs collect the information as approved under OMB control number 0970-0427.

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page 20,699-20,700, and provided a sixty-day period for public comment. During the notice and comment period, one comment was received, from Start Early. The comment is attached as Appendix A. Start Early's comments focused on strengths of the partnerships, workforce development, impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, inclusive language to refer to parental leave, and provider data that EHS programs already collect. We gave careful consideration to these important topics and found that many were outside the scope of the Sustainability Study, or might be better addressed by another study (for example, Baby FACES<sup>2</sup> includes a nationally representative sample of EHS programs). Some comments, such as those on highlighting successes and strengths, can likely be addressed in analysis and reporting from this study.

We did incorporate two updates in response to these comments.

- We changed language from “maternity leave” to “parental leave” across instruments.
- In the Sustained Partnership Provider survey, we updated an item on professional development to include less formal professional growth opportunities.

These updates will make the study more inclusive of all parents, and of the range of professional growth opportunities providers might have.

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

We consulted with experts to complement our team's knowledge and experience (Table A.2). Consultants included researchers with expertise in EHS and child care, child development, family engagement, and classroom and family child care processes. We also engaged experts with specialized knowledge and skills in the areas of partnership and collaboration among early care and education providers.

**Table A.2. EHS-CCP Sustainability Study consultation with outside experts**

Name	Affiliation
Catherine Ayoub	Brazelton Touchpoints Center
Gina Adams	Urban Institute
Rachel Chazan Cohen	Department of Human Development and Family Sciences, University of Connecticut <sup>a</sup>
Tamara Hall	Child Trends
Toni Porter	Early Care and Education Consultant
Diane Schilder	Urban Institute <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Rachel Chazan Cohen was formerly affiliated with the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education and Human Development, University of Massachusetts Boston.

<sup>b</sup> Diane Schilder was formerly affiliated with the Education Development Center.

## **A9. Tokens of Appreciation**

<sup>2</sup> The Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (Baby FACES) is approved under OMB #0970-0354.

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Participation in the Sustainability Study will place some burden on respondents. To offset this and to acknowledge respondents' efforts in a respectful way, the study team requests nominal tokens of appreciation for respondents. Respondents' participation in the study activities is key to ensuring the quality of the information gathered. Because this is a longitudinal study following up on the 2016 NDS of Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships, it is vital to encourage the participation of the same Early Head Start (EHS) programs, community-based child care centers, and family child care providers that participated in the NDS. The target population of partnership programs and providers under this longitudinal study is finite, and the lack of participation in the data collection activities could jeopardize the study's goal of understanding the factors that supported or impeded sustainability in a representative sample of partnerships. Furthermore, EHS program directors' survey completion is critical for obtaining updated contact information for providers. In addition to the proposed tokens of appreciation, the team is taking other steps to address nonresponse bias and encourage participation (see B.5).

Along with mail survey invitations, we will include a small non-monetary gift for respondents. Then, at completion of the surveys, we will offer respondents a gift card. We will offer:

- A \$20 gift card to participants who complete the EHS program director survey.
- A \$20 gift card to participants who complete the sustained partnership provider survey.
- A \$40 gift card to participants who complete the dissolved partnership provider survey. We plan to offer a larger token of appreciation for these providers—who may no longer have any connection to Early Head Start or the partnership programs (and who might not even be in business)—because we expect they will be more difficult to recruit.

We will offer an additional token of appreciation to providers that participate in the semi-structured interviews. We will offer:

- A \$20 gift card for sustained partnership providers.
- A \$40 gift card to participants in the semi-structured interviews for dissolved partnership providers.

We use a base of a \$20 gift card (for EHS program directors and sustained partnership providers) because the NDS provided the same amount to respondents in 2016 and, given we anticipate significant overlap in respondents, we assume respondents might recall and expect a similar token of appreciation for participating in the follow-up. Further, there are two subgroups among the Sustainability Study sample that we expect will be more difficult to reach and are at risk of completing the surveys and interviews in smaller numbers. First, there will be family child care providers in both the sustained and dissolved partnership provider surveys. Typically, family child care providers are harder to reach and have lower response rates than center-based providers, including in the NDS (see B.5). Second, whereas EHS program directors and sustained partnership providers will be active participants in the partnerships, likely with an interest in their continued success, dissolved partnership providers will have no connection to the partnerships. It is likely that some dissolved partnership providers might have gone



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out of business by the time of Sustainability Study data collection, making the study even less salient to them.

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

#### *Personally Identifiable Information*

This collection requests personally identifiable information (PII) such as name and contact information. We will ask EHS program directors to confirm the names and contact information for their partnership providers from the NDS to help us identify the right respondents for the provider surveys and interviews. We will ask all respondents to confirm their names and contact information in order to distribute their tokens of appreciation.

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 will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. The consent statement that all study participants will receive provides assurances that the research team will protect the privacy of respondents to the fullest extent possible under the law, that respondents' participation is voluntary, and that they may withdraw their consent at any time without any negative consequences.

As specified in the contract signed by ACF and Mathematica (referred to as the Contractor in this section), 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 will develop a Data Safety Plan that assesses all protections of respondents' PII and will submit it to ACF by July 2021. The Contractor shall ensure that all of its employees, subcontractors (at all tiers), and employees of each subcontractor who perform work under this contract/subcontract are trained on data privacy issues and comply with the above requirements. All of the Contractor's staff sign the Contractor's confidentiality agreement when they are hired.

Due to the sensitive nature of this research (see A11 for more information), the evaluation will obtain a Certificate of Confidentiality. The study team has applied for this Certificate and will provide it to OMB once it is received. The Certificate of Confidentiality helps to assure participants that their information will be kept private to the fullest extent permitted by law. Further, all materials to be used with respondents as part of this information collection, including consent statements and instruments, will be submitted to the Health Media Lab Institutional Review Board (the Contractor's IRB) for approval.

#### *Data Security and Monitoring*

As specified in the evaluator's contract, the Contractor shall use Federal Information Processing Standard (currently, FIPS 140-2) 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 and 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

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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 data or PII, ensuring secure storage and limits on access.

All electronic data will be stored on a secure network drive at Mathematica offices and never in possession of ACF; data will be backed up on our secure servers for 60 days for disaster recovery purposes. Sixty days after the primary data files are securely deleted, the backed-up data will be automatically and securely deleted, as required by our contract (i.e., "The Contractor shall dispose of the primary data and files created during the course of the study in accordance with specifications provided by ACF"). These plans are described in more detail in a data security plan, also required by the contract. Systems will be accessible only by staff working on the project through individual passwords and logins.

Following data collection, we will remove all PII from the instruments and the de-identified data will be exported for analysis. Neither analysis staff nor ACF will have access to any PII; only de-identified data will be available. Once the analysis is complete all electronic databases will be deleted, and as mentioned above, after 60 days the data will no longer be able to be retrieved.

We will also create a de-identified restricted use data file and a data user's guide to inform and assist researchers who would like to use the data in future analyses.

### **A11. Sensitive Information**

To understand what factors supported and impeded the sustainability of partnerships, we ask child care providers sensitive questions about their relationship with their grantee. These questions include reporting on the barriers to sustaining their partnership with the grantee and supports the grantee may have or may not have provided. The invitation to participate in the study will inform child care providers that the survey will ask these questions, that they do not have to answer any questions that make them uncomfortable, and that the responses they provide will not be reported to program staff.

### **A12. Burden**

#### *Explanation of Burden Estimates*

Table A.3 presents the current request for data collection activities. Section B.2 in Supporting Statement B discusses the anticipated response rates, but for burden estimate purposes, we have provided estimates for the maximum possible number of anticipated completes. The estimates include time for respondents to review instructions, search data sources, complete and review the responses, and transmit or disclose information. This information collection request covers a period of three years. We expect the total annual burden to be 172 hours for all of the instruments in this information collection request.

- **EHS Program Director Survey (Instrument 1).** We will ask EHS program directors to complete a web-based survey. We assumed there would be 335 respondents and the survey would take 35 minutes to complete.
- **Sustained Partnership Provider Survey (Instrument 2a).** We will ask sustained partnership providers to complete a survey on the web or by telephone. We assumed there would be 330 respondents and that the survey would take 30 minutes to complete.

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- **Dissolved Partnership Provider Survey (Instrument 2b).** We will ask dissolved partnership providers to complete a survey on the web or by telephone. We assumed there would be 140 respondents and that the survey would take 30 minutes to complete.
- **Dissolved Partnership Provider Semi-structured Interview Protocol (Instrument 3).** We will ask dissolved partnership providers to participate in semi-structured interviews. We assumed there would be 48 respondents and that the interview would take 50 minutes to complete.
- **Sustained Partnership Provider Semi-structured Interview Protocol (Instrument 4).** We will ask sustained partnership providers to participate in semi-structured interviews. We assumed there would be 24 respondents and that the interview would take 50 minutes to complete.

**Table A.3. Total burden requested under this information collection**

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
EHS Program Director Survey	335	1	.58	194	65	\$35.65	\$2,317.25
Provider Survey (Sustained Partnership Provider Survey and Dissolved Partnership Provider Survey)	470	1	.50	235	78	\$35.65	\$2,780.7
Dissolved Partnership Provider Semi-structured Interview Protocol	48	1	.83	40	13	\$35.65	\$463.45
Sustained Partnership Provider Semi-structured Interview Protocol	24	1	.83	20	6	\$35.65	\$213.90
<b>Total</b>					<b>162</b>		<b>\$5,775.30</b>

*Estimated Annualized Cost to Respondents*

We expect the total annual cost to be \$5,775.30 for all of the instruments in the current information collection request.

Average hourly wage estimates for deriving total annual costs are based on Current Population Survey data for the first quarter of 2021 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021). For each instrument included in Table A.3, we calculated the total annual cost by multiplying the number of annual burden hours by the average hourly wage.

For program directors and partnership provider staff, we used the median usual weekly earnings for full-time wage and salary workers age 25 and older with a bachelor’s degree or higher. We divided weekly earnings by 40 hours to calculate hourly wages (\$35.65 per hour).

**A13. Costs**

There are no start-up costs for respondents.

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

**Table A.4. Estimated Annualized Costs to the Federal Government**

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<b>Cost category</b>	<b>Estimated costs</b>
Instrument Development and OMB Clearance	\$229,403
Field Work	\$551,733
Analysis	\$317,210
Publications/Dissemination	\$199,151
<b>Total costs over the request period</b>	<b>\$1,297,497</b>
<b>Annual costs</b>	<b>\$432,499</b>

**A15. Reasons for changes in burden**

This is an additional information collection request under OMB control number 0970-0471.

**A16. Timeline**

Table A.5 contains the timeline for the data collection and reporting activities. Data collection is expected to occur during the summer and fall of 2021.

**Table A.5. Schedule for Sustainability Study data Collection and Reporting**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Start date</b>
<b>Data collection</b>	
EHS program director survey	Upon OMB approval
Provider surveys	One month after start of EHS program director survey
Dissolved and sustained partnership provider interviews	Two months after start of EHS program director survey
<b>Analysis</b>	
Data processing and analysis for data tables	Two months after the end of data collection
Data processing and analysis for final report	Two months after the end of data collection
<b>Reporting</b>	
Data tables	One month after analysis begins
Final report	One month after analysis begins
Briefs on specific topics	One month after analysis begins
Restricted-use data file	One month after analysis begins

**A17. Exceptions**

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.

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**Attachments**

**Instruments**

Instrument 1. EHS Program Director Survey

Instrument 2. Sustained Partnership Provider Survey

Instrument 3. Dissolved Partnership Provider Survey

Instrument 4. Dissolved Partnership Provider Semi-structured Interview Protocol

Instrument 5. Sustained Partnership Provider Semi-structured Interview Protocol

**Appendices**

Appendix A. Comments Received on 60-Day *Federal Register* Notice

Appendix B. Supplemental materials for surveys

Appendix C. Supplemental materials for provider interviews

Appendix D. Joint Office of Head Start and Office of Child Care letter of support

**References**

Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Usual Weekly Earnings of Wage and Salary Workers: First Quarter 2021."  
USDL-21-0655. Washington, DC: Bureau of Labor Statistics, April 16, 2021.