

Appendix D

FAQs for Head Start Program Staff



Head Start REACH Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Head Start REACH study, and why is it taking place?

The Head Start REACH study will explore how Head Start programs recruit, select, enroll, and retain families experiencing adversities. Adversities is a broad term that refers to a wide range of circumstances or events that pose a threat to a child or caregiver's physical or psychological well-being. The adversities that families experience are often intertwined with poverty, may co-occur, and are affected by systematic factors, such as structural racism. Common examples include (but are not limited to) families experiencing homelessness; involvement in child welfare, including foster care; and affected by substance use, mental health issues, and domestic violence. To meet this goal, the study team will conduct six case studies, each focused on one Head Start program that excels at recruiting, selecting, enrolling, and retaining families facing adversities. By retention, I mean efforts to maintain the attendance and enrollment of families in the program. The case studies will help the early childhood field learn about best practices for identifying and supporting these families, families' experiences with these practices, and opportunities to expand Head Start's reach for these families.

Who is sponsoring and conducting Head Start REACH?

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is sponsoring the study. [Mathematica](#), an independent research organization with a long history of learning from Head Start programs, will conduct the study on behalf of ACF. The Office of Head Start fully supports this endeavor, and strongly encourages your participation (please see the letter of support from the Office of Head Start).

Why do you need my help?

Your program was nominated as having demonstrated success in reaching and supporting families experiencing adversities. Given this success, we are eager to include your program as one of the six case studies. We would like to speak with program staff involved in identifying and supporting families facing adversities in order to understand best practices. Your perspectives will shed light on what other Head Start programs and staff can do to better reach and support families experiencing adversities.

What do the study's activities include?

Mathematica will complete the following activities with your program: (1) conduct an initial call with you to provide details about the study (30 minutes); (2) hold a one-on-one conversation with program directors (60 minutes); (3) hold one-on-one conversations with staff involved in recruiting, selecting, enrolling, and retaining your program's families (90 minutes); (4) conduct a focus group with families involved in your program (90 minutes); and (5) request documentation on your program's eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance (ERSEA) policies and related activities. We will complete the following activities with partner organizations: (1) hold one-on-one conversations with staff from up to four of your program's partner organizations (45 minutes) and (2) conduct a focus group with families who are not enrolled in your program but are involved with one partner organization (90 minutes).

What kinds of topics will you ask me about?

During our conversations, we will discuss the following topics: (1) your background; (2) the adversities the families in your center are facing; (3) your center's approach to recruiting, selecting, enrolling, and retaining families experiencing adversities; (4) the partners you work with to support families facing adversities, and the nature of your

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partnerships; and (5) training and support that staff receive related to working with families experiencing adversities and conducting ERSEA activities. We will also review (and ask you to share copies of, if possible) program

documents related to ERSEA activities, such as your program's recruitment plan, attendance plan, outreach plans and materials, and application or enrollment forms.

When will study activities take place?

Conversations will take place in spring 2022, mostly during a two-day visit to your program. Mathematica would work closely with your program to schedule the visit at a time that works well for your program. We will be prepared to conduct all data collection activities remotely if necessary.

Do I have to participate?

No. Choosing not to participate will not affect your job in any way, but your participation will help us learn important lessons about how Head Start programs like yours can serve and support families experiencing adversities. If you do choose to participate, you can change your mind about participating at any time.

How will you protect the privacy of participants and use the information you collect for this study?

We will get informed consent from parents and staff prior to their participation. We will also ensure that all information is kept private to the extent permitted by law. We will ensure all information is only reported in summary form and will not attribute any information to you or your program. We will ask for your program's help identifying and recruiting parents who are facing adversities that the study is focused on, but we will never ask your program or parents to tell us which specific adversities they are facing. Only Mathematica staff will collect data for this study. Data from the interviews and focus groups will be transmitted to the Child & Family Data Archive or a similar data archive at the end of the study so it can be used by other researchers. No personal information that could identify you or your program will remain in the interview notes that are shared with the data archive.