Youth Empowerment Information, Data Collection, and Exploration on Avoidance of Sex (IDEAS) –Study of Parent Reflections

Formative Data Collections for Program Support

0970 - 0531

Supporting Statement

Part B

September 2020

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

Part B

B1. Objectives

Study Objectives

The objective of the information collection is to provide the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) and the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) with in-depth qualitative information regarding parent reflections on youth sexual behavior and sexual risk avoidance education (SRAE) and programming, with the goal of describing and generating insights on SRAE program parental engagement strategies that best resonate with parents. This study is being conducted as part of the Youth Empowerment IDEAS project, which aims to identify messages and strategies that resonate with parents and youth and reinforce a sexual risk avoidance message. This information collection request seeks approval to conduct a set of virtual focus groups with parents whose youth receive SRAE programming. These focus groups will allow us to perform an in-depth, qualitative exploration of these topics and summarize parent perspectives and experiences. The qualitative information collected from the parent focus groups will provide FYSB, OPRE, and SRAE grantees with additional insights into program content and strategies that may best resonate with parents and youth to reinforce messages related to sexual risk avoidance.

Generalizability of Results

This study is intended to present an internally valid description of the experience of parents in chosen sites, not to promote statistical generalization to other sites or service populations.

Appropriateness of Study Design and Methods for Planned Uses

The purpose of the focus groups is to obtain in-depth information from parents of youth in SRAE programs. Focus groups provide a unique opportunity to collect information about respondent opinions and reflections, capturing respondent voices in a way that other data collection methods, like survey instruments, cannot. For example, unlike surveys, the focus groups will allow us to delve deeper into how parents communicate with their children about sex-related topics, such as how and why they communicate with their youth about some topics and not others.

We will conduct asynchronous focus groups, or online chat focus groups, that allow users to log into an online platform and respond to discussion guide questions via chat rooms moderated by study staff. This study design lends itself well to this population, as parents often have competing demands and find it difficult to attend in-person focus groups due to the need for childcare. Additionally, the chat-room format allows respondents to complete activities at a time that is convenient for them. Focus group data will not be used to assess youth outcomes. Key limitations will be included in written products associated with the study.

As described in section B2, below, participants for the parent focus groups will be recruited through a convenience sample. As a result, the data collected from the focus groups will not be considered representative of other sites or populations. Ultimately, the results from these focus groups will provide insights on SRAE program content, messages, and strategies that may best resonate with youth, and that may help parents to reinforce messages related to sexual risk avoidance and cessation. As noted in Supporting Statement A, the information collected from the parent focus groups is not intended to be used as the principal basis for public policy decisions and is not expected to meet the threshold of influential or highly influential scientific information.

B2. Methods and Design

Target Population

We propose to conduct up to three virtual focus groups with parents of adolescents in SRAE grantee programs that engage parents in programming, each with up to thirty participants for a total of up to 90 participants. The sampling frame for each focus group will be the roster of parents/guardians who have participated in the parent component of the selected SRAE programs. The research team will use non-probability, purposive sampling to identify potential respondents who can provide information on the study's key constructs. Because participants will be purposively selected, they will not be representative of the population of families that the programs serve. While we will aim to obtain parent demographic variation to the extent possible, including diversity in parent gender and race/ethnicity, as well as extent of parental participation in the program (i.e., parents highly involved in the parent engagement component versus those less involved), we recognize that the programs may not have this type of information and therefore these types of variation may be difficult to implement.

Sampling and Site Selection

The focus groups will employ a convenience sample for focus group participant recruitment, led by a research contractor, Mathematica, who will recruit parents across several SRAE programs that offer a relatively robust set of parent engagement strategies. These SRAE programs were identified through a review of SRAE grant applications and through a breakout session at a 2019 Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention grantee conference. Since the selected programs have already engaged parents in program activities, the contractor will work with the programs to identify parents who would be willing to participate in a focus group to provide feedback on SRAE key topics. We will conduct one focus group with parents from each of the three sites, seeking variation, to the extent possible, of parents with middle school and high school age youth. We will also seek a representative set of parents who reflect the characteristics of the youth served through the grantees' programming. If the programs can provide parent telephone number, home address, and email address information, the study team will reach out to parents directly by email and, if necessary, over the phone to attempt to schedule their participation in the focus groups (Appendix A and Instrument 1). Details on participant recruitment are discussed in section B4.

B3. Design of Data Collection Instruments

Development of Data Collection Instrument(s)

The parent focus group data collection aims to provide insight into parent perspectives on youth sexual behavior and risk avoidance education and programming. The Parent Discussion Guide (Instrument 2) was developed in collaboration with ACF and Mathematica staff, who held brief conversations with SRAE grantees that conduct programming for parents. The discussion guide focuses on: 1) sources of information for youth about sexual health and risk avoidance, 2) parental preferences regarding content and delivery of sexual health education information, 3) parental participation in, and opinions about, the

SRAE program, 4) parent-youth communication, and 5) youth decision making around sexual health and risk avoidance.

The study design itself minimizes potential measurement error in two ways: 1) by providing anonymity for respondents on potentially sensitive items, compared to in-person focus groups, and 2) the online platform exports a transcript of all comments, limiting potential error in note-taking and transcription.

B4. Collection of Data and Quality Control

ACF is contracting with Mathematica for this data collection. The researchers at Mathematica have extensive experience conducting focus groups with adult populations for prior studies sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and other federal agencies.[1]

We will use a virtual engagement platform called QualBoard to conduct the focus groups. QualBoard is an online bulletin board where participants will be able to see and respond to questions, as well as read and respond to fellow participants' answers. However, it is not a real-time chat, so participants can log on at any time that is convenient for them.

Participants will be recruited from up to three SRAE programs by either Mathematica or program staff, via an introductory email (Appendix A) with a follow up eligibility screener administered over the phone (Instrument 1). During the screening call, parents will receive an overview of the study and details about participation. The recruitment period is expected to last approximately two weeks. Mathematica or the SRAE program will send reminder emails to parents that agree to participate (Appendix B) a few days prior to the start of the virtual focus group. Each parent that agrees to participate in the study will be invited to an informational session hosted by the study team, organized by SRAE program site. Participation in this telephone call is voluntary. The aim is to provide an opportunity for the study team to answer any questions participants may have before the parent focus groups begin.

Following the informational session, participants will receive login credentials to access the QualBoard site via email (Appendix C). When they enter the site, they will be asked to enter their first name, initials, or an alias, but will be asked to not provide their full name to protect their privacy. An electronic consent form will be displayed upon login for completion by the participant before the first focus group session begins (Appendix D). Each participant will not be able to access any focus group questions until they complete the consent form.

A trained researcher from Mathematica will moderate the focus group sessions. The moderator will post questions from the discussion guide in a chat box and participants will type responses that will be visible to the entire group. Moderators will be trained on the discussion guide and the focus group lead will review each session across moderators for consistency in engagement with participants. Throughout the sessions, moderators will review responses and when necessary, probe participants to elaborate on

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[1] Pregnancy Assistance Fund Study (OMB Control Number 0990-0424), The Strengthening Relationship Education and Marriage Services Evaluation (OMB Control Number 0970-0481), Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey 2019 (OMB Control Number 0970-0151), Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017-18 (OMB Control Number 1850-0911), Evaluation of Demonstration Projects to End Childhood Hunger (OMB Control Number 0584-0603), Regional Partnership Grants National Cross-Site Evaluation and Evaluation Technical Assistance (OMB Control Number 0970-0444).

responses, and encourage more in-depth responses as needed. Moderators will also encourage participants to read and engage with others in the group.

The focus groups will be administered over three separate sessions on QualBoard. Each session will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The timing per section and session are noted in Instrument 1. After participants complete the initial set of questions, they will be encouraged to log back in at least one time to review other participants' responses and probes from the moderator. Each session will remain open for 24-hours.

Transcripts of all responses logged by participants will be exported from QualBoard as Excel files and/or PDFs at the end of the sessions to prepare for coding and analysis.

B5. Response Rates and Potential Nonresponse Bias

Site/Respondent Selection

The focus groups are not designed to produce statistically generalizable findings and participation is wholly at the respondent's discretion.

Response rates will not be calculated or reported.

NonResponse

As participants will not be randomly sampled and findings are not intended to be representative, non-response bias will not be calculated. Respondent demographics will be documented and reported in written materials associated with the data collection. To provide context for the focus group findings and themes, we will document the background characteristics of the parents who participate in the discussions (for example, their age, gender, race/ethnicity, education level, socioeconomic status, geographic area, and the ages of their children).

B6. Production of Estimates and Projections

The data will not be used to generate population estimates, either for internal use or dissemination.

B7. Data Handling and Analysis

Data Handling

Focus group data retrieved from QualBoard will be saved on a secure drive only accessible to Mathematica study team members. Direct export of the Qualboard data to the secure drive will result in minimal processing. Moderators will review transcripts to fix spelling and grammar issues, fill in missing words, and explain unclear terms or phrases in preparation for qualitative coding and analysis.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data from the focus group transcripts will be reviewed for overarching themes and lessons across each of the key topics explored through the virtual discussions. Codes will be developed based on the research questions and focus group discussion topics and will be applied to the transcripts by the team that moderated the discussions. The task lead for the focus groups will monitor the coding across the team to ensure accuracy and consistency.

Data Use

The focus group data will provide a unique opportunity to learn in-depth qualitative information about parents' beliefs, expectations, and communication with youth regarding youth sexual behavior. The focus groups will generate insights on program content and strategies that may best resonate with youth and parents to reinforce messages related to sexual risk avoidance. Focus group data will be summarized to provide more detailed information about parent engagement strategies employed by grantees, providing insights that may be useful to SRAE grantees and future SRAE programming.

B8. Contact Person(s)

Table B8 lists the federal and contract staff responsible for the study, including each individual's affiliation and email address.

Table B8. Individuals Responsible for Focus Group Discussion Guide and Data Collection Procedures

Name	Affiliation	Email address
Caryn Blitz	Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation Administration for Children and Families U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	Caryn.Blitz@acf.hhs.gov
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Appendices

Appendix A: Parent recruitment email

Appendix B: Reminder email

Appendix C: Invitation email

Appendix D: Consent Form

Instrument 1: Parent Screener Script

Instrument 2: Parent Discussion Guide