

Survey for Staff Supporting Infants and Toddlers for the National Center for Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning's (NCECDTL's) Training and Technical Assistance Offerings

Formative Data Collections for Program Support

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Supporting Statement Part B

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Submitted By:
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Overview of Study Objectives

The goal of this survey is to collect data on the current needs of (1) infant/toddler educators and (2) staff who support infant toddler educators. Results of this survey will be used to develop relevant and meaningful Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) for these groups in the coming year. In particular, the National Center for Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning (NCECDTL) intends to deliver a multi-day TTA event for managers in the infant/toddler space. Data from this survey will inform the planning and execution of this event (and other TTA opportunities offered by NCECDTL) to best meet the most current needs of these groups.

1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

Target Population

Data will be collected from two groups: (1) Head Start infant/toddler educators (including teachers, family child care providers, and home visitors) and (2) Head staff who support infant/toddler educators (including service area managers, directors, home-based supervisors, and child development specialists). The sampling frame will contain Head Start professionals in these categories who are subscribed to receive e-blasts from NCECDTL. The survey link will be distributed to prospective respondents in an e-blast. While this approach necessitates a convenience sampling approach, it also allows for a more diverse array of respondents from across the nation. Furthermore, the sampling frame is comprised of professionals who are already engaged with NCECDTL content and could potentially benefit from the resulting TTA that the survey data is intended to inform.

Sampling

The current data project will employ a convenience sampling approach. The sampling frame will contain two groups of Head Start infant/toddler professionals (educators and managers) who are also signed up to receive communications via e-blast from NCECDTL. The NCECDTL e-blast list includes 22,694 subscribers. Based on current (2023) Program Information Report data (OMB #0970-0427), approximately 16.4% of Head Start staff are infant/toddler educators and an additional 7.6% are leaders who directly support infant/toddler educators. Therefore, the expected population from the e-blast list that would be eligible to complete the survey is approximately 5,446 respondents (3,722 educators and 1,724 managers). Recruitment of respondents will be solicited via an e-blast containing the survey link as well as information needed to consent to participation in the survey (expected burden and data use disclosure). Based on response rates for previous needs assessments and for NCECDTL evaluations offered to similar populations, we expect respondent self-selection into participation to be as high as 40%, yielding a potential respondent pool of up to 2,178 respondents. To mitigate burden on the potential respondent pool, the cap on the survey will be 300 respondents in each respondent category (educators and managers), which allows for both groups to have sufficient data that across-category inferences could be made for certain survey items at a 95% confidence level (5% MOE). The cap will effectively balance optimal respondent pool size with an appropriate reduction in burden.

Appropriateness of Study Design and Methods for Planned Uses

The electronic survey design approach is optimal for this case given (1) the ability to rapidly access and analyze findings to implement change in TTA, and (2) to minimize burden to potential respondents through voluntary, elective completion. The survey asks questions specifically related to professional development in the Head Start field, and is therefore not intended to reflect any conclusions outside decisions specifically supporting the development of TTA. Data is not intended to be fully representative of all Head Start professionals nor of the target populations of the survey, nor is the data intended to be used in any capacity outside of TTA development.

The primary products of this data collection will be (1) TTA developed in light of survey findings to better address the needs of the population, and (2) written summaries of data analyses intended for internal-only Office of Head Start use. This information 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.

2. Procedures for Collection of Information

Data Collection Processes

The survey instrument will be administered using a web-based survey platform (Alchemer). Potential respondents will be able to complete the survey at their convenience during a period of about two weeks. NCECDTL will provide an active link to the web-based survey in the recruitment e-blast. Respondents can discontinue their participation at any time during the survey.

Data Handling

The target population will be advertised in the respondent recruitment e-blast; however, to ensure that respondents are part of the target population, questions about respondents' role and work environment are also at the beginning of the survey. Those respondents who indicate that they are not part of the target population will be disqualified from participation. The survey instrument has been vetted by a team of researchers to ensure quality and functionality prior to deployment. Raw data from the survey will be downloaded for analyses but also preserved in raw form to allow for spot checking of data integrity across statistical analyses and any recoding needed. The dataset will be screened for incomplete or duplicate participation. The data are handled and analyzed by a team of experienced researchers.

Data Analysis

Upon closure of the survey, data will be analyzed within and across the two primary target groups (educators and managers). The data will be summarized across the survey using appropriate descriptive statistics. Most of the survey items are scale selection items (including Likert), so appropriate non-parametric analyses (e.g., categorical regression, Jonckheere-Terpstra) will be employed to examine group differences. Where sample size allows, we will also examine how respondent demographic factors (e.g., education environment, respondent years' experience) may create response covariance. For qualitative data (open-ended survey items), a team of research analysts will create a thematic analysis framework to catalogue and categorize data.

Data Use

The data is only intended for internal capacity building and no publications are expected as a result of this data collection. The primary product of this data collection will be TTA plans and presentations informed by the data.

The process of delivering TTA to the infant/toddler workforce will be vastly improved with a deeper understanding of the needs and professional development goals of the current population. This particular population has experienced a high workforce turnover in recent years (evidenced in PIR data), so a timely survey of this population will allow NCECDTL to provide more responsive TTA in the coming months.

3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Nonresponse

Response Rates

This survey is 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. Because the survey employs a convenience sample approach, the qualitative assessment of nonresponse will not be possible, though partial responses will be examined as applicable.

4. Test of Procedures or Methods to be Taken

Development of Data Collection Instruments

The purpose of the survey is to identify the needs of two target populations to develop TTA in support of those needs. The educator group will answer questions about their demographics, their comfort with infant/toddler education competencies, and how they would like to be supported with professional development. The manager group will answer questions about their demographics, their comfort supporting staff in infant/toddler education competencies, and what topics they are most interested in for additional professional development. These measures are all self-report items; reliability and validity for these items are not applicable, but this will be the most expedient and relevant approach for accruing data on perceived needs across the populations.

The culminating event that is being developed in response to this survey data will feature content centered around the ZERO TO THREE Infant and Toddler Critical Competencies (ITCC) and the Home Visit Rating Scale (HOVR) as frameworks for best practice. The questions in the survey were accordingly developed to assess educators' and managers' comfort with and knowledge of these frameworks instead of a larger breadth of knowledge, limiting the scope of the survey. Managers are asked directly about content they would like to participate in for professional development, which will directly translate to the TTA offerings. Demographic data provided by respondents will be analyzed against the framework knowledge and professional development interest responses to best cater how to deliver content.

5. Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data

- Kaitlin Brunick, Ph.D. (kbrunick@zerotothree.org), Research & Evaluation Director for the National Center for Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning
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Attachments

Instrument: Survey for Staff Supporting Infants and Toddlers