

# **Survey on Where Parents Look for and Find Information and How They Use Information When Selecting Child Care**

**OMB Information Collection Request**  
0970 – 0627

## **Supporting Statement Part A**

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Submitted By:  
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Research, Public Health Surveillance, and Program Evaluation Purposes**

## **Part A**

### **Executive Summary**

- **Type of Request:** This Information Collection Request is for a new collection. We are requesting one year of approval.
  
- **Description of Request:** The goal of this study is to collect nationally representative survey data to learn about (a) where parents look for and find information about Child Care and Early Education (CCEE); (b) how parents assess the people, places, or things that may offer CCEE information; (c) how easy or hard it is for parents to find CCEE information; (d) the types of CCEE information that parents look for and say are helpful in choosing CCEE; (e) the last time parents made a decision about CCEE and what information they tried to learn about at that time; (f) parent's assessments of the CCEE options at the time they made their last CCEE decision; (g) how well parents' CCEE decision met their family's needs; and (h) demographic information about families. The survey is intended to produce findings that are generalizable to the larger population of parents with children under the age of 6, but not in kindergarten. The information collected may be used by Child Care Lead Agencies to inform their consumer education efforts. We do not intend for this information to be used as the principal basis for public policy decisions.
  
- **Time Sensitivity:** The funding to collect the data is only available through August 31, 2024.

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

The reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program, through the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 and the associated 2016 CCDF Final Rule emphasize the importance of helping parents make informed decisions regarding early care and education services that meet the family's needs. There are, however, many gaps in our understanding of how parents search for and select care for their young children that this study will fill. Existing studies are narrow and primarily qualitative. A small number of quantitative studies examined which care arrangements parents select. Many of these studies focused on family subgroups (e.g., families with low-incomes, families with children with special needs, and immigrant populations). Importantly, there are no nationally representative studies that examine where parents look for Child Care and Early Education (CCEE) information, how they assess the people, places, or things that may offer CCEE information, or how parents use information to select CCEE.

The proposed collection is to conduct a nationally representative survey of parents and legal guardians with young children (under the age of 6 years, but not in kindergarten) to better understand parents use of information to select CCEE. This survey will help identify how parents look for and find CCEE information and use it to select CCEE. The survey will include parents using many kinds of CCEE and those who use parental care only to see if there are differences in how information is used depending on care type. In addition, the study will include understudied subgroups, such as parents who speak a language other than English, to help inform consumer education efforts.

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 information collected is meant to inform consumer education efforts by identifying where parents search for and find CCEE-related information, what types of information parents find or come across before making decisions about CCEE, how parents evaluate the information they find or come across, how parents use the information when selecting CCEE, and the key facilitators and barriers to parents' finding and/or using consumer education information. The study will expand the field's understanding of the kinds of information parents look for and where they get information, including through official outreach and other consumer education efforts. The survey will help to identify how states and territories can reach parents to share consumer education information.

We will disseminate the results through published reports to CCDF lead agencies, technical assistance centers that support CCDF lead agencies on consumer education, and the broader child care and early education field. This information may support peer learning and innovation to advance the field. The information collected through the survey is descriptive and is not intended to assess the effectiveness or impact of consumer education strategies. This limitation will be clearly stated in written materials associated with the study. ACF will also use this information internally to inform future planning and decision-making. The data, questionnaire, and analysis files will be archived for use in an online data repository. The archived data will be available to other researchers to use. The information collected is meant to contribute to the body of knowledge on ACF programs. It is not intended to be used as the

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principal basis for a decision by a federal decision-maker and is not expected to meet the threshold of influential or highly influential scientific information.

*Research Questions*

This information collection will address the following research questions:

1. Where do parents search for and find information about CCEE options (e.g., family, friends, states' and territories' consumer education)?
2. What types of information are parents searching for before making decisions about CCEE for their children?
3. How do parents evaluate the information they find or come across about possible CCEE options?
4. How do parents use the information they find or come across to inform the decisions they make about CCEE?
5. What characteristics of CCEE programs are most salient to their decision-making process?
6. What are key facilitators and barriers to parents' finding and/or using consumer information?

*Study Design*

ACF has contracted with NORC at the University of Chicago to complete this work. The study will use a nationally representative sample from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak panel. We plan to administer this one-time survey to all households with young children, whether or not they currently use CCEE and whether or not they recently searched for CCEE. AmeriSpeak panelists who indicated that they have a young child in the household will be invited to complete the survey if they are at least 18 years of age. The survey will be conducted in English and Spanish.

Because household circumstances may have changed since the AmeriSpeak panel was recruited, we will ask households to answer a few questions about household demographics to confirm eligibility before moving into the parent questionnaire.

There are some limitations of probability-based designs. One limitation is that these designs are more complex than non-probability sampling designs and more costly, especially in terms of recruitment. However, having an established probability-based panel (AmeriSpeak) reduces these limitations. Another limitation is it is not always feasible to examine small subsamples, such as those that comprise a small proportion of the population (i.e., subsidy recipients). We will include any limitations in all publications resulting from the information collection.

See Supporting Statement B, part 1 for more detail on the study design, its appropriateness for the intended use, and its limitations.

<i>Data Collection Activity</i>	<i>Instruments</i>	<i>Respondent, Content, Purpose of Collection</i>	<i>Mode and Duration</i>
Parent Survey Questionnaire	Parent Survey Eligibility Confirmation (Section AE)	<p><b>Respondents:</b> 7,000 households</p> <p><b>Content:</b> Questions about household demographics (e.g., number of children in the household, ages of children and ages of parents)</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> To confirm households' eligibility</p>	<p><b>Mode:</b> Web with phone as needed</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 5 minutes</p>

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		(with children under the age of 6 years, but not in kindergarten), verify that parent is at least 18 years of age.	
Parent Survey Questionnaire	Parent Survey Questionnaire (Section A - DA)	<p><b>Respondents:</b> 2,500 parents who are at least 18 years of age with children under the age of 6 years, but not in kindergarten.</p> <p><b>Content:</b> Questions about (a) where parents look for and find information about Child Care and Early Education (CCEE); (b) how parents assess the people, places, or things that may offer CCEE information; (c) how easy or hard it is for parents to find CCEE information; (d) the types of CCEE information that parents look for and say are helpful in choosing CCEE; (e) information about the last time parents made a decision about CCEE and what information they tried to learn about at that time; (f) parent's assessments of the CCEE options at the time they made their last CCEE decision; (g) how well parents' CCEE decision met their family's needs; and (h) demographic information about families.</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> To learn about where parents look for and find CCEE information, how parents evaluate where information comes from, what types of CCEE information parents look for, how parents use information to make CCEE decisions, and to identify key facilitators and barriers to parents' finding and/or using consumer information.</p>	<p><b>Mode:</b> Web with phone as needed</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> 15 minutes</p>

*Other Data Sources and Uses of Information*

To the extent possible, the parent survey results will be merged with publicly available data from the American Community Survey (ACS) or other similar data sources for use in analysis.

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

We will primarily collect data using a self-administered web-based questionnaire. This will allow respondents to complete the interview at their own convenience. Self-administration times are generally shorter than interviewer-administration times due to faster silent reading ability of most adults, and web-based questionnaires are expected to reduce burden relative to paper survey administration.

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

The proposed survey does not duplicate other data that is already available. We have made efforts to determine whether similar research and information exists by searching existing data and reports, and consulting with federal staff. We reviewed the literature on parental search and selection of CCEE. We found existing data related to parental search and selection of CCEE (e.g., ECPP-NHES 2016; NSECE 2012 and 2019). However, these data sources lack detail on the parent search process. For example, they do not ask parents about their use and assessment of individual information sources. They are also limited because they ask parents about one recent search for child care rather than having them consider all information they have received or searched for related to child care options generally in the last twelve months. Therefore, this data collection effort request does not duplicate any other work being done by OPRE and does not duplicate other data sources.

**A5. Impact on Small Businesses**

No small businesses will be involved with this information collection.

**A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Collection**

This is a one-time data collection effort.

**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 October 30, 2023, Volume 88, Number 208, page 74196-74197, and provided a sixty-day period for public comment. During the notice and comment period, no substantive comments were received.

ACF published a subsequent notice in the Federal Register announcing the agency's submission of this request to OMB for review. This second notice was published on January 11, 2024, Volume 8, Number 8, page 1920-1921, and provided a thirty-day period for public comment. During the notice and comment period, one comment was received from the First Five Years Fund (FFYF). The FFYF suggested that the CEPC team consider a) utilizing the opportunity to understand how local supply informs parents' decision-making, b) using the survey to gauge the extent to which parents are aware of QRIS systems, and c) including questions seeking parents' input on potential solutions they believe would have been helpful for their child care search and selection process. The CEPC team is addressing these suggestions by a) Robustly linking public data sources on child care supply, to the extent possible, with the survey data and addressing child care supply in our analytic plan; b) Planning to code verbatim responses for specific references to QRIS. Qualitative work to develop the questionnaire indicated that

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this approach would be the most feasible way to measure QRIS awareness. The survey will also capture whether parents looked for or found information on childcare via official government websites, including their states' QRIS site; c) Planning to analyze these two questions together to help identify challenges that may lead to possible solutions – the types of information parents said they did not find, but would have found helpful when searching for childcare, and what makes it hard for parents to get the information they want to know about childcare. Also, as part of the larger CEPC project, the team conducted parent focus groups, which examined what parents said would be helpful and or useful when they look for child care, which we plan to publicly disseminate. Qualitative methods are better suited for capturing parental input on solutions than a self-administered web-based questionnaire.

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

We consulted with experts outside the study to complement the knowledge and experience of the research team. This included consultations with six experts, including those with expertise in parental child care decision-making, consumer education strategies, and issues of equity in early childhood systems. Consultants provided input on the study's research questions and scope.

### **A9. Tokens of Appreciation**

For this survey, participation will be particularly important from groups prioritized within the CCDF program, such as those with infants and toddlers, those working non-standard schedules, members of households with low-incomes, or individuals who do not speak English at home. Many of these groups are less common populations, relatively, so maximizing response rates will both improve sample representativeness and increase sample sizes available for analysis. Research on household surveys has consistently shown that tokens of appreciation promised for completion of the survey can significantly improve response rates and reduce refusals (Dillman, et al 2014, Singer and Ye 2013). Additionally, tokens of appreciation have generally been shown to have a positive impact on the representativeness of a sample without reducing response quality (Groves et al 2000, Mercer 2015).

Participants in this study have voluntarily registered with the AmeriSpeak panel. Panelists are offered points (AmeriPoints) for completing panel surveys. These points can be redeemed for rewards and are delivered through the online AmeriSpeak portal to sampled panelists who complete the survey. We will offer panelists a token of appreciation of 15 AmeriPoints, equal to \$15, for completing the parent survey questionnaire, which is estimated to take about 20 minutes for all sections.

While the literature supports use of tokens of appreciation in panel surveys to increase response rates and reduce non-response bias, it does not directly address the appropriate amount to offer. In the case of this survey, respondents are voluntary members of the AmeriSpeak panel, and will be familiar with the AmeriSpeak custom of offering rewards to sampled panelists for participation in surveys. The proposed amount lies within the range of points AmeriSpeak offers to panelists who complete a questionnaire of this length and complexity. In addition, the proposed amount lies between the \$10 and \$20 amounts offered for the topical module of the Early Childhood Program Participation module of the National Household Education Survey (OMB No. 1850-0768) sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics, which samples a similar population on a similar topic for a similar 20-minute respondent burden (Medway, R et al., 2022).

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

*Personally Identifiable Information*

We are selecting the sample for this survey from NORC's AmeriSpeak panel. As a result, we will have personally identifiable information (PII) for the panelists including names, email addresses, phone numbers, and mailing addresses which will be used to contact panelists and invite them to complete the parent survey questionnaire. This information will be stored separately from the panelists' parent survey questionnaire responses and will not be shared with anyone outside the data collection team. We will not collect personally identifiable information in the parent survey questionnaire.

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. AmeriSpeak panelists consent to be part of the panel when they are initially recruited to AmeriSpeak. Additional consent language relevant to this survey is included at the start of the parent survey questionnaire. Respondents will be informed of all planned uses of data, that their participation is voluntary, that their information will be kept private to the extent permitted by law, that their responses may be aggregated and combined with existing administrative data such as information about state CCEE consumer education policies or state-level Census data, and that the data, questionnaire, and analysis files will be archived in an online data repository for other researchers to access and use.

*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 Security and Monitoring Plan that outlines how respondents' data including PII will be protected. The Contractor shall ensure that all 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.

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.

We will use data collected from this survey to develop a data file for public use by the research community. We will conduct a disclosure review to determine variables for aggregation or exclusion from the archived data files. Data may be excluded from the final archived data files as a result of finding

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a disclosure risk that may reveal private information about a study participant. The final data file will not include any direct identifiers to ensure the privacy of the study sample.

Researchers may use this data file to conduct additional secondary data analyses to learn more about households' use of information sources in searching for and selecting CCEE, or perhaps for methodological research in how these questions performed with our chosen data collection strategy and sample. This data file will be prepared for archiving with an archiving entity.

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

There are no questions of a sensitive nature that will be collected.

**A12. Burden**

*Explanation of Burden Estimates*

We estimate that the Eligibility Confirmation section of the Parent Survey Questionnaire (Section AE) will take approximately 5 minutes to complete, and that the Parent Survey Questionnaire (Section A - DA) will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Cognitive testing of the Parent Survey Questionnaire confirmed these time estimates.

*Estimated Annualized Cost to Respondents*

To compute the total estimate annual cost, the total burden hours were multiplied by the average hourly wage based on the median weekly wages from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Usual Weekly Earnings of Wage and Salary Workers. The median weekly salary for full-time employees 25 years and over was used for parents (\$27.675).

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>No. of Respondents (total over request period)</b>	<b>No. of Responses per Respondent (total over request period)</b>	<b>Avg. Burden per Response (in hours)</b>	<b>Total Burden (in hours)</b>	<b>Average Hourly Wage Rate</b>	<b>Total Annual Respondent Cost</b>
<b>Parent Survey Eligibility Confirmation (Section AE)</b>	7,000	1	.08	560	\$27.675	\$15,498
<b>Parent Survey Questionnaire (Section A - DA)</b>	2,500	1	.25	625	\$27.675	\$17,297
<b>Total</b>				1,185	\$27.675	\$32,795

**A13. Costs**

<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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There are no additional costs to respondents.

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

The total costs for the data collection activities will be \$1,030,000. These costs include personnel labor hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and staff support), and other expenses which would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

<b>Cost Category</b>	<b>Estimated Costs</b>
Field Work	\$600,000
Analysis	\$250,000
Dissemination	\$180,000
<b>Total costs over the request period</b>	<b>\$1,030,000</b>

**A15. Reasons for changes in burden**

Since launching the survey, we have experienced substantially higher screener completion and interview completion rates than expected. Therefore, we have higher than expected burden and need to update the burden rates for this study. As such, we request to update the number of households taking the screener section of the survey from 2,100 to 7,000 and the number of households taking the full survey from 1,500 to 2,500. With increased numbers we will have greater power to detect differences between key subgroups of interest, particularly among low-incidence groups. For example, differences in information access and use based on whether the household has reliable internet access.

**A16. Timeline**

Below is our projected timeline for the following study activity milestones. The data, Parent Survey Questionnaire Eligibility Confirmation (Section AE only) and Parent Survey Questionnaire (Sections A – DA), and methodology files will be prepared and submitted to be archived with a data archiving entity.

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Estimated Timeframe (after OMB approval)</b>
Train interviewing staff	1-2 weeks
Begin administration of the parent survey questionnaire	1-2 weeks
Analysis	3 months
Reporting and archiving public use data with CFdata	9 months

**A17. Exceptions**

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.

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**Attachments**

Instrument 1. Parent Survey Eligibility Confirmation (Section AE) and Parent Survey Questionnaire (Section A - DA)

Instrument 1S. Spanish Translation of Instrument 1 Parent Survey Eligibility Confirmation (Section AE) and Parent Survey Questionnaire (Section A - DA)

Appendix A. Recruitment and Communication Materials

Appendix AS. Recruitment and Communication Materials (Spanish)

Appendix B. References

Appendix C. Technical Overview for the AmeriSpeak panel