

APPENDIX B

ExCELS Center Recruitment Materials

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ExCELS Advance Recruitment Letter/Email

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Annalee Kelly
Survey Director

TO: [PRIMARY SITE LEADER/HEAD START PROGRAM DIRECTOR EMAIL ADDRESS]

RE: Invitation to Participate in the Early Care and Education Leadership Study (ExCELS)

Dear [PRIMARY SITE LEADER/ HEAD START PROGRAM DIRECTOR NAME]:

We are reaching out to [CENTER: ask your center to be part of / HS PROGRAM: let you know about] an important study, the Early Care and Education Leadership Study, or ExCELS. As you know, leadership is widely recognized as an essential driver of performance and improvement in an organization. Little is known about who participates in leadership in early care and education centers, and what role leadership plays in improving the quality of care and education a center provides and outcomes for staff, children, and families. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation has partnered with Mathematica, an independent research firm, and the Institute for Early Education Leadership and Innovation at the University of Massachusetts Boston to conduct ExCELS. ExCELS will help us learn how effective leadership can improve the quality and outcomes for staff, children, and families in early care and education centers!

The study involves two interviews for the primary site leader, and surveys for two or three managers and all the teaching staff at [CENTER: your/ HS PROGRAM: a] center. We understand that [CENTER: you and your/ HS PROGRAM: center] staff are very busy, so we will be flexible about scheduling these activities with [CENTER: you/ HS PROGRAM: them].

For this study to be successful, it is critical to have the participation of a range of centers—such as big and small centers, and centers that receive different types of funding support. We will be reaching out to centers in your area soon to inform them that they have been selected for the study. If [CENTER: your center/ HS PROGRAM: a center in your program] is selected, [CENTER: your input, and the input of your management and teaching staff/ HS PROGRAM: the input of center management and teaching staff], will be valuable. We see [CENTER: you and your center/ HS START PROGRAM: centers] as important partners in this study, and we hope your [CENTER: center/ HS PROGRAM: program] will participate. **We are offering participating centers \$150 for taking part in the study.**

Taking part in ExCELS is voluntary, but we hope you will participate. The purpose of this study is to learn about leadership in early care and education centers. There are no risks or direct benefits from taking part in the study. We will use the information the study collects only for research purposes and in ways that will not reveal [CENTER: who you are or identify your center or its staff/ HS PROGRAM: the organization, the center, or its staff]. We have a certificate of confidentiality from the National Institutes of Health. It helps us protect [CENTER: your privacy/ HS PROGRAM: the privacy of the organization, the center, and its staff]. This means no one can force the study team to give out information that identifies [CENTER: you/ HS PROGRAM: the organization, the center, and its staff], even in court. However, in some cases federal or state laws might require us to show information to government officials or sponsors who monitor the safety of the study. Publications about the study will not identify anyone from the center. Nor will they identify the center [CENTER: itself/ HS PROGRAM: or organization]. We will share some of the data the study collects with qualified individuals for research purposes. Nothing we share will identify people [CENTER: or specific centers/, HS PROGRAM: specific centers, or specific organizations].

I have attached a fact sheet and a brochure about the study [HS PROGRAM: that we are sharing with centers]. If you are interested in learning more about ExCELS and having [CENTER: your center/ HS PROGRAM: a center in your program] participate in the study, please contact me, the survey director, at [STUDY PHONE] or by email at [STUDY EMAIL].

Sincerely,

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Annalee Kelly

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ExCELS Joint-Agency Support Letter

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ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20201 | www.acf.hhs.gov

TO: Primary Site Leader

FROM: Dr. Bernadine Futrell, Director, Office of Head Start

Dr. Ruth Friedman, Director, Office of Child Care

DATE: Spring 2022

RE: The Early Care and Education Leadership Study (ExCELS)

We are writing to let you know that your center has the opportunity to take part in an important study—the Early Care and Education Leadership Study (ExCELS). The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation at the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is sponsoring the study.

We are learning from the K-12 education and other fields that strong leadership that involves a range of staff can improve the workplace environment, staff performance, and student outcomes. However, we don't know much about what leadership looks like in early care and education centers and how staff contribute to leadership to make quality happen. Mathematica, an independent research firm, will conduct ExCELS with the Institute for Early Education Leadership and Innovation at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

Mathematica will collect information from 120 early care and education centers across four states to get a picture of what leadership looks like and how it works. The study team will interview primary site leaders, or the center staff in the building who are responsible for oversight of all that happens in the center on a daily basis, and distribute surveys to a few managers and all teaching staff. The Office of Head Start and Office of Child Care may use the study information to enhance supports for leadership development that engages staff and supports continuous quality improvement.

For ExCELS to succeed, it is essential to have the participation of a variety of centers. Having your center take part is vital to closing the knowledge gap that currently exists about leadership in early care and education. Taking part in the study is voluntary. Mathematica will use the information collected from your center together with information from other centers, so nothing will reveal who you are or identify your center or staff.

On behalf of the Office of Head Start and Office of Child Care, we hope you will join this important study of early care and education leadership. Your participation will be important to the study's success. A member of Mathematica's research staff will call you soon to explain the study in more detail. You can ask any questions you have during the call. If you have any concerns regarding your center's participation in the study, please contact the Mathematica survey director, Annalee Kelly, at (609) 275-2885. You can also reach the study project officer, Nina Philipsen, at (202) 205-8115, at the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services.

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ExCELS Study Brochure

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ExCELS includes centers of various sizes, characteristics, and contexts from four states across the country. We hope you will be one of the centers helping us understand leadership in early care and education centers.



If you have any questions about ExCELS, please call us toll-free at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or email us at [EMAIL]. You can learn more about ExCELS on the ExCELS website:

<https://www.URL.gov>.



Mathematica
Progress Together



Early Care and Education Leadership Study (ExCELS)



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About the study

Leadership is important to how early care and education centers provide services to children and families. But, we don't know a lot about how leadership works in centers and who participates in making decisions. The Early Care and Education Leadership Study (ExCELS) will help the early childhood field learn about the ways that center directors, managers and teaching staff contribute to decisions and practices that support quality. Through this study, we will gather information from many points of view to understand staffing and participation in leadership across a range of centers.

Why should my center participate?

Taking part in ExCELS is voluntary, but you and your center are a valuable part of this study. We invite you to help us understand what leadership looks like at centers like yours.



What will my center be asked to do?

Participation begins with two telephone interviews to collect information about your center and staffing structure. Then we will invite two or three of your center managers and all of your teaching staff to complete surveys. Our study team will schedule telephone interviews at times that are most convenient for you, and the surveys can be completed on the web or on paper at any time.

As a thank you, we will offer your center \$150 for participating, and we will offer staff a gift card for completing the surveys.

How was my center selected?

The study team selected centers from a variety of funding sources, center types, and geographic location.

Who is conducting the study?

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation sponsors ExCELS. Mathematica and the Institute of Education Leadership and Innovation at the University of Massachusetts Lowell will conduct the study.

ExCELS Study Fact Sheet

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The Early Care and Education Leadership Study FACT SHEET

Leadership is an essential driver in the performance and improvement of early care and education in centers. Unfortunately, there isn't a lot of research about who plays a leadership role in early care and education. The Early Care and Education Leadership Study (ExCELS) wants to take a closer look at that. The study will allow us to get a better idea of the kinds of leadership roles that are available to staff in early care and education centers, and how center leadership can improve the quality and outcomes for staff, children, and families in early care and education centers.

The study team

The study is being conducted by Mathematica, an independent research firm, and the Institute for Early Education Leadership and Innovation at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

Center selection

The study will take place in 120 early care and education centers. We will select centers in urban and suburban areas in four different states. ExCELS will focus on centers that are funded by Head Start or the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and have at least two classrooms serving children whose ages range from birth to 5 (but who are not yet in kindergarten).

Staff participation

We will ask the center's primary site leader to participate in two phone interviews to get information about center characteristics, such as the size of the center and the ages of the children served, and to learn about the center's staffing structure and leadership positions. We will ask two or three center managers to complete a 25-minute survey and ask all teaching staff to complete a 60-minute survey.

Benefits of ExCELS

We will offer each participating center \$150 in recognition of the time and expertise that center staff contribute to the study. We will offer teaching staff who complete a survey a \$40 gift card, and center managers who complete a survey a \$25 gift card.

Privacy

Mathematica is committed to respecting and protecting the privacy of respondents and the data entrusted to us to the extent permitted by law. We will give participating staff a consent form that they will sign before participating in the study. They can withdraw their consent at any time. Mathematica senior project staff will be responsible for making sure that the whole study team understands the necessity of maintaining strict privacy of the information they collect. All staff involved with the study will sign confidentiality agreements.

At the end of the study, we intend to prepare files containing the data from this study. We will share some of the data with qualified researchers. We will protect the privacy of participants whenever study findings or data files are shared with qualified researchers. The names of centers and the names of participating staff members will not be included in these files.

Findings

We plan to produce a report and short briefs to advance understanding of early care and education leadership in centers. The materials will be suitable for a range of audiences, including researchers, program administrators, technical assistance providers, funders, and center leaders and staff. We also plan to release a new leadership survey that can be used for multiple purposes including program improvement, research, and evaluation.

To find out more

Contact: Annalee Kelly, the survey director, at Mathematica, [PHONE], [EMAIL].

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ExCELS Targeted Recruitment Letter/Email

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[DATE]

TO: [PRIMARY SITE LEADER EMAIL ADDRESS]

RE: Invitation to Participate in the Early Care and Education Leadership Study (ExCELS)

Dear [PRIMARY SITE LEADER NAME]:

We are reaching out to ask your center to be part of an important study, the Early Care and Education Leadership Study, or ExCELS.

As you know, leadership is widely recognized as an essential driver of performance and improvement in an organization. Little is known about who participates in leadership in early care and education centers, and what role leadership plays in improving the quality of care and education a center provides and outcomes for staff, children, and families. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation has partnered with Mathematica, an independent research firm, and the Institute for Early Education Leadership and Innovation at the University of Massachusetts Boston to conduct ExCELS. ExCELS will help us learn how effective leadership can improve the quality and outcomes for staff, children, and families in early care and education centers!

The study involves two interviews for the primary site leader, and surveys for two or three managers and all teaching staff at your center. We understand that you and your staff are very busy, so we will be flexible about scheduling these activities with you. **We are offering participating centers \$150 for taking part in the study.**

For this study to be successful, it is critical to have the participation of a range of centers—such as big and small centers, and centers that receive different types of funding support. We view you and your center as important partners in this study and hope your center will participate.

Taking part in ExCELS is voluntary, but we hope you will participate. The purpose of this study is to learn about leadership in early care and education centers. There are no risks or direct benefits from taking part in the study. We will use the information the study collects only for research purposes and in ways that will not reveal who you are or identify your center or its staff. We have a certificate of confidentiality from the National Institutes of Health. It helps us protect your privacy. This means no one can force the study team to give out information that identifies you, even in court. However, in some cases federal or state laws might require us to show information to government officials or sponsors who monitor the safety of the study. Publications about the study will not identify anyone from the center. Nor will they identify the center itself. We will share some of the data the study collects with qualified individuals for research purposes. Nothing we share will identify people or specific centers. If you have questions about ExCELS, please call Annalee Kelly, the survey director at [STUDY PHONE] or by email at [STUDY EMAIL].

I have attached a fact sheet and a brochure about the study. I would like to schedule a time to talk with you by phone about the study in more detail. I would also like to discuss your center's participation in the study and learn about some key characteristics of your center. If you can let me know some times when you would be available to talk with me by phone, that would be great. Otherwise, I will call you in the next few days to schedule a time.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to speaking with you soon. If you have any questions before our call, please contact me at [LIAISON PHONE] or by email at [LIAISON EMAIL].

Sincerely,

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[LIAISON NAME]

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