



ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
OFFICE OF PLANNING, RESEARCH, AND EVALUATION

# Child & Family Development Annual Report

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 **OPRE**

# Child and Family Development Research

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# Administration for Children and Families

The Administration for Children & Families (ACF) is a division of the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS). ACF promotes the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals, and communities.

## ACF programs aim to:

- Empower families and individuals to increase their economic independence and productivity
- Encourage strong, healthy, supportive communities that have a positive impact on quality of life and the development of children
- Create partnerships with front-line service providers, states, localities, and tribal communities to identify and implement solutions that transcend traditional program boundaries
- Improve access to services through planning, reform, and integration
- Address the needs, strengths, and abilities of vulnerable populations including refugees and migrants

## Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation

The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) studies ACF programs and the populations they serve through rigorous research and evaluation projects. These include evaluations of existing programs, evaluations of innovative approaches to help children and families who have low incomes, research syntheses, and descriptive and exploratory studies. OPRE aims to build and disseminate knowledge about effective approaches to helping children and families who have low incomes. OPRE's research and evaluation projects are conducted primarily through grants and contracts, and include collaboration with ACF program offices, HHS's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), other Federal entities, and State, Tribal and community partners.

## OPRE includes four divisions:

- The Division of Economic Independence focuses on welfare, employment, and family self-sufficiency.
- The Division of Child and Family Development focuses on child care, Head Start, Early Head Start, child abuse and neglect, and human trafficking.

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- The Division of Family Strengthening focuses on teen pregnancy prevention, youth development, healthy marriage, responsible fatherhood, family violence, runaway and homeless youth, and home visiting.
  - The Division of Data and Improvement focuses on improving the quality, usefulness, sharing, and analysis of data on ACF programs.

## Child and Family Development Research and Evaluation

OPRE's Division of Child and Family Development (DCFD) is responsible for research and evaluation related to Head Start programs, early childhood development, childcare, child maltreatment, child welfare services, and human trafficking. OPRE's research in the area of child and family development focuses on young children, parents and caregivers, families, and youth. Examples of recent focal areas include: equitable access to services, dual language learners, classroom quality, family engagement, provision of comprehensive services, and building and sustaining workforce capacity.

DCFD invests in rigorous research and evaluation on child and family development topics and disseminates findings to a diverse range of stakeholders, including federal and state policymakers, program administrators, researchers, and intermediary organizations. DCFD funds experimental impact evaluations, process and implementation evaluations, descriptive and theory-building research projects, and measure development aimed at informing the design and implementation of programs and improving our ability to capture outcomes. Over the past year, DCFD has worked with ACF's Office of Head Start, Office of Child Care, Children's Bureau, and Office of Trafficking in Persons to develop or implement learning agendas that are aimed at building a culture of learning among program offices. DCFD also invests in building capacity in the research and evaluation community to answer policy-relevant questions.

DCFD works in close partnership with a number of program offices, including, among others:

### In ACF:

- The Office of Head Start;
- The Office of Child Care;
- The Children's Bureau;
- The Office on Trafficking in Persons; and
- The Office of Early Childhood Development;

### In HHS:

- The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation;
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration;
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;

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- The Health Resources and Services Administration; and
  - The National Institutes of Health;

**In the Department of Education:**

- The Institute for Education Sciences;
- The Office of Innovation and Early Learning;
- The Office of Special Education; and
- The Office of English Language Acquisition

*The following pages describe major OPRE/DCFD projects in Fiscal Year 2023.*



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# CROSS-CUTTING EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH

DCFD sponsors projects that focus on issues facing children and families with low income who may be served in a variety of settings. These cross-cutting projects may examine populations that multiple ACF programs serve, may have several foci, or may develop research methodology that supports high-quality evaluations across OPRE's work.

## National Survey of Early Care and Education, 2012, 2019, and 2024 (NSECE 2012, NSECE 2019, and NSECE 2024)

The National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) of 2024 is repeating the NSECE surveys implemented in 2012 and 2019 with new cohorts of (1) child care and early education programs and providers serving families with children from birth through age five who are not yet in kindergarten; 2) the teachers and caregivers that work directly with young children; and (3) households with children from birth through age 13.

As with previous cohorts, these surveys of center- and home-based providers (both listed and unlisted) and the workforce include nationally representative information on the supply of child care and early education available to families across all income levels, with attention to generating a robust sample of providers serving families with low income of all racial, ethnic, language, and cultural backgrounds, in diverse geographic areas. Providers include programs that do or do not participate in the child care subsidy program, regulated, registered, or otherwise listed home-based providers, unlisted home-based providers, and center-based programs (e.g., private, community-based child care, Head Start, and state or local pre-K). The household survey of families with children ages birth through age 13-years includes information about the characteristics of all adults in the family and all the children and will capture schedules of employment, training, and education of the adults and schedules of care used by the children, including all forms of non-parental care in center and homes. The NSECE 2024 will provide information in a manner that facilitates comparisons with data collected for the NSECE in 2012, 2019, and the two COVID-19 follow up surveys conducted between Oct 2020 and February 2022, and will allow for examination of the changing landscape of child care and early education programs during that 12-year period, and of the interactions of demand and supply/utilization of non-parental care.

In addition, the NSECE will include two follow-up data collections with respondents who complete interviews in the 2024 NSECE: one with households and one with individuals who were employed in center-based child care and early education programs in early 2024. Using characteristics of sample members from the 2024 NSECE, the collected household follow-up data will allow nationally-representative descriptions of 1) households under 300% FPL with at least one resident

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child under age 9, and 2) households with at least one resident child under age 13 and using paid individual care in 2024, and will provide new information on household search and selection of ECE, with a focus on financial assistance and paid individual care. Data collected in the workforce follow-up will allow nationally-representative descriptions of classroom-based child care and early education workers in 2024 and will provide new information on retention and attrition patterns among classroom-based child care and early education workers.

The NSECE 2024 is implemented through a contract with NORC at the University of Chicago (Rupa Datta, Project Director), with partners from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago and Child Trends.

### Variations in Implementation of Quality Interventions (VIQI)

Experts agree that the quality of children’s early care and educational experiences is critical for promoting children’s development. However, there is a lack of consensus around which aspects of quality matter most, what levels of quality are essential for promoting children’s development, and how quality enhancement efforts should be designed in order to reliably promote children’s developmental outcomes, particularly in light of the varied landscape of child care, Head Start, and early care and education nationally.

The VIQI project is a large-scale, rigorous, multi-year study that started in 2016 and is being conducted in two key stages to address these issues and to build substantial new evidence to inform center-based child care and Head Start policies and practices. The VIQI project is guided by the following research questions:

- Do overall improvements in classroom quality promote children’s developmental outcomes?
- Do different dimensions of classroom quality yield different effects on children’s developmental outcomes?
- Do critical levels in classroom quality need to be met in order to promote children’s developmental outcomes?
- Do the effects of classroom quality – different dimensions or levels – on children’s developmental outcomes differ, depending on child, staff, and center characteristics? Do differences in children’s developmental outcomes vary based on the initial levels of classroom quality?
- Do classrooms with varying initial levels of readiness to implement the intervention benefit from quality improvement efforts differently? Do classrooms with varying initial levels of classroom quality benefit from quality improvement efforts differently?

The first stage of the VIQI project included a pilot feasibility study to refine protocols and measures to inform the second stage, a larger-scale impact and implementation study. At the core of the project is a 3-group randomized controlled study (i.e., two intervention groups, one comparison

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group) testing two theoretically distinct interventions consisting of curricular and professional development supports that target different dimensions of classroom quality (e.g. structural, interactional, instructional). The VIQI project is designed to examine how these interventions improve a range of children’s developmental outcomes in mixed-aged classrooms serving 3- and 4-year-olds in community-based child care and Head Start settings that vary in initial levels of quality.

Under a follow on contract, the VIQI project team is finalizing analyses of the impact and implementation study, and dissemination products. This project is led by MDRC (Michelle Maier as Project Director and Principal Investigator, JoAnn Hsueh as Co-Principal Investigator) along with partners at the University of Virginia (Margaret Burchinal as Co-Principal Investigator), Abt Associates, RTI International and MEF Associates.

### **Building and Sustaining the Early Care and Education Workforce (BASE)**

Funded in 2020, the Building and Sustaining the Child Care and Early Education (CCEE) Workforce project (BASE) aims to assist ACF, states, and localities in understanding what drives workforce turnover in the ECE field and to evaluate promising strategies to support recruitment and retention of a qualified CCEE workforce. The dynamics contributing to high rates of staff departures in some center-based CCEE programs and decreasing supply of family child care providers, including individuals paid to provide noncustodial care, are not well understood. It is critical that ACF learns more about what motivates individuals to enter jobs in child care and early education and about what supports their attachment to the field. Better comprehension of how various conditions, incentives, and strategies may differentially affect CCEE workers, depending on individuals’ backgrounds, programmatic and local contexts, and features of care settings, can inform public and private efforts, and especially the initiatives of the Office of Child Care and Office of Head Start, to support states and programs in their activities to build and retain a qualified CCEE workforce.

This project has released publications that:

1. Assess the knowledge base about what contributes to high rates of turnover among CCEE educators;
2. Identify and assess existing efforts to increase recruitment and reduce the loss of CCEE educators, including specific efforts being implemented in Head Start/Early Head Start programs and other subsidized CCEE settings;
3. Assess the availability and potential of existing data to address questions about recruitment and retention of the CCEE workforce;

Forthcoming publications include products that:

1. Design study options for investigating factors and strategies to increase workforce retention; and



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2. Analyze existing data and collect new data to address key questions about workforce retention.

In 2023, the BASE team began evaluating one statewide center-based and one home-based pilot initiative in Colorado that aim to improve the economic well-being of the child care and early education (CCEE) workforce. Teachers and assistant teachers in randomly selected eligible centers received an increase in pay of between \$3 to \$7.50/hour, and home-based child care providers and assistants received annual award amounts for two years that can be used to fund medical benefits, paid time off, and retirement contributions. Survey, interview, and cost data are being collected to understand the impact, implementation, and costs associated with the center-based pilot initiative and describe implementation experiences with the home-based initiative.

This project is led by MDRC (Cynthia Miller and JoAnn Hsueh as Co-Principal Investigators) in partnership with MEF Associates, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, Erikson Institute, Butler Institute for Families, University of Denver, and Decision Information Resources, Inc.

### **Professional Development Tools to Improve Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infant and Toddler Care (Q-CCIIT PD Tools)**

The Professional Development Tools to Improve Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infant and Toddler Care (Q-CCIIT PD Tools) project developed a research-based professional development system called We Grow Together (WGT). As part of We Grow Together, teachers and caregivers work with their professional development providers (mentors, coaches, supervisors) using resources delivered on an interactive website. The resources include training videos, materials, and exercises targeting the same principles and practices assessed by the Q-CCIIT observation tool: support for socioemotional, language and literacy, and cognitive development. This project conducted a field test to examine the implementation of We Grow Together with teachers and caregivers of infants and toddlers and their professional development providers in Early Head Start, family child care, and community-based child care settings.

The field test sought to address the following research questions:

1. What tools and supports help early childhood professionals use We Grow Together's responsive caregiving principles to improve caregiver-child interactions?
2. Can WGT be used by early childhood professionals to support change in beliefs, knowledge, or practice concerning infants and toddlers?

In 2023, the project published a [Design Option Report for the We Grow Together Process and Implementation Study](#).

This project was led by Mathematica Policy Research (Louisa Tarullo, Shannon Monahan, and Sally Atkins-Burnett).

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## Creating a Culture of Continuous Quality Improvement in Child Care and Head Start Settings (CCL)

The purpose of this project is to explore how child care and Head Start programs can improve the quality of services received by young children, while institutionalizing continuous quality improvement activities. The project has designed and assessed the feasibility of implementation of examines a specific approach to continuous quality improvement – the Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) – to promote the uptake and success of evidence-based practices around social and emotional learning (SEL) in both child care and Head Start settings. In 2017, OPRE contracted with Child Trends and the team conducted a literature review, developed a theory of change framework, and designed conducted a feasibility study with a measurement plan. Starting in 2021, Phase II has built on the existing work and materials from Phase I to explore whether it is possible to integrate the BSC into existing training and technical assistance systems in Head Start and child care to enhance, instead of duplicate, existing efforts within those systems.

In 2018, a BSC was initiated to focus on supporting children’s SEL within seven ECE settings in an East Coast, urban area. Simultaneously, researchers conducted a study to assess the feasibility of implementing a BSC in the early care and education context. An embedded case study design with data collection from multiple sources at multiple time points, across all phases of implementation of the BSC, was implemented to learn about the overall cost of implementation, the organizational and individual characteristics that relate to feasibility, barriers related to feasibility, and the supports within the BSC that are associated with progress towards improvement. At the end of 2020, the project has completed data collection and is preparing a final report for dissemination. Reports summarizing study findings were released in 2021.

Phase II has started to landscape the existing Head Start regional Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) System and State QRIS systems to examine “business as usual” in providing training and technical assistance on SEL practices, whether there are current needs in the form of gaps between knowledge and practice in implementing evidence-based SEL practices in the classroom, the contextual variation within these systems, and both program needs and ability to implement in-person training in the COVID context. Next, Phase II will design and implement a BSC within selected state systems to determine whether it is feasible to do so, whether doing so addresses some of the challenges experienced in Phase I when the BSC was implemented at the program level, and the costs and perceived benefits of BSC implementation within ECE T/TA systems. The results of this phase will inform the design and implementation of an impact study of the BSC to be conducted in Phase III of the project.

This project is led by Child Trends (Kathryn Tout as Principal Investigator, Tamara Halle as co-PI) along with partnership from the University of Massachusetts Boston (Anne Douglass as co-PI).

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## Child Care and Early Education Research Connections

Child Care and Early Education Research Connections (Research Connections) promotes the use of research findings in policymaking and practice. Research Connections' is a digital library of child care and early education research resources for researchers, policymakers, and other professionals. The Research Connections librarians catalog a searchable collection of peer reviewed journal articles and “gray” literature (i.e., research reports from states, local communities, foundations, and the federal government) on child care and early education research from a wide range of disciplines and sources. The collection includes interactive tools and filters that allow users to refine their searches by features, such as state/territory or key child care and early education research topics.

This project is currently supported through a cooperative agreement with ICF (Karen Ruprecht as Project Lead).

## Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium (CCEEPRC)

Supported by OPRE and the Offices of Child Care and Head Start, the Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium (CCEEPRC) includes former and current grantees and contractors funded by ACF to conduct child care and early education policy-related research.

The Consortium was created by the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families in 1995 to increase national capacity for sound child care and early education research, identify and respond to critical issues, and link child care and early education research with policy and practice. CCEEPRC has historically held an annual in-person research meeting for its members that builds on in-depth roundtables and other activities throughout the year. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, CCEEPRC's activities have shifted in format and frequency—and newly developed Research Collaboratives were launched in 2022 with the second cohort launching in 2024. The Research Collaboratives were designed to create opportunities for our vast and diverse CCEEPRC membership to connect within the virtual landscape of our world in 2022-2023. As such, smaller, topically focused, intimate working groups were developed to support monthly connections across project teams and propel our work forward.

Through the in-person meeting and virtual Research Collaboratives, CCEEPRC provides a forum for researchers, state, territory, and local policymakers and program administrators, technical assistance partners, and federal staff from other agencies and departments to connect across programs and projects to explore research findings, questions and methods, as well as emerging information needs, and to consider how these can inform child care and early education policies to better serve children and families. Materials from past CCEEPRC meetings and Research Collaboratives can be found on the Research Connections website.

This project is supported through OPRE's Research Support Contract, which is awarded to ICF (Carolyn Swaney) and consultant Jennifer Park.

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## Administration for Children and Families' National Research Conference on Early Childhood (NRCEC) 2022/24

The goals of ACF's National Research Conference on Early Childhood (NRCEC) are to:

- identify and disseminate research relevant to young children (birth to 8 years) and their families;
- encourage collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to build the evidence base for policy and practice; and
- foster discussion of research priorities, gaps, and needs.

The biannual event has occurred since 1992 (originally titled Head Start's National Research Conference). Research presented at NRCEC addresses knowledge gaps across programs serving young children and their families. NRCEC presents the latest research surrounding Head Start, Early Head Start, child care, home visiting, child welfare, special education, pre-kindergarten, early elementary, and other early childhood programs.

The NRCEC 2022 virtual event was a success, presenting over fifty sessions addressing questions of importance to early care, early education, and other programs providing services to young children. The 3100 attendees include a record proportion of practitioners, in addition to researchers and policy makers from across the country. Selected recorded sessions from the event can be found at [www.nrcec.net](http://www.nrcec.net).

For 2023, planning was initiated for NRCEC 2024.

The contract for NRCEC 2022/2024 was awarded to AIR (Annie Oliver as Project Director).

### Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance Cross-Systems Evaluation

This project carried out utilization-focused evaluation activities to address ACF's questions about the processes and effectiveness of Office of Child Care (OCC) and Office of Head Start (OHS) Training and Technical Assistance Systems (T/TA Systems). The project included: a comprehensive review of the knowledge base, a scan and analyses of administrative sources of T/TA data, a study of peer learning opportunities offered to Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) grant recipients, the development of a CCDF equity assessment toolkit, a census survey of Head Start grant recipients about their experiences with T/TA, and technical support for use of data and evaluation tools for continuous quality improvement among T/TA partners. OPRE oversaw the project in close collaboration with OCC and OHS.

This project is led by NORC at the University of Chicago (Carol Hafford and Marc Hernandez, Co-Principal Investigators).

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## Network of Infant/Toddler Researchers (NitR)

The Network of Infant/Toddler Researchers (NitR) answers questions concerning children's first three years of life by bringing together researchers interested in policy and practice. NitR members collaborate to identify relevant basic and applied research and translate it for a variety of audiences. NitR builds collaboration capacity by facilitating networking and coordination among participants to conduct future research that will inform ACF-sponsored programs. NitR members include staff from OPRE and other ACF/HHS agencies, researchers in academia, and contractors who are working on issues related to the first three years of life. In FY23, NitR hosted the 2023 virtual Annual Meeting series about Federal Updates and working meetings to discuss Infant Toddler research frameworks about systems alignment and collaboration, workforce development and support, and child and family well-being. In addition, NitR hosted informal gatherings at the Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium (CCEEPRC) and Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) Biannual Meeting and organized a virtual webinar on Infant Toddler Competencies.

This project is supported through OPRE's Research Support Contract, which is awarded to ICF (Carolyn Swaney, Hila Bernstein). ICF has a subcontract for this project with Rachel Chazan Cohen.

## The Child & Family Data Archive

The Child & Family Data Archive is the place to discover, access, and analyze data on young children, their families and communities, and the programs that serve them. OPRE funds numerous data collection efforts through research studies on a wide range of early care and education (ECE) topics within and across child care, Head Start, and home visiting. The Child & Family Data Archive provides ongoing support to facilitate sharing data from previous, current, and future OPRE-supported grants and contracts relevant to the ECE field. Additionally, this archive may support the sharing of datasets in other ECE-relevant fields such as economic self-sufficiency, welfare, and employment.

The Child & Family Data Archive hosts over 350 datasets. Example datasets include:

- [American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey \(AI/AN FACES, 2015, 2019\)](#)
- [Child Care and Development Fund \(CCDF\) Policies Database \(2009-2021\)](#)
- [Head Start Family & Child Experiences Study \(FACES 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2014, 2017, 2019; Family Engagement Plus Study, 2014-2015\)](#)
- [Early Head Start Family & Child Experiences Survey \(Baby FACES 2009-2012, 2018, and 2022\)](#)
- [Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Study \(MSHS 2017\)](#)
- [Mother and Infant Home Visiting Program Evaluation \(MIHOPE 2012-2019\)](#)



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- [Mother and Infant Home Visiting Program Evaluation-Strong Start \(MIHOPE-Strong Start 2012-2017\)](#)
  - [National Survey of Early Care and Education \(NSECE 2010-2012, 2019, COVID-19 Longitudinal Follow-up 2019-2022\)](#)

## Early Care and Education Leadership Study (ExCELS)

Leadership is widely recognized as an essential driver of organizational performance and improvement, but little is known about its role in driving the quality of early childhood programs and desired outcomes for programs, staff and families. In launching the Early Care and Education Leadership Study (ExCELS), OPRE seeks to fill the definitional and measurement gaps to help the early childhood field understand how effective leaders can improve quality experiences for families in early care and education (ECE) settings. The project will identify the key features of effective ECE leadership and highlight gaps in our understanding. In 2019 and 2020, the team reviewed existing research literature; constructed a theory of change that shows how ECE leaders can act as change agents for quality improvement; and developed a compendium of existing measures aligned with the theory of change to identify measurement gaps. In 2020, the team also began development of a short form instrument to examine key ECE leadership constructs in center-based settings, serving children birth to age 5 (not yet in kindergarten). In 2021, the project published and disseminated the literature review and has identified several promising leadership quality improvement initiatives and methods of evaluating them. In 2022, the project published and disseminated the compendium of measures and conducted a descriptive study in approximately 100 centers that receive funding from Head Start and/or the Child Care and Development Fund. The study included surveys of teaching staff and center management to measure who center leaders are, what they do, and what they bring. The items included on the surveys were used to develop a measure of leadership.

This project is led by Mathematica (Gretchen Kirby as Project Director) and its subcontractor, the University of Massachusetts, Boston (Anne Douglass as Co-PI), to conduct this study.

## Next Steps for Rigorous Research on Two-Generation Approaches (NS2G)

*This project is a joint effort with the Division of Economic Independence.*

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The Next Steps for Rigorous Research on Two-Generation Approaches (NS2G) project, which concluded in 2023, aimed to build on the gaps in research and practice highlighted in an earlier project, [Integrated Approaches to Supporting Child Development and Improving Family Economic Security](#). Specific objectives included:

- 1) Conducting formative research to better understand program implementation, strengthen promising programs, and prepare them for evaluations of effectiveness;

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- 2) Building the capacity of programs and researchers to conduct rigorous and meaningful evaluations of integrated approaches to supporting child development and improving family economic security; and
  - 3) Addressing measurement issues to promote learning across evaluations and a better understanding of relevant processes and outcomes of two-generation programs for low-income children and their parents.

The project team also developed, pilot tested, and refined a new measure specific to two-generation programs with participating NS2G initiatives.

The NS2G study team developed several products for two-generation practitioners and researchers:

- [Final synthesis report](#)
- Series of practitioner briefs
  - [Defining a Two-Generation Logic Model](#) (with fillable template)
  - [Using a Structured Learning Process to Strengthen Two-Generation Service Delivery](#) (with program improvement planning worksheet)
  - [Using Rapid Cycle Learning to Build Momentum for Change in Two-Generation Service Delivery](#)
- Brief on the initial development of the Two-Generation Mutual Reinforcement Measurement tool <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/two-generation-mutual-reinforcement-measurement-tool> (with several appendices, including an electronic version of the tool)

This project was led by Mathematica (Emily Sama-Miller and Scott Baumgartner as the Project Directors).

### **Infant and Toddler Teacher and Caregiver Competencies (ITTCC)**

Identifying the competencies (knowledge, skills, and attributes) essential to a given profession may offer a common language and lens for assessing job performance and provide a clear structure for professional growth and development. The [Infant and Toddler Teacher and Caregiver Competencies](#) (ITTCC) project examined existing efforts – across states, institutes of higher education, professional organizations, and providers— related to competencies of teachers and caregivers serving infants and toddlers.

The project included several foundational tasks:

- A [scan of existing competency frameworks](#), to examine approaches to implementation and assessment as well as alignment across various competency frameworks.
- A [scan of measures aligned with competencies](#), to examine potential tools for assessing competencies for research or practice.

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- A [literature review](#), to examine and depict the associations between competencies and key program, teacher/caregiver, family, and child outcomes.
  - An examination of other fields that have successfully developed and implemented competency frameworks, to identify key lessons that can be applied to infant and toddler care and education.

Building on this foundational work, the project developed several products that describe different approaches to the implementation of competency frameworks and identify promising practices and lessons learned related to the implementation of infant and toddler teacher and caregiver competency frameworks:

- A [scan of online competency-based professional development \(PD\) systems](#) that include infant and toddler teachers and caregivers as an audience.
- An [interactive map](#) that provides information on state competency frameworks relevant to I/T teachers and caregivers.
- A session at ACF's National Research Conference of Early Childhood 2022 on [State Efforts to Support the Competencies of the Infant and Toddler Workforce](#)
- Profiles of [California](#), [Illinois](#), [Maine](#), [Oregon](#), and [Texas](#) that have developed and implemented competency frameworks focused on infant and toddler teachers.
- A [multi-case study report](#) that provides a comprehensive picture of competency framework implementation and presents overarching lessons learned across five states.
- A [project synthesis](#) that presents a conceptual model for the implementation of competency frameworks, describes key lessons from the project, and identifies future steps for research.

This project is led by Mathematica (Pia Caronongan as Project Director).

## Consumer Education and Parental Choice in Early Care and Education

The 2014 Reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and subsequent 2016 Final Rule demonstrated a new commitment on the part of the child care subsidy program to providing equal access to stable, high-quality child care and early education (CCEE) for children of households with low income. Part of supporting equal access included providing guidance to states and territories regarding child care consumer education strategies and the type of information that should be provided to support parents and/or caregivers as they are deciding where to enroll their child for care.

OPRE launched the Consumer Education and Parental Choice in Early Care and Education project to learn more about how parents find and use information to make informed choices about their children's enrollment in CCEE programs, with a particular focus on parents' use of information from states' and territories' consumer education efforts. This project will also examine the breadth of states' and territories' consumer education efforts.

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During 2023, the team conducted [Case Studies of Child Care and Development Fund Lead Agencies' Consumer Education Strategies](#). The study collected from 6 sites (5 states & 1 territory) on (a) the selected consumer education strategies; (b) implementation successes and challenges; and (c) parents' experiences looking for CCEE. The team is currently planning a survey to learn more about where parents look for and find information about their CCEE options and how they use consumer information to decide where to send their child for care.

The team also planned for a [nationally representative survey](#) to learn more about where parents look for and find information about Child Care and Early Education (CCEE), how parents assess the people, places, or things that may offer CCEE information, what types of CCEE information parents look for, and how parents use information to select CCEE. The study aims to gather information that may be used by Child Care Lead Agencies to inform their consumer education efforts.

This project is led by NORC at the University of Chicago (Jill Connelly as Project Manager, Rupa Datta as co-PI) and Urban Institute (Diane Schilder as Project Manager, Teresa Derrick-Kills as co-PI) in collaboration with Child Care Aware of America and Roberta Weber of Oregon State University.

## Exploring the Opportunity Gap for Young Children from Birth to Age 8

DCFD contributed funding in 2020 to the National Academies of Engineering, Sciences, and Medicine (NASEM) to carry out a consensus study on the causes, costs, and consequences of the “opportunity gap” for young children from birth to age eight. The opportunity gap was defined as “the unequal and inequitable distribution of resources and experiences on the basis of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, disability, immigration status, community wealth, familial situations, geography, or other factors that contribute to or perpetuate inequities in well-being across groups of young children in outcomes including health, social and emotional development, and education.”

In 2023, NASEM released the final report of the committee's findings, [Closing the Opportunity Gap in Young Children](#). The report synthesizes evidence across three broad domains – education, physical health, and social-emotional health and well-being; draws conclusions regarding the contexts that drive opportunity gaps and areas in which there are opportunities to change policies, programs, and interventions to close the opportunity gap for young children; and offers recommendations to address opportunity gaps, improve data collection, and identify future research needs.

## Understanding Supply-Building and Sustainability Efforts of the Child Care and Early Education (CCEE) Market (2021-2026)

In 2021, OPRE launched Understanding Supply-Building and Sustainability Efforts of the Child Care and Early Education (CCEE) Market to better understand the types of CCEE supply-building

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and sustainability efforts states, territories, and tribes are undertaking as well as to plan for a potential future evaluation of those efforts. The project will pay particular attention to how the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the CCEE market (e.g., supply and demand, cost of care) and how supply-building or sustainability efforts may have changed in response. In addition, the project will focus on underserved populations (e.g., families with infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, children in underserved areas, and children who receive care during nontraditional hours). Over the next few years, this project aims to: (1) Assess the available literature and information on supply-building and sustainability efforts (2) collect in-depth information from states, territories, and tribes to determine if any are ready for an intensive evaluation of their supply building and/or sustainability efforts; (3) analyze secondary data on supply-building and sustainability efforts; (3) develop designs for a future rigorous evaluation of select supply-building and/or sustainability efforts; and (5) develop geomaps of supply-building and/or sustainability efforts. Throughout the course of the project, the project team will engage a variety of contributors, including state and territory administrators, Tribal Lead Agencies and Tribal community members, CCEE advocates and researchers, child care and early education providers, and families of children who seek and/or utilize child care and early education services.

This project is led by Urban Institute (Gina Adams as Principal Investigator and Heather Sandstrom as Project Director).

### **Assessing the Implementation and Cost of High-Quality Early Care and Education (ECE-ICHQ)**

The goal of the Assessing the Implementation and Cost of High Quality Early Care and Education (ECE-ICHQ) project is to:

- Produce technically sound, systematic measures of the implementation and costs of education and care in center-based settings that serve children birth to age 5 (not yet in kindergarten)
- Produce implementation and cost measures that can be used with existing measures of quality to examine the variation in ECE center capacities and resources that can make a difference in the experiences of children
- Develop a feasible and useful instrument to guide the collection, development, and reporting of implementation and cost for a broad range of users

The final ICHQ instruments measure what a center does to support quality, how quality features and practices are supported and implemented within a center, and how much the ECE services cost and how resources are allocated within a center.

The ECE-ICHQ project involves a multi-case study and field test and the development of measures to assess the cost and implementation of high-quality center-based ECE programs and



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the process through which costs are related to quality in center-based ECE settings serving children birth through age five (not yet in kindergarten). Under a follow on contract, the ECE-ICHQ team is finalizing the measures, user's guide, technical report, and dissemination products.

This project is led by Mathematica (Pia Caronongan, Principal Investigator/Project Director and Gretchen Kirby, Co-principal Investigator).

### **Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships Sustainability Study**

This study followed up with the EHS programs and child care providers (including child care center directors and family child care providers) who participated in the National Descriptive Study of Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships to understand whether and how partnerships have been sustained or have dissolved, and which features of partnerships support or impede sustainability. Data collection took place in 2022 and included surveys of those who participated in 2016 as well as semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of child care providers whose partnerships have dissolved and have been sustained since 2016.

In 2023, findings were released in [Findings from the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships Sustainability Study](#) and data were archived at the Child and Family Data Archive.

This project is led by Mathematica Policy Research.

### **Addressing the Long-Term Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Children and Families**

Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic will likely carry significant downstream implications for child physical and mental health. In addition, the pandemic highlighted pre-existing societal inequities, and introduced new challenges and obstacles, particularly for children and families living in communities that have been historically marginalized. To better understand the state of the science on these complex issues, OPRE contributed funding in 2021 to support an ad hoc committee, formed under the auspices of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), in conducting a consensus study on the consequences of and solutions to the long-term effects of COVID-19 on children living in high-risk communities.

In 2023, NASEM released the consensus report of the committee's findings, [Addressing the Long-Term Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Children and Families](#). In the report, the committee examined the societal context of the COVID-19 pandemic, short-term outcomes, and pandemic-era responses, and they made recommendations for a path to recover and rectify the inequities resulting from and exposed by the pandemic. Among the committee's recommendations for policies and practices are approaches to supporting children's social, emotional, and education needs and addressing families' economic needs. The report also highlights research and data needs, including (a) strengthening data systems to support service provision and identification of

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needs and opportunities and (b) prioritizing rigorous research, and the infrastructure to support it, on the effects of the pandemic on children and families.

## Policies and Programs to Reduce Intergenerational Poverty

In the 2021 House Appropriations Committee Report (H. Rept. 116-450), Congress directed HHS to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to “provide an evidence-based analysis of and recommendations for policies and programs to reduce intergenerational poverty and improve child welfare.” This project supports an ad hoc committee, formed under the auspices of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), in conducting a consensus study over the course of 36 months. The study is designed to complement the 2019 NASEM report, [A Roadmap to Reduce Child Poverty](#), which provided recommendations for policy and programs to reduce child poverty within 10 years.

In 2023, NASEM released the final report of the committee’s findings, [Reducing Intergenerational Poverty](#). The report identified the drivers of long-term intergenerational poverty, racial disparities in intergenerational poverty, potential policies and programs to reduce it, and recommendations for actions to address gaps in research. The committee also released a special report in 2023, [Intergenerational Poverty and Mobility Among Native Americans in the United States: Proceedings of a Workshop](#). In 2024, committee members will present findings to local, state, and federal policymakers, and other relevant audiences, and will publish special topics briefs.

## Develop Teaching Materials Based on OPRE's Research and Evaluation

The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) supports high-quality research on programs and policies that promote the well-being of children and families. However, gaps between federal and academic research can make it hard to ensure students and professionals in relevant fields are aware of OPRE’s work. To address these gaps, this [project](#) aims to create and disseminate teaching materials for graduate and undergraduate courses.

To inform the development of the teaching materials, the project team initially conducted a survey of higher education instructors across nine targeted disciplines. The key goals of the survey were to better understand: the academic audience(s) for OPRE’s teaching materials, the instructional needs of this audience, and how to disseminate the materials to instructors.

During 2023, the team worked on several packages of teaching materials:

- Applying Behavioral Science Concepts to Improve Program Design and Outcomes
- An Introduction to the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and the CCDF Policies Database
- Interactions between Research and Policy: The Head Start Program
- Fundamentals of Self-Regulation and Co-Regulation

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The team also engaged with content and instructional design experts to ensure teaching materials will be:

- Adaptable (Instructors can customize the materials to better fit the needs of their curriculum).
- Applied (connecting policy-relevant research to practice and theory).
- Engaging (interactive learning experiences).
- Relevant for a variety of disciplines including social work, public policy, psychology, education, human development, sociology, public health, economics, and research/evaluation.

The teaching materials will be available on the OPRE website in summer 2024.

OPRE contracted with MEF Associates and their partners Mathematica and Prof2Prof for this project.

Point(s) of contact: Alysia Blandon and Shirley Adelstein.



## CHILD CARE: RAISING QUALITY AND SUPPORTING PARENTAL EMPLOYMENT

A growing body of research demonstrating the link between high quality early care and education and positive child and family outcomes has encouraged efforts to enhance early care and education programs. Early care and education programs serve as resources for families, supporting young children’s development in a variety of domains, assisting parents, and providing comprehensive services for families. Research in this area focuses on early learning education

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standards, improving quality in care settings, innovative interventions, and supporting parental employment through access to high quality care.

## **Child Care and Development Block Grant Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grants Cohort 1 and Cohort 2**

In 2016, ACF began the [Child Care and Development Block Grant \(CCDBG\) Implementation Research and Evaluation Grants program](#). The goal of this grant program was to provide Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies the opportunity to plan for and evaluate initiatives and policy changes in response to the goals of the CCDBG Act of 2014. The grant program had two phases: a planning grant (Phase I) to develop and plan for an evaluation research project and an implementation grant (Phase II) to conduct the evaluations designed in Phase I.

The first cohort of planning grants (Phase I/Cohort 1) included eight CCDF Lead Agencies awarded cooperative agreements in September 2016. The second cohort (Phase I/Cohort 2) included three CCDF Lead Agencies awarded cooperative agreements in May 2017.

The first cohort of implementation grantees (Phase II/Cohort 1) includes four CCDF Lead Agencies awarded cooperative agreements in March 2018. Projects focus on improving infant and toddler care quality with increased set-aside for quality; evaluating extension of redetermination length of subsidies; evaluating new health and safety standards; monitoring license exempt providers; examining the stability of subsidies for families and providers; understanding professional development supports for home based providers; and increasing access to care.

The second cohort of implementation grantees (Phase II/Cohort 2) were awarded cooperative agreements in November 2018 and includes two CCDF Lead Agencies. Their projects focus on improving culturally responsive practice in tribal early care and learning settings and examining how changes in authorization length and generosity of subsidy are associated with access to high quality care, child care continuity, and parental employment. Most of the grants ended in 2023, and we published a list of [publications](#) from the grants.

## **Child Care and Early Education Policy and Research Analysis Project (CCEEPRA)**

The purpose of the Child Care and Early Education Policy and Research Analysis (CCEEPRA) project is to support policy and program planning and decision-making with rigorous, research-based information. Through CCEEPRA, Child Trends identifies high-priority issues in child care and early education (CCEE), develops research activities to address the issues, and shares results and implications with state, federal, and regional leaders. Research topics and activities are selected in partnership with OPRE to ensure that the project activities address the needs of children and families with low incomes and elevate the voices and experiences of parents and the child care and early education workforce. CCEEPRA activities aim to inform policies and practices related to the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and other early childhood initiatives at the

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Administration for Children and Families. Considerations to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion are embedded in all research activities. The work is intended to address critical issues in child care and early education while building the capacity for new research and evaluation efforts. Products supported through CCEEPRA include literature reviews, syntheses of research findings, policy scans, fact sheets, data snapshots, measures compendia, meeting summaries, briefing papers, webinars, research briefs, research-to-policy/research-to-practice briefs, and research translation products disseminated in multimedia formats.

Examples of key research activities include:

- Identifying effective strategies to promote equitable access to child care and early education.
- Documenting key trends in the characteristics and supply of child care and early education through analyses of the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE).
- Documenting trends in families' search and use of different types of child care and early education through analyses of the NSECE.
- Analyzing characteristics of and supports for the child care and early education workforce.
- Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on child care and early education.
- Understanding strategies to improve the quality of child care and early education.
- Analyzing state and territory implementation of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG).
- Synthesizing knowledge gained through research and consultation with child care and early education experts to inform future research and policies at the national, state, and local levels.
- Translating research findings into short, easy-to-use products designed for child care and early education leaders and their teams.
- Convening research and policy experts to review research findings and identify implications for policy decision-making and program administration.
- Identifying new methodological and analytic approaches to increase the efficiency and applicability of research efforts.

This project is led by Child Trends (Tamara Halle and Kathryn Tout, Co-Principal Investigators)

### **Early Care and Education Research Scholars: Child Care Dissertation Grants**

The Early Care and Education Research Scholars: Child Care Dissertation Grants support dissertation research addressing child care policy interests in partnership with state Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) agencies or administrators. The grant program builds capacity in the field to produce research on questions that inform child care policy decision-making.

The immediate goals of the Child Care Dissertation Grants are to:

- Build capacity in the early care and education field by supporting high-quality dissertation research and student-faculty collaboration and mentorship;



- Conduct rigorous research that has the capacity to inform child care programs, policies, and practices;
- Support active communication, collaboration, and partnerships between researchers and CCDF policymakers;
- Foster the exchange of current research, ideas, and information among research, policy, and practice communities.



### Understanding the Role of Licensing in Early Care and Education (TRLECE)

Funded in 2019, this 5-year project seeks to strengthen the field’s understanding of the role of child care and early education (CCEE) licensing in supporting positive outcomes for providers, families and children. Features of CCEE licensing systems include, but are not limited to, establishing licensing standards, practices to monitor provider compliance, pre-service and ongoing health and safety training for CCEE providers, and training and management of licensing staff to perform roles related to monitoring and ensuring compliance.

This project will:

1. Identify and address gaps in knowledge about how key features of the CCEE licensing system are related to CCEE quality and outcomes for children, families, and others who interact with the licensing system (e.g., licensing agencies, state administrations).
2. Collect new data and analyze existing data to address priority questions about licensing systems.
3. Develop resources to support states and territories in evaluating and strengthening their licensing systems.

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The project team has

- Refined a conceptual framework for how the licensing system can support CCEE quality and other key outcomes.
- Synthesized information about licensing research, policies, and administrative practices.
- Analyzed national datasets and produced public products about various licensing topics, including monitoring and enforcement. Interviewed State and Territory licensing administrators to understand current licensing issues, their research needs and priority research questions.
- Analyzed licensing data published by states to answer questions about the CCEE licensing system.
- Established partnerships with states to answer research questions about the CCEE licensing system using their administrative data.
- Collected new survey data and qualitative interviews as part of research studies to address gaps and priorities.
- Engaged with constituents and experts to inform project activities and products.

The project team is working on several publications to share findings from these research activities.

This project is led by Child Trends (Kelly Maxwell as Principal Investigator/Project Director and Brenda Miranda as Co-Project Director) and ICF (Nina Johnson as Project Lead).

## SPOTLIGHT: Home-Based Child Care Supply and Quality Project

Millions of families with children from birth to age 12 rely on home-based child care (HBCC)—early care and education (ECE) offered in a provider’s or child’s home, both by regulated providers and by family, friend, and neighbor providers. However, research on HBCC settings lacks information about how the dynamics of HBCC availability and the features of HBCC settings relate to child and family outcomes.

In 2019, OPRE launched a project to examine home-based child care (HBCC) supply and quality. HBCC is a vital part of our nation’s child care supply and the most common form of care for children living in poverty. Yet, many HBCC providers face challenges in providing quality care, with fewer resources and supports when compared to providers in child care centers. Additionally, the supply of licensed and publicly subsidized family child care has declined dramatically over the past decade. The following research questions guide all project activities:

- What are the key drivers of HBCC supply?
- What are the essential features and drivers of quality in HBCC, and how should these features be measured?

- What factors support or inhibit HBCC provider participation in quality improvement efforts and in early care and education systems?

An overview of all project activities can be found [here](#).

In 2023, the project published a series of four [briefs](#) presenting a national portrait of unlisted HBCC providers, using data from the 2019 National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE). The series examines: (1) provider demographics, economic wellbeing, and health, (2) caregiving histories, motivations, and professional engagement, (3) learning histories, motivations, and professional engagement, and (4) the communities where providers live. Forthcoming analyses of NSECE data examine the experiences of listed home-based child care providers with various CCEE systems and policies.

In 2023, the project initiated original data collections to address key gaps in the field. A study of family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) providers is investigating practices and experiences among FFN and the families they serve, as well as resources and supports these providers rely on. A second activity has developed and is now validating a new measure designed to support quality care in HBCC.

This project is led by Mathematica (Ashley Kopack Klein as Project Director, with Sally Atkins-Burnett and Erikson Institute's Juliet Bromer as Principal Investigators).

## Child Care Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Center (Child Care ECB Center)

State, Territory, and Tribal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies are increasingly asked to use, conduct, and disseminate high-quality, rigorous, and policy-relevant research on early care and education. They are also expected to use research and evidence to inform their decisions. The purpose of [the Center](#) was to assess and build the research and evaluation capacities of State, Territory, and Tribal CCDF Lead Agencies.

The project team conducted a needs assessment in 2021 to learn how lead agencies use research, analyze administrative or program data, and what supports would help them use and conduct future research. Based on information from needs assessment, during FY23 the Center continued to work on resources and webinars intended to CCDF Lead Agencies research and capacity building. In addition, the Center continued Receiving Individualized Support for Evaluation and Capacity Building (ECE-RISE). As part of ECE-RISE, the Center provides research and evaluation capacity building supports that are tailored to the participating agency's needs. The Center also supported the agency as they planned and completed their own research project to get information that will help the agency improve policies, programs, or services.

The project is led by Urban Institute (Teresa Derrick-Mills as Principal Investigator/Project Director) with a subcontract to Mathematica (Gretchen Kirby as Co-PI).

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## Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Policies Database

The CCDF Policies Database is a source of information on the detailed policies used to operate child care subsidy programs under the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). Since 2008, the CCDF Policies Database has collected, coded, and disseminated CCDF policies for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories and outlying areas. The information in the database is based primarily on the documents that caseworkers use as they work with families and providers, as well as the CCDF Plans and amendments submitted by States/Territories to ACF, state law, and regulations used by the staff operating the program. The database captures detailed information on eligibility, family payments, application procedures, and provider-related policies, including dates of enactment and some of the policy variations that exist within states/territories.

The project disseminates information in different forms to meet the needs of various users—quantitative and qualitative researchers, policymakers, and administrators at all levels of government.

The project's most recent annual report is [Key Cross-State Variations in CCDF Policies as of October 1, 2022: The CCDF Policies Database Book of Tables](#). Each annual report also presents policy changes since the previous year, as well as changes in select policies over the previous five years.

The project also periodically produces policy briefs and other short reports. In conjunction with the 2022 annual report, the project produced a brief providing a graphical overview of some of the CCDF policy differences across States/Territories as of October 1, 2022: [Visualizing State and Territory CCDF Policies as of October 1, 2022](#). Finally, the data are archived, in various formats suitable for analysis, at the Child and Family Data Archive

## Definitions and Policies Related to the Incidence of Child Abuse and Neglect State Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) Policies Database

This project will support the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in identifying federal, state, and/or local definitions and policies related to the surveillance of child maltreatment and related risk and protective factors. The primary goal is to maintain and enhance the State Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) Policies Database that allows researchers and policy analysts to link to other data sources to address important questions about how variations in these definitions and policies are associated with child welfare intake, screening practices, substantiation decisions, service provision, and ultimately child safety and well-being. The database includes child abuse and neglect definitions and policies collected from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. A SCAN Policies Database website (<https://www.scanpoliciesdatabase.com/>) allows key stakeholders to download summary state profiles of the child maltreatment policies and definitions as well as access resources to help understand and guide the interpretation of this information. The SCAN Policies Database will also be available at the National Data Archive on

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Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN).

This project is led by Mathematica Policy Research (Elizabeth Weigensberg as Project Director, Nuzhat Islam as Deputy Project Director), with a subcontract to Child Trends.

### **Coordinated Evaluations of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Policies and Initiatives: Implementation Grants (PROSPR)**

The purpose of the Coordinated Evaluations of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Policies and Initiative grants, also known as the Promoting Research on Subsidy Payment Rates (PROSPR) project, is to support research partnerships between CCDF Lead Agencies in states, territories, or tribes and researchers to plan and implement rigorous evaluations of policy and practices related to setting and implementing child care subsidy payment rates and/or family co-payments. Funded partnerships coordinate research questions, measurement, and analyses with the goal of learning how similar policies and initiatives may yield different effects across sites based on differences in policy, administrative practices, or targeted populations. A second major aim of the grant program is to strengthen the evaluation capacity of CCDF Lead Agencies. Partnership members take part in collaborative research activities throughout the project period that aim to support lead agencies in increasing their capacity to conduct internal research or engage in innovative analyses of administrative data.

The project is proceeding in two phases. During the Planning Phase (2021-2023), OPRE funded 10 partnerships to develop research plans to examine the effectiveness of child care subsidy payment rate and family co-payment methods and structures on CCDF participants' access to quality child care.

The Implementation Phase (2023-2027) will support nine partnerships in implementing their planned evaluations on the effectiveness of child care subsidy payment rate and family co-payment policies and practices on increasing access to high quality child care. In addition, partnerships will coordinate with each other on the development of common measures and data collection protocols, identify opportunities for pooled analyses, and develop collective expertise and resources for the field.

### **Child Care Policy Research Partnership Grants**

The Child Care Policy Research Partnership (CCPRP) Grant Program supports active collaborations between Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies and researchers to investigate questions of immediate relevance to local and national child care policies and practices. There are currently two active cohorts of CCPRP grants. The first cohort was awarded in 2019 and includes 11 CCPRP grantees and the second cohort was awarded in 2022 and includes 9 new CCPRP grantees. These projects will add to our knowledge about the CCDF program and quality improvement initiatives that are intended to support employment and self-sufficiency outcomes for parents, increase families' access to high quality child care programs, and promote positive



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learning and school readiness outcomes for children. The overarching goals of this grant program are to:

1. Promote evidence-based policymaking through mutually beneficial research partnerships between child care researchers and CCDF Lead Agencies.
2. Conduct research that addresses issues of current relevance to CCDF decision-makers at the local, state, and national levels.
3. Produce policy-relevant findings and information throughout the duration of the grant.
4. Support collaborative research projects across lead agencies that explore common research questions to maximize the value and generalizability of these federal investments
5. Foster the exchange of current research, ideas, and information among research, policy, and practice communities.
6. Disseminate findings to relevant audiences at local, state, and national levels.

### **Secondary Analyses of Child Care Data Grants (Awarded 2022)**

These awards support researchers conducting secondary analyses of data to address key questions of relevance to the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). CCDF is the primary federal funding source for child care subsidies and aims to help eligible low-income working families access child care and to improve the quality of child care for all children. CCDF also aims to improve implementation of high-quality child care programs to 1) promote children's healthy development and learning and 2) support the education, training, and well-being of child care workers through efforts that include child care licensing, quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) and professional development opportunities. Analyzing existing data sets may provide researchers an efficient and cost-effective method for answering critical research questions of relevance to CCDF. Findings from these awards are intended to inform policy, program administration, and future research.



## HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START: ENHANCING CHILD DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH, AND HUMAN SERVICES FOR FAMILIES WITH LOW INCOME

Head Start research over the past decades has provided valuable information not only for guiding program improvements in Head Start itself, but also for the larger field of early childhood programming and development. Head Start and Early Head Start programs have collaborated with researchers in making significant contributions in terms of program innovation and evaluation, as well as the use of systematic data collection, analysis and interpretation in program operations.

Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Study (Baby FACES), 2018, 2020, and 2022

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The Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (Baby FACES) is a nationally representative descriptive study of Early Head Start (EHS) aimed at informing program planning, technical assistance, and research at the national level by:

- Providing descriptive information about the quality, frequency, and intensity of EHS services;
- Describing the characteristics and qualifications of staff working with EHS families and the professional supports they receive;
- Identifying key characteristics, strengths, and needs of families served in EHS;
- Learning how EHS children and families are faring in key areas of child and family well-being; and
- Exploring associations between the type and quality of EHS services and child and family well-being.

Baby FACES 2009 employed a longitudinal cohort design with a representative sample of 89 Early Head Start programs in 2009. It followed approximately 1,000 children in two age cohorts: (1) a perinatal group of pregnant mothers or newborn children under 3 months of age in Spring 2009, and (2) a group of infants about 1 year old in Spring 2009. Data were collected annually, in the spring, until children left or aged out of the program (at age 3) through annual interviews with parents, teachers, home visitors, and program directors; direct child assessments; video-recorded parent-child and assessor-child interactions; and weekly service logs.

Baby FACES 2018 and 2022 used a repeated cross-sectional research design with a nationally representative sample of programs, centers, classrooms, home visitors, and children of all age groups enrolled in Early Head Start. Data collection included interviews with parents, teachers, home visitors, center directors, and program directors; assessment of children's development via parent- and staff-report; assessment of parent-child relationship quality; in depth observational assessments of Early Head Start center-based service quality (in 2018); and in depth observational assessments of Early Head Start home-based service quality (in 2022).

In 2023, findings from Baby FACES 2022 were released in the *Early Head Start Programs, Staff, and Participating Infants/Toddlers and Families: Baby FACES 2022 Data Tables* and Baby FACES 2022 data were archived at the Child and Family Data Archive.

This project is led by Mathematica Policy Research (Cheri Vogel, Sally Atkins-Burnett, Yange Xue).

### **Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES), 2021**

The Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) is a periodic survey of a nationally representative sample of Head Start children that provides descriptive information on the characteristics, experiences, and outcomes of Head Start children and families, as well as the characteristics of the Head Start programs that serve them. The most recent publicly available

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data were collected in the fall of 2014, spring of 2015, spring of 2017, fall of 2019, and a modified data collection in the spring of 2020 (due to the pandemic) and are available through the Child and Family Data Archive.

In 2021, FACES launched a COVID-19 module to collect data specific to family and staff well-being during and after the COVID-19 pandemic as well as gather some of the information forgone in the spring of 2020 due to program closures. This collection was followed by the scheduled Spring 2022 collection which was again modified.

Data cleaning, weighting, and analyses began in the summer of 2022 at the close of all data collection and continued through 2023. In 2024, the project will be archiving the data and publishing dissemination products.

The project is led by Mathematica Policy Research (Lizabeth Malone as Project Director, Ashley Kopack Klein as APD, Louisa Tarullo as co-PI, Nikki Aikens as co-PI).

## **American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (AIAN FACES), 2021**

The American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (AIAN FACES) has provided a national picture of children, families, and programs in Region XI. There have been three rounds of program year data collection including 2015, 2019, and 2021.

The design, analysis, and reporting of AIAN FACES has been informed by members of the AIAN FACES Workgroup which includes tribal Head Start directors, researchers with expertise working with tribal communities, Mathematica Policy Research study staff, and federal officials from the Office of Head Start, Region XI, and the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. Members of the AIAN FACES Workgroup have shared insights and information on the kinds of information needed about Region XI Head Start programs (including children's development and school readiness, parent and family demographics, health, and program engagement, and teacher, classroom, and program characteristics). Members have also recommended recruitment practices that are responsive to the unique cultural and self-governing contexts of tribal Head Start programs.

In 2023 and with input from the AIAN FACES Workgroup worked to analyze and report on the data collected in 2021-2022 through fall and spring data tables reports and infographics. All data have been (2015 and 2019) or will be (2021) archived at the Child and Family Data Archive. Additionally in 2023, we published the Cross-Cultural Understanding and Cultural Humility: Training for Early Childhood Researchers Working with American Indian and Alaska Native Communities. This training was designed to ensure that research study staff are rigorously trained on how to work respectfully with tribal programs and communities. The training materials give facilitators the information and materials they need to lead the training.

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Training materials describe the background, guiding principles, and skills that early care and education research staff need to work respectfully with AIAN communities as partners in ethical research.

### **Early Care and Education Research Scholars: Head Start Dissertation Grants**

The Early Care and Education Research Scholars: Head Start Dissertation Grant program is designed to build research capacity in and knowledge of effective early childhood interventions for children and families with low income. The grant program does this by providing support for dissertation research conducted by graduate students working in partnership with local Head Start or Early Head Start programs.

The immediate goals of the grant program are to:

1. build capacity in the early care and education field by supporting high-quality dissertation research and student-faculty collaboration and mentorship;
2. conduct rigorous research that has the capacity to inform Head Start and Early Head Start programs, policies, and practices;
3. support active communication, collaboration, and partnerships between researchers and Head Start/Early Head Start programs; and
4. foster the exchange of current research, ideas, and information among research, policy, and practice communities.

### **Head Start Connects: Individualizing and Connecting Families to Comprehensive Family Support Services**

The Head Start Connects project was launched in 2018 to generate knowledge about the processes through which Head Start programs individualize, coordinate, and provide appropriate services that meet families' needs. In 2023, the project published a theory of change on how the coordination of family support services in Head Start programs is expected to improve outcomes for the whole family. We also published a report on the findings from six case studies. The report provides a thorough review of the family support service coordination process from the perspectives of Head Start staff members, parents, and community providers at each site. In 2023, the team also completed data collection for a nationally descriptive study of Head Start programs to document how programs coordinate family support services for parents/guardians; the characteristics of Head Start programs and staff members involved in family support services coordination; the job characteristics, work activities, and well-being of Head Start family support services staff members; and how Head Start programs can improve coordination of family support services. Findings from the nationally descriptive study are forthcoming.

This project is led by MDRC (Michelle Maier as Project Director and Co-Principal Investigator, Carolyn Hill as Principal Investigator).



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## Head Start University Partnerships: Building the Evidence Base for ECE Workforce Well-Being

The overall goal of these Head Start University Partnership grants, awarded in 2021, is to contribute to the knowledge base regarding the individual, program, and community factors that promote the well-being of Head Start and/or Early Head Start education staff (i.e., teachers and assistant teachers). Six groups of researchers are working in partnership with Head Start programs to evaluate promising approaches to improving education staff well-being. Each grant recipient is conducting an implementation study and rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the approach(es) identified. Further, each grant recipient is examining the individual, program, and community context factors that contribute to education staff well-being. Throughout 2023, grant recipients carried out activities related to evaluating the effectiveness of their interventions; conducted analyses with pilot, baseline, or preliminary outcome data; and presented findings in various venues.

Throughout 2023, the grant recipients also worked together as a consortium to finalize a common conceptual framework, align measures of common constructs, and plan for future collaborative analyses. Together, the group conducted a systematic review examining features of holistic educator well-being and its hypothesized associations with individual resources, characteristics, and backgrounds; relationships, the work environment, and other contextual factors; education staff classroom practices; workforce quality and retention; and well-being of children and families.

### The Study of Disability Services Coordinators and Inclusion in Head Start

This study will provide a national picture of the Disability Services Coordinators (DSC) workforce for Early Head Start (EHS) and Head Start (HS), including American Indian/Alaska Native (Region XI) and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (Region XII) grantees. It will also explore practices and policies for working with staff, families, children, and the community. This effort will explore how EHS/HS serves children with disabilities and their families and will seek to understand how EHS/HS collaborates with services in the community, including health providers, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and early intervention services.

The study goals include the following:

1. to describe the characteristics and work of DSCs and related staff in EHS/HS programs;
2. to describe how children with disabilities and their families are served by EHS/HS including through recruitment and selection; throughout screening and ongoing assessment; evaluation; and the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process and implementation;
3. to describe how EHS/HS programs engage in capacity building with families and provide supportive services to families as they understand and advocate for their children with potential or identified disabilities, delays, or other issues such as chronic health

4. to describe what EHS/HS programs do when services are not available and when children do not meet Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) eligibility requirements;
5. to describe how EHS/HS programs engage with LEAs, IDEA Parts B and C providers, and community programs;
6. to describe the training teachers receive as well as how they individualize practice and work to fully integrate children with disabilities into the classroom; and
7. to describe how EHS/HS programs work with children with disabilities and their families on transitions to HS or kindergarten.

In 2023, the study team will complete data collection and will turn to analysis, report writing, and data archiving.

The project team is led by NORC at the University of Chicago (Michael López as Principal Investigator; Shannon Ten-Broeck as Project Director) in partnership with SRI International and consultant Amanda Schwartz.

## SPOTLIGHT: Understanding Children’s Transitions from Head Start to Kindergarten (HS2K)

The purpose of this project, which concluded in 2023, was to better understand how to improve children’s transitions from Head Start programs to elementary schools. Taking a systems approach, the project examined engagement of both the sending programs (Head Start) and the receiving programs (elementary schools) and the transition strategies and practices that are implemented at multiple levels – among classroom teachers in Head Start and kindergarten, families and teachers, elementary school principals and Head Start directors, Head Start programs and school districts, and state and federal agencies. The project aimed to explore the definition of “successful transitions” by addressing the following research questions:

1. What strategies and practices are Head Start programs and elementary schools implementing to support children as they transition from Head Start to kindergarten?
2. What characterizes the partnerships among Head Start programs, elementary schools, and other community partners that support children’s successful transitions from Head Start to kindergarten? What helps strengthen these cross-system partnerships?
3. What are the key short- and long-term outcomes of transition strategies and practices for children, families, Head Start teachers, and kindergarten teachers? What are the contextual factors and mechanisms that result in these outcomes?

These questions were addressed through a variety of activities: a literature review, interviews with key informants, secondary analyses of survey data and program documents, and a comparative multi-case study of five Head Start and Local Education Agency (LEA) partnerships.

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In 2023, the project published a report describing the findings from the case studies, [Understanding Cross-System Transitions from Head Start to Kindergarten: A Comparative Cross Case Study of Head Start and K-12 Partnerships](#).

Drawing on findings from across the project and examples from the case studies, the project also published a brief focused on systems-levels strategies that can facilitate transitions to kindergarten, [Systems-Level Strategies to Facilitate Kindergarten Transitions: Key Study Findings and Examples from Case Studies of Head Start & K-12 Partnerships](#). Key findings highlighted in the brief include:

- Research suggests that coordinated efforts across systems can support better outcomes. This includes better short-term initial school adjustment, long-term social and emotional development, and academic outcomes for children. Leadership amongst policymakers and administrators is key to supporting coordinated efforts.
- Developing strong and positive relationships is easier when people are physically close to one another.
- Intentional planning, dedicated funding, and policies and processes that are written down and known by all are important ways to strengthen supports for transitions from Head Start to kindergarten.
- Community organizations can play an important role in supporting cross-system relationships and activities. They can encourage coordination, provide resources, and amplify messages to families about the kindergarten transition.

See the [project website](#) for all publications, including a “toolkit” ([Head Start to Kindergarten: It Takes Two \(Systems\)](#)) through which you can explore all HS2K activities, and an interactive map ([HS2K Head Start to Kindergarten Proximity Map](#)) that shows locations of all Head Start programs and elementary schools with kindergarten across the United States.

This project was led by NORC (Stacy Ehrlich Loewe as Project Director and Co-Principal Investigator), with subcontracts to Child Trends, the National P-3 Center, and independent consultant Kyle DeMeo Cook (Co-Principal Investigator).

## **Conversion of Enrollment Slots from Head Start to Early Head Start (HS2EHS)**

Converting enrollment slots from Head Start to Early Head Start (i.e., shifting funding from services for Head Start preschool-age children to Early Head Start services for pregnant women, infants, and toddlers) necessitates strategic planning and the careful development and implementation of new processes to ensure high quality service delivery tailored to the unique needs of pregnant women, infants, and toddlers and delivered in accordance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

This project examines how and why Head Start grantees prepare for and engage in enrollment conversions and aims to identify facilitators and barriers to the provision of high quality Early Head Start services that meet community needs.

In 2023, the project released the following products:

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- [How Do Head Start Grant Recipients Use Data to Demonstrate Availability and Need for Services in Applications to Convert Enrollment Slots to Center-Based Early Head Start?](#)
  - [Why Do Head Start Grant Recipients Apply to Convert Enrollment Slots?](#)
  - [What Data Do Head Start Grant Recipients Use in Applications to Convert Enrollment Slots to Center-Based Early Head Start?](#)
  - [Qualifications and Competencies of Staff in Head Start Programs That Are Converting Enrollment Slots to Early Head Start](#)
  - [Staff Turnover and Retention among Head Start Grant Recipients That Converted Enrollment Slots](#)

This project is led by Urban Institute (Diane Schilder and Catherine Kuhns) in partnership with MEF Associates (Kate Stepleton).

## **Head Start Reach: Strengthening Recruitment, Enrollment, and Engagement Practices for Families (HS REACH)**

Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) are key tasks performed by Head Start programs, but little research has focused on how these activities are carried out, particularly with families facing adversities. In 2020, OPRE launched Head Start Reach to fill gaps in our understanding of the characteristics and experiences of Head Start eligible families facing adversities and how Head Start programs recruit, select, enroll, and engage these families. The adversities that some Head Start eligible families may face are often intertwined with poverty. Focusing on families experiencing adversity and the approaches that support their participation in Head Start can strengthen efforts to ensure Head Start is reaching and serving the families who can potentially benefit from Head Start's comprehensive approach. In 2022 the project team continue executing a set of interrelated research activities that build on and inform one another. Specifically, the project conducted and published a [literature synthesis](#) examining what is known about ERSEA practices, particularly for families facing adversity. They have developed a draft conceptual framework and completed a set of six case studies to better understand ERSEA practices, publishing a [report](#) in FY23. Lastly, the project team is analyzing existing data to looking at the location of HS centers and programs in relation to income eligible children and children facing adversity. In future years, the project will design and potentially execute a large-scale study to strengthen the research base on approaches in Head Start and develop a toolkit for use by federal, state, and/or local agencies and programs to support ERSEA practices. The study team will engage a variety of stakeholders and experts in shaping and learning from contract activities and will communicate project insights to the field through various products, such as reports, briefs, and presentations.

The project is led by Mathematica (Louisa Tarullo as Project Director, Nikki Aikens as Co-Principal Investigator), with a subcontract to Brazelton Touchpoints Center (Cathy Ayoub as Co-Principal Investigator).

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## Financing for Early Care and Education Quality and Access for All (F4EQ)

The Financing for ECE Quality and Access for All (F4EQ) project seeks to better understand the landscape of Head Start’s participation in or use of coordinated funding by measuring and understanding both Head Start programs’ decision making around the use of multiple funding sources as well as the local and state contexts and conditions that influence those decisions. We also aim to understand how participation in coordinated funding approaches are associated with Head Start’s engagement with broader ECE systems efforts. Specifically, the project will include a nationwide descriptive study of financing in ECE programs, including surveys of Head Start programs and state ECE administrators and possible future case studies that will address three primary research questions:

1. What are Head Start programs’ common approaches to coordinated funding?
2. What are the system-level approaches and structures around coordinated funding that may inform Head Start’s approaches to coordinated funding and/or engagement with broader ECE systems? These include federal, state, or local financing policy levers (e.g., requirements, regulations, standards) and enabling conditions (e.g., governance structures, mindsets, the political will to coordinate ECE funds).
3. How are Head Start programs’ approaches to coordinating funding—including those that do not coordinate funding—related to (a) system-level approaches and structures around coordinated funding identified in RQ2 and (b) Head Start’s program implementation?

To date, the project team has completed a review of the existing knowledge base, conducted an environmental scan of policies and regulations around coordinated ECE funding at the state level, interviewed key informants, and consulted with technical experts. Those activities informed the design of surveys of Head Start program and ECE systems leaders who make decisions about and implement coordinated funding approaches that are being fielded in 2024.

The resulting insights from this descriptive study will generate beneficial knowledge about Head Start’s use of and participation in coordinated funding practices and integration within ECE systems, including contexts and conditions that may operate as potential enablers or barriers at local, state, and federal levels. Furthermore, this project will identify promising approaches to inform program strategies and policies by which coordinated funding may support the equitable provision of more accessible, comprehensive, high-quality ECE services that meet Head Start Program Performance Standards.

This project is led by NORC at the University of Chicago (Dr. Stacy Ehrlich as Principal Investigator and Mitch Barrows as Project Director), with partners Start Early (Margery Wallen and Dr. Amanda Stein) and the Children’s Equity Project at Arizona State University (Dr. Shantel Meek).



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## Secondary Analyses of Head Start and Early Head Start Data Grants

These grants aim to support researchers conducting secondary analyses of data to address key questions of relevance to the goals and outcomes of Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS). Analyzing existing data sets may provide researchers an efficient and cost-effective method for answering critical research questions. Findings from these grants are intended to inform policy, program administration, and future research.

## Survey of Staff Recruitment, Training, and Professional Development in Early Head Start

This nationally representative survey that will describe EHS grant recipients' strategies, successes, and challenges to ensure staff meet or exceed the HSPPS qualification and competency requirements. The survey will include questions asking EHS grant recipients how they search for and hire qualified staff and support staff in their ongoing career development.

The project addresses the following research questions:

1. How do EHS grant recipients search for and hire teaching and home visiting staff with the qualifications and competencies necessary to deliver high-quality EHS services to infants, toddlers, and their families? What strategies or approaches have been most successful? What challenges do grant recipients face?
2. How do EHS grant recipients support existing teaching and home visiting staff in improving their qualifications and competencies? What strategies or approaches have been most successful? What challenges do grant recipients face?
3. How have any challenges searching for, hiring, and training teaching and home visiting staff impacted EHS program operations?

The project is led by the Urban Institute (Diane Schilder and Rebecca Berger) in partnership with MEF Associates.



## PROMOTING CHILD WELFARE

The promotion of children’s safety, permanence, and well-being are the principles that guide child welfare practice and policy. OPRE’s child welfare research portfolio includes studies on children who have experienced or are at risk for maltreatment, families who are investigated by Child Protective Services, and children and families who access child welfare services. OPRE partners with ACF’s Children’s Bureau to conduct research covering a broad array of topics, including identification of antecedents and consequences of child maltreatment, strategies for its prevention, and service needs and outcomes for children who experience it.

### National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW)

The National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW) is a nationally representative, longitudinal survey of children and families who have been the subjects of investigation by Child Protective Services. NSCAW examines child and family well-being outcomes in detail and seeks to relate those outcomes to experience with the child welfare system and to family characteristics, community environment, and other factors. NSCAW includes first-hand reports from children, parents, and other caregivers, as well as reports from caseworkers and teachers.

To date, there are three cohorts of NSCAW:

- NSCAW I, the landmark study, was launched in 1997 and continued through 2007;
- NSCAW II was initiated in 2006 and completed in 2014; and

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- NSCAW III began in 2015 and is ongoing.

NSCAW III. Data is currently being collected baseline (wave 1) and follow-up (wave 2) in NSCAW III. The design of NSCAW III was guided by three priorities: (1) keeping NSCAW III as comparable to the two previous cohorts as possible, (2) minimizing response burden for all participants, and (3) making sure that the NSCAW III sample and instruments best reflected the composition and characteristics of children being served by the child welfare system in 2017. Additionally, a new sub-study on the child welfare workforce takes advantage of the NSCAW III sampling frame.

Reimagining NSCAW. In the fall of 2021, the Reimagining NSCAW project started to carry out preliminary activities for future data collection performed as part of NSCAW. These activities include (a) developing potential design option(s), (b) active engagement of various experts throughout the project life course, (c) conducting preliminary data collection, and (d) disseminating findings from preliminary data collection and/or secondary analysis of data from prior cohorts of NSCAW. Reimagining NSCAW aims to complement and build from the existing portfolio of projects within the Administration for Children and Families to address research questions and priorities related the well-being of children and families involved with the child welfare system, as well as their service needs and utilization.

These projects are led by RTI International (Melissa Dolan as Project Director).

## Supporting Evidence Building in Child Welfare

The overall purpose of this project is to support OPRE and the Children’s Bureau (CB) in increasing the number of evidence-supported interventions for the child welfare population by conducting rigorous evaluations and supporting the field in moving toward rigorous evaluations. The project focuses on interventions that have been fully implemented previously in at least one setting, undergone formative testing, and have shown some significant impacts through summative evaluation, rather than those that are in earlier stages of development and testing. Key project tasks include identification of priority areas and interventions ripe for moving to the next level of evidence; review of existing evidence and feasibility issues; rigorous impact evaluations of interventions; and consultation around complex evaluation designs or statistical methods relevant for testing interventions in one or more sites.

In 2023, the project focused on its continuing evaluations of the Family Unification Program in six sites (Bucks County, PA; Chicago, IL; King County / Seattle, WA; Orange County, CA; Phoenix, AZ; Santa Clara County, CA), Project Connect in Rhode Island, and LifeSet in New Jersey.

- The Family Unification Program provides Housing Choice Vouchers to homeless or unstably housed families involved in the child welfare system to prevent removing children into out-of-home care or to increase reunification for children in out-of-home care.

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- Project Connect provides home-based services and treatment to child welfare-involved, substance-affected families with children and adolescents ages 0 to 17.
  - LifeSet provides at-risk youth and young adults leaving foster care, as well as juvenile justice and mental health, systems, with the intensive in-home support and guidance they need to make a successful transition to adulthood.

The results of all evaluations will be disseminated to meet the needs of ACF, CB, policymakers, practitioners, and other key stakeholders.

This project is led by Urban Institute (Marla McDaniel as Project Director and Mike Pergamit as Co-Principal Investigator), with subcontracts to Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, University of Chicago (Mark Courtney as Co-Principal Investigator), and Child Trends.

### **Building Capacity to Evaluate Child Welfare Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families (CWCC)**

This project supports OPRE in its work with the Children’s Bureau (CB) to advance the evidence around collaborative approaches to preventing child abuse and neglect. In 2018 and 2019, CB funded grants to states, communities, and Tribes to develop, implement, and evaluate proactive strategies that build on the strengths of families. The initiative supports community-level mobilization around the development of multi-system collaboratives that provide a continuum of activities and services designed to prevent child abuse and neglect. The first cohort of four grantees received CWCC funds in 2018, and the second cohort of nine grantees received CWCC funds in 2019.

This project supports the CB effort through two primary components: 1) evaluation-related technical assistance to strengthen grantees’ evaluation capacity to conduct site-specific outcome evaluations, and 2) a cross-site process evaluation of each cohort of grantees to better understand how communities came together to develop and implement integrated approaches to preventing child maltreatment, including documenting project and organizational leadership approaches, integration and alignment strategies, and recruitment and assessment methods to identify and serve at-risk families.

In FY23, OPRE released a [brief](#) on lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This project is led by Abt Associates (Michelle Blocklin as Project Director) in partnership with Child Trends (Karin Malm as Principal Investigator).

### **Building Capacity to Evaluate Interventions for Youth/Young Adults At-Risk of Homelessness (YARH)**

*This project is a joint effort with the Division of Family Strengthening.*

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This project supports ACF’s efforts to build evidence on how to end youth homelessness by continuing work with organizations who conducted foundational work as part of Phases I and II of the Building Capacity to Evaluate Interventions for Youth/Young Adults with Child Welfare Involvement At-Risk of Homelessness (YARH) project. Phase I of YARH (YARH-1) provided evaluation-related technical assistance (TA) to organizations awarded planning grants to develop interventions for youth with child welfare involvement who are most likely to experience homelessness. Phase II of YARH (YARH-2) provided evaluation-related support for organizations awarded implementation grants for further developing and testing of interventions developed under Phase I. Phase III of YARH (YARH-3) will continue to provide important information to the field by supporting organizations from Phase II in evidence-building activities, including providing evaluation-related TA; assessing sites’ readiness for summative evaluation; designing and conducting a federally led evaluation of at least one comprehensive service model, including an implementation study and an impact study; and disseminating knowledge gained through project activities. The evaluation team will work closely with ACF, a broad range of relevant groups and individuals, and selected experts so that the TA activities and evaluation will yield timely findings that inform policy and practice.

In FY23, OPRE released several briefs and reports, including [an early picture of youth services](#) from the summative evaluation.

This project is led by Mathematica (Cay Bradley as Project Director, Robin Lindquist-Grantz as Deputy Project Director, Russell Cole as Principal Investigator).

### **Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse**

This project is a joint effort with the Division of Family Strengthening.

The Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse was established in September 2018 by ACF to conduct an independent systematic review of research on programs and services intended to provide enhanced support to children and families and prevent foster care placements. The Prevention Services Clearinghouse, developed in accordance with the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) as codified in Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, reviews and rates programs and services as “well-supported,” “supported,” “promising,” or “does not currently meet criteria.” The Prevention Services Clearinghouse reviews evidence on mental health, substance abuse, in-home parent skill-based, as well as kinship navigator programs and services.

In 2022, the Clearinghouse continued to select, review, and rate programs and services as quickly as possible to support states’ efforts to improve outcomes for children and families through the implementation of FFPSA.

The Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse is led by Abt Associates (Sandra Wilson as Project Director) in partnership with the University of Denver (Suzanne Kerns as Principal Investigator).



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## State Child Welfare Data Linkages Descriptive Study

The State Child Welfare Data Linkages Descriptive Study aims to examine state child welfare agencies' capacities to share and link data, as well as to better understand states' uses of linked data, data governance, and methods and procedures to access, link, and secure data.

The descriptive study is examining the extent to which child welfare agencies in 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, DC, connect administrative data on child maltreatment to data in other systems and learn more about states' practices related to sharing and linking data. The study is gathering systematic information on the extent to which states link their child maltreatment data to other data sets; how linked or integrated data sets are created, managed, and used; challenges states face in linking data; and promising practices.

The study aims to provide novel information regarding state data linkages that may be leveraged to improve the ongoing and accurate surveillance of child maltreatment incidence and related risk. This project is led by Mathematica (M. Cay Bradley as Project Director).

## Child Welfare Study to Enhance Equity with Data (CW-SEED)

This project is a joint effort with the Division of Family Strengthening.

The Child Welfare Study to Enhance Equity with Data (CW-SEED) project aims to understand how and to what extent data are used to explore equity in service delivery and child and family outcomes, to identify barriers or problematic data practices, and to explore efforts by child welfare agencies and their partners to use data to reduce barriers across the continuum of child welfare services. The project will examine practices across the data life cycle related to data planning, collection, access, and analysis; use of statistical tools and algorithms; and data reporting and dissemination (hereafter referred to as data practices). Intentional, continuous engagement of community partners and advocates with lived child welfare experience, child welfare administrators and staff, policymakers, researchers, and data leaders will inform all aspects of the work.

The project team will conduct an environmental scan and case studies in up to five sites to examine how data use among child welfare agencies and their partners can advance equity. The project will produce a research agenda and propose design options that will provide a platform for building capacity among child welfare agencies and their partners. The project will also result in a final report that summarizes findings on promising data practices from the environmental scan and the case studies.

By understanding the data practices in the field—and the facilitators and barriers that exist at the system, organizational, and individual levels—the project will help ACF inform equity approaches, highlight remaining challenges in using data to advance equity, and document the remaining questions to be answered.

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This project is led by Mathematica Policy Research (Elizabeth Weigensberg as Project Director), with subcontracts to the Center for the Study of Social Policy and the University of North Carolina School of Social Work.

## Secondary Analysis for the National Incidence of Child Maltreatment

These grants aim to support researchers conducting secondary analyses of data to inform the ongoing and accurate national surveillance of child abuse and neglect. The specific goals of these grants are to:

- Examine research topics related to the national incidence of child abuse and neglect as articulated in Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act;
- Encourage active communication, networking, and collaboration among prominent child maltreatment researchers and policymakers; and
- Increase the capacity of child maltreatment researchers to analyze existing data source and disseminate their findings to multiple audiences.

Four grantees were funded with *Secondary Analyses of Data on the National Incidence of Child Maltreatment*:

- Chapin Hall at The University of Chicago (PI: Dr. Leanne Heaton) - Leveraging Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Administrative Data to Understand the Relevance of Context in Surveillance and Advancing Equity
- Chapin Hall Center for Children (PI: Dr. Amy Dworsky) - Child Maltreatment among Children in Out-of-Home Care: Secondary Analysis of NCANDS and AFCARS Data
- Child Trends, Incorporated (PI: Dr. Rachel Rosenberg) - Mandated Reporting Policies and the Relationship with Accurate Surveillance of Child Abuse and Neglect
- Washington University (PI: Dr. Brett Drake) - Building Infrastructure and Training Tools to Understand CPS Involvement and Trajectories: An Open-Source Approach

## SPOTLIGHT: Prevention Services Evaluation Partnerships: Building Evidence for Mental Health, Substance Use, In-home Parent Skill-based, and Kinship Navigator Programs and Services



In 2023, OPRE awarded seven three-year cooperative agreements under the Prevention Services Evaluation Partnerships funding opportunity. The overall goal of this new funding opportunity is to contribute to the knowledge base regarding the effectiveness of mental health, substance abuse prevention and/or treatment, in-home parent skill-based, and kinship navigator programs and services in preventing foster care placements. As part of each project, researchers are actively engaging relevant individuals and groups, such as Title IV-E agencies and community organizations. Each project aims to conduct a well-designed and rigorous summative evaluation

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that aligns with Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse Design and Execution Standards for Moderate or High Support of Causal Evidence.

- Researchers at Arizona State University (Abigail Gewirtz, PI) are conducting a randomized controlled trial to evaluate the effectiveness of the Parenting in the Moment/PIM program for parents across the United States with experiences of forced displacement.
- Using a quasi-experimental design, researchers at Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago (Emma Monahan and Julie McCrae, Co-PIs) are evaluating the effectiveness of Circle of Security Parenting (COSP) on child welfare outcomes in Nebraska.
- Using a quasi-experimental design, researchers at Evident Change (Cynthia Burnson, PI) are evaluating the impact of Nurturing Families on parenting, child safety, and child permanency in Texas.
- Researchers at OSLC Developments (Stacey Tiberio, PI) are conducting a randomized controlled trial in Oregon to evaluate the effectiveness of KEEP Connecting Kin (KEEP-CK) on child and adult outcomes (e.g., child permanency, child well-being, parenting practices, parent/caregiver stress); parents' access to, referrals for, and use of services from multiple systems (financial, educational, mental health, medical, legal); and prevention of entry into the child welfare system.
- Researchers at the University of Colorado-Boulder (Kimberly Shipman and Marcela Torres Pauletic, Co-PIs) are conducting a randomized controlled trial to evaluate the effectiveness of Let's Connect®, a trauma-responsive parenting skills program.
- Using a quasi-experimental design, researchers at the University of Oklahoma (Erin Maher and Julie Gerlinger Co-PIs) and the University of Washington (Susan Stoner, Co-PI) are evaluating the effectiveness of a one-year version of the Parent-Child Assistance Program (PCAP-1), a home visitation and case management program for parents in Oklahoma who used substances during pregnancy.
- Researchers at the University of Vermont (Jessica Strolin-Goltzman and Matthew Price, Co-PIs) and the University of Connecticut (Cristina Mogro-Wilson and Jon Philips, Co-PIs) are conducting a randomized controlled trial to evaluate the impact of the Breakthrough Parenting Curriculum: Navigating Trauma Across Generations (BPC) on child safety, child permanency, child well-being, and adult well-being for traditionally underserved families in Connecticut and Vermont.

In addition to initiating work on their individual projects, the seven new award recipients also convened for the first time in late 2023. They shared about their evaluations and their approaches to active engagement, including engagement of people with lived experience, and they discussed the challenges inherent in balancing active engagement with designing and executing a rigorous evaluation to meet specific standards. The group will continue to meet regularly over the next three years.

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# HUMAN TRAFFICKING: IMPROVING SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS

Human trafficking includes forced labor and sexual exploitation and can affect individuals of any age, gender, or nationality. OPRE partners with the Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP), Children’s Bureau (CB), and other ACF program offices on research and evaluation efforts to inform the development of anti-trafficking strategies, policies, and programs and to improve services for those who have experienced human trafficking.



## Evaluation of the National Human Trafficking Hotline Program

The primary objective of this project is to develop and execute an evaluation of the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH), a 24-hour toll-free line which provides assistance and service referrals to potential victims, service providers, law enforcement officials, and other individuals who contact the NHTH, and also provides time-sensitive tips to appropriate local, state, or federal law enforcement authorities.

Specifically, the evaluation will: describe the activities, procedures, and organization of the NHTH, including training, staff capacity, and service delivery; describe the customer service of the NHTH, for example who contacts the NHTH and what assistance do they seek; describe the immediate outcomes of the NHTH, specifically regarding the experiences of contactors and users.

In FY23, OPRE released a number of [reports and briefs](#) from the evaluation.

This project is led by RTI International (Hannah Feeney as Project Director, Kathleen Krieger as Associate Project Director).

## SPOTLIGHT: Human Trafficking Policy and Research Analyses Project



This project will conduct research to answer questions identified by ACF's OPRE and Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) that will inform the development of anti-trafficking strategies, policies, and programs to prevent and respond to human trafficking.

This project will include a variety of research and evaluation activities such as:

- Designing and conducting original studies that will inform policy, best practices of programs and strategies to prevent and respond to human trafficking, and the development of new research priorities;
- Identifying emerging policy and research questions or topics of special interest to ACF that can be addressed through research activities, such as literature reviews; convening and/or reviewing recommendations from various experts, relevant groups and individuals, and federal staff and initiating work based on those recommendations; and identifying sources of policy and data and conducting summaries, assessments, or secondary statistical analyses to answer questions of relevance; and
- Preparation of written products, such as syntheses of research evidence to inform policy and practice; methodological and analytic research documents to advance human trafficking research and evaluation; and translation of research findings and issues for policymakers and implementers of anti-trafficking programs.

Three topics have been selected for study: (1) field testing methods for estimating the prevalence of human trafficking in the U.S.; (2) a process evaluation of OTIP's Human Trafficking Youth Prevention Education (HTYPE) Demonstration Program; and (3) a formative evaluation of OTIP's Demonstration Grants to Strengthen the Response to Victims of Human Trafficking in Native Communities (VHT-NC) Program.

Additionally, two special topics were selected: (1) a Learning Agenda for OTIP; and (2) Strategies for Survivor Economic Empowerment.

In FY23, OPRE released several reports and briefs from the evaluations.

As part of the second special topic on strategies for survivor economic empowerment, this project conducted an environmental scan and led listening sessions with experts with lived and professional experience to assess promising practices to increase economic empowerment among individuals who have experienced human trafficking and communities with similar economic challenges. RTI held three community reflection workshops to review, discuss, and reflect on the information uncovered through the environmental scan and listening sessions. The community reflection workshops included participants from the listening sessions and additional experts, allowing participants in the research to inform the resource guide. RTI also partnered with consultants with lived expertise to inform the tools, findings, and final products throughout the project.



RTI incorporated the principles of economic empowerment throughout the project, compensating the consultants, workshop participants, and listening session participants for their time and expertise in ways that were transparent and offered flexibility. For more information on the methods, review [Economic Empowerment for People Who Have Experienced Human Trafficking: A Guide for Anti-Trafficking Service Providers](#).

The guide was informed by five guiding principles and the [Five Tiers of Economic Empowerment](#) developed by Futures Without Violence.

### Guiding Principles

1. All programming should center survivor voice and choice.
2. All programming should incorporate the consideration of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
3. Economic disenfranchisement is rooted in deeper systemic inequalities that impact vulnerabilities to human trafficking, barriers to exiting, and barriers to recovery.
4. Meeting the needs of people with lived experience is best accomplished through strategic collaboration.
5. People with lived experience need ongoing access to financial advocacy, education, and resources in alignment with their changing economic situation and personal and professional development.

This project is led by RTI International (Rebecca Pfeffer as Project Director, Samantha Charm as Associate Project Director), in partnership with American Indian Development Associates for the VHT-NC study.

## **Building Evidence for Trafficking Interventions and Response (BETIR)**

This project will use multidisciplinary perspectives, including the active engagement of impacted communities, to guide rigorous research and evaluation, providing ACF's OPRE and Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) with information needed to inform the development of anti-trafficking strategies, policies, and programs to prevent and respond to human trafficking.

This project will include a variety of research and evaluation activities such as:

- Designing and conducting original studies that will inform policy and best practices for programs and strategies to prevent and respond to human trafficking;
- Identifying emerging policy and research questions or topics of special interest to ACF that can be addressed through research activities, such as literature reviews; convening and/or reviewing recommendations from relevant groups and individuals, and initiating work based on those recommendations; and identifying sources of policy and data and conducting summaries, assessments, or secondary statistical analyses to answer questions of relevance; and
- Preparing written products and other deliverables, such as syntheses of research evidence to inform policy and practice; methodological and analytic research documents to advance

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human trafficking research and evaluation; and translation of research findings and issues for policymakers and implementers of anti-trafficking programs.

To date, two evaluation topics have been selected for study: (1) a two-stage formative and short-term outcome evaluation of the Aspire: Child Trafficking Victim Assistance Demonstration Program and Trafficking Victims Assistance Program (TVAP), and (2) a second phase evaluation of the National Human Trafficking Hotline and other federally sponsored hotlines (the original evaluation of the National Human Trafficking Hotline can be found [here](#)).

This project is led by RTI International (Rebecca Pfeffer as Project Director, Samantha Charm as Associate Project Director).

## RECOGNIZING CULTURAL DIVERSITY & PROMOTING EQUITY

While a growing body of research has greatly advanced knowledge of child and family development, more needs to be learned about the diversity of cultural features (e.g., language) among families accessing federal resources and the implications for early care and education programs and policies. DCFD seeks to better represent African American, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native, and other cultural minority groups in studies geared toward improving policy and practice. OPRE has launched several projects that aim to expand the knowledge base and improve resources for these communities.

### National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families

This project is a joint effort with the Division of Family Strengthening and the Division of Economic Independence.

The National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families (NRCHCF) leads and supports research concerning three priority areas—poverty reduction and self-sufficiency, healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood, and early care and education—to inform ACF programs and policies to better serve Hispanic families and children. The Center has three primary goals: (1) advancing a cutting-edge research agenda; (2) building research capacity; and (3) implementing an innovative communication and dissemination approach. The Center produced a number of reports, briefs, webinars and other resources this past year to inform the field. In 2023, the Center released the following briefs and data points:

- Latino families' access to early care and education
- Characteristics of the early childhood workforce serving Latino children
- California child care subsidy survey
- Availability and flexibility of early care and education providers
- Child care access among Hispanic households with low incomes

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- National profile of Latino parents' education
  - COVID and the changing workforce
  - Pandemic-related disruptions to child care arrangements among Latino households
  - Declines in childcare employment in Latino metro areas early in the pandemic
  - Latino child age distribution

in 2023, the Center collaborated with Amigos de ACF (employee resource group) to host webinars about state-level policies and practices that can shape Hispanic families' access to TANF and CCDF programs and about developing culturally responsive practices.

In addition, the Center continues activities designed to build capacity in the field, including sub-grants for early career faculty at Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) or Emerging HSIs. .

This project is led by Child Trends (Lina Guzman as Principal Investigator, with Co-Investigators Maria Ramos-Olazagasti, Danielle Crosby, Natasha Cabrera, Julia Mendez and Lisa Gennetian).

### **Tribal Early Childhood Research Center (TRC)**

The Tribal Early Childhood Research Center (TRC) seeks to address gaps in early childhood research with American Indian and Alaska Natives (AIAN) through partnerships with Tribal Head Start, Early Head Start, Child Care, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and home visiting programs. The three areas of focus include: 1) national leadership to grow the field of Indigenous early childhood research; 2) scientifically and culturally rigorous research; and 3) strategic dissemination to share resources and research relevant to AIAN children, families, programs, and communities. The TRC engages in pilot research with AIAN communities and secondary analyses of existing data on AIAN children and families.

In 2023, the TRC pursued four areas of research through a communities of learning approach (CoL). The Early Relational Wellbeing CoL and Family Economic Wellbeing CoLs are exploring culturally and contextually meaningful measurement of early development and developmental supports. The TRC published a [brief](#) summarizing key findings from a scoping review of peer-reviewed and grey literature related to family economic wellbeing (FEW) among Indigenous communities. The Native Language and Culture CoL is using data from the AIAN Family and Child Experiences Survey to add to understanding of how Native language and culture are important for children's development. Finally, the Needs and Resource Assessment CoL will be assessing resources, challenges, and priorities among the Tribal Head Start, Home Visiting, and Child Care workforce and the programs within which the workforce works to serve children and families. The TRC's national leadership activities in 2023 included planning and implementing the biennial Native Children's Research Exchange Conference (focused on Indigenous research methods), the annual TRC Summer Institute course "Early Childhood Research with Tribal Communities" (focused on Indigenous ways of knowing and learning about Native children's early development) and a virtual learning circle (focused on Indigenous food sovereignty practices in early childhood). The

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grant award for the TRC is to the Centers for American Indian and Alaska Native Health (CAIANH) at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. Partners include Johns Hopkins University, Brazelton Touchpoints Center, Michigan State University, and Children Trends.

## **African American Child and Family Research Center**

This project is a joint effort with the Division of Economic Independence and the Division of Data and Improvement.

The National African American Child and Family Research Center was established in 2021 through a cooperative agreement between OPRE and the Morehouse School of Medicine. The Center seeks to investigate the assets, needs, and experiences of the diverse population of African American families and children served (or potentially served) by ACF programs, as well as identify promising approaches to address economic and social inequities and, ultimately, promote their social and economic well-being. The Center will focus on childcare assistance, TANF, and Head Start and Early Head Start programs and the populations they serve, and will draw on interdisciplinary approaches to accomplish three goals:

### **1. Advance Research**

The Center will plan, initiate, and maintain a community-engaged, focused, and high-caliber research program. The Center's program of research will build on the existing literature related to African American children and families and should be directly relevant to the needs and interests of ACF areas of programmatic concern.

### **2. Build Research Capacity**

The Center will build research capacity and infrastructure to conduct research relevant to ACF program and policy goals that is culturally rigorous and informed by an understanding of current and historical circumstances that shape the experiences of African Americans. In addition, the Center will contribute to the development and expansion of the pool of researchers reflective of the communities being studied by the Center.

### **3. Communicate Research**

The Center will to develop and implement a dissemination strategy that broadly and efficiently communicates findings from research conducted within and outside of the Center and increases the use of research, data, and relevant resources for a wide audience including researchers, federal and state policymakers, ACF grantees, program administrators, and communities participating in the research.

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## Links to Projects and Reports

### Cross-Cutting Early Childhood Research

National Survey of Early Care and Education, 2012 (NSECE 2012)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/national-survey-early-care-and-education-nsece-2010-2015>

National Survey of Early Care and Education, 2024 (NSECE 2024)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/national-survey-early-care-and-education-2024>

Variations in Implementation of Quality Interventions (VIQI)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/variations-implementation-quality-interventions-examining-quality-child-outcomes>

Building and Sustaining the Early Care and Education Workforce (BASE)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/building-and-sustaining-early-care-and-education-workforce-base>

Professional Development Tools to Improve Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infant and Toddler Care (Q-CCIIT PD Tools)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/professional-development-tools-improve-quality-infant-toddler-care-q-cciit-pd-tools>

Creating a Culture of Continuous Quality Improvement in Child Care and Head Start Settings (CCL)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/culture-continuous-learning-ccl-project-breakthrough-series-collaborative-improving>

Child Care and Early Education Research Connections

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/child-care-and-early-education-research-connections-2013-2019>

Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium (CCEPRC)

<https://www.researchconnections.org/content/childcare/federal/cceprc.html>

ACF's National Research Conference on Early Childhood (NRCEC) 2022/24

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/national-research-conference-early-childhood-nrcec>

Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance Cross-Systems Evaluation

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/early-childhood-training-and-technical-assistance-cross-system-evaluation-project-2015>



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Network of Infant/Toddler Researchers (NitR)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/network-infant-toddler-researchers-nitr>

The Child & Family Data Archive

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/early-care-and-education-data-archive-2018-2023>

Early Care and Education Leadership Study (ExCELS)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/early-care-and-education-leadership-study-excels-2018-2023>

Next Steps for Rigorous Research on Two-Generation Approaches (NS2G)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/next-steps-rigorous-research-two-generation-approaches-ns2g-2019-2023-0>

Infant and Toddler Teacher and Caregiver Competencies (ITTCC)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/infant-and-toddler-teacher-and-caregiver-competencies-2017-2021>

Consumer Education and Parental Choice in Early Care and Education

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/consumer-education-and-parental-choice-early-care-and-education-2020-2025>

Exploring the Opportunity Gap for Young Children Birth to Age 8

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/exploring-the-opportunity-gap-for-young-children-from-birth-to-age-eight>

Understanding Supply-Building and Sustainability Efforts of the Child Care and Early Education (CCEE) Market

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/understanding-supply-building-and-sustainability-efforts-child-care-and-early>

Assessing the Implementation and Cost of High Quality Early Care and Education, 2014-2019 (ECE-ICHQ)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/assessing-implementation-and-cost-high-quality-early-care-and-education-project-ece>

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships Sustainability Study

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/study-early-head-start-child-care-partnerships-2013-2018>

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Addressing the Long-Term Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Children and Families

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/addressing-the-long-term-impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-children-and-families>

Policies and Programs to Reduce Intergenerational Poverty

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/policies-and-programs-to-reduce-intergenerational-poverty>

Develop Teaching Materials Based on OPRE's Research and Evaluation

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/develop-teaching-materials-based-opres-research-and-evaluation-2019-2024>

### **Child Care: Raising Quality and Supporting Parental Employment**

Child Care and Development Block Grant Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grants Cohort 1 and Cohort 2

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/child-care-development-block-grant-cbdbg-implementation-research-and-evaluation-grants>

Child Care and Early Education Policy and Research Analysis Project (CCEEPRA)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/child-care-and-early-education-policy-and-research-analysis-project-2005-2018>

Early Care and Education Research Scholars: Child Care Dissertation Grants

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/early-care-and-education-research-scholars-child-care-research-scholars-2000-2019>

Understanding the Role of Licensing in Early Care and Education Project (TRLECE)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/understanding-role-licensing-early-care-and-education-trlece-2019-2024>

Spotlight: Home-Based Child Care Supply and Quality Project

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/home-based-child-care-supply-and-quality-2019-2024>

Child Care Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Center (Child Care ECB Center)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/child-care-research-and-evaluation-capacity-building-center-child-care-ecb-center-2019>

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Policies Database

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/child-care-and-development-fund-ccdf-policies-database-2008-2018>

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- The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Policies Database Website  
<https://ccdf.urban.org/>

Definitions and Policies Related to the Incidence of Child Abuse and Neglect State Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) Policies Database

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/definitions-and-policies-related-incidence-child-abuse-and-neglect-and-related-risk>

Coordinated Evaluations of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Policies and Initiatives: Planning and Implementation Grants (PROSPR)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/coordinated-evaluations-child-care-and-development-fund-ccdf-policies-and-initiatives#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20Coordinated,and%20researchers%20to%20plan%20and>

Child Care Policy Research Partnership Grants

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/child-care-policy-research-partnerships-1995-2023>

Secondary Analyses of Child Care Data Grants (Awarded 2022)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/secondary-analyses-child-care-and-early-education-data-grants>

Secondary Analyses of Child Care Data Grants (Anticipated Award 2024)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/secondary-analyses-child-care-and-early-education-data-grants>

**Head Start and Early Head Start: Enhancing Health and Human Services for Families with Low Income**

Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Study (Baby FACES), 2018, 2020, and 2022

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/early-head-start-family-and-child-experiences-study-baby-faces-2007-2020>

Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/head-start-family-and-child-experiences-survey-faces-1997-2022>

American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (AIAN FACES), 2021

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/american-indian-and-alaska-native-head-start-family-and-child-experiences-survey-ai-0>

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Early Care and Education Research Scholars: Head Start Dissertation Grants

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/early-care-and-education-research-scholars-head-start-graduate-student-research-grants>

Head Start Connects: Individualizing and Connecting Families to Comprehensive Family Support Services

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/head-start-connects-individualizing-and-connecting-families-comprehensive-family>

Head Start University Partnerships: Building the Evidence Base for ECE Workforce Well-Being

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/head-start-university-partnerships-building-evidence-base-ece-workforce-well-being>

The Study of Disabilities Services Coordinators and Inclusion in Head Start

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/study-disability-services-coordinators-and-inclusion-head-start-2019-2024>

Spotlight: Understanding Children’s Transitions from Head Start to Kindergarten (HS2K)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/understanding-childrens-transitions-head-start-kindergarten-hs2k-2019-2022>

Conversion of Enrollment Slots from Head Start to Early Head Start (HS2EHS)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/conversion-enrollment-slots-head-start-early-head-start>

Head Start REACH: Strengthening Recruitment, Enrollment, and Engagement Practices for Families (HS REACH)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/head-start-recruitment-selection-enrollment-and-retention-especially-vulnerable>

Financing for Early Care and Education Quality and Access for All (F4EQ)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/financing-ece-quality-and-access-all-f4eq>

Secondary Analyses of Head Start and Early Head Start Data Grants

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/grant-funding/secondary-analyses-head-start-and-early-head-start-data-2023>

Survey of Staff Recruitment, Training, and Professional Development in Early Head Start

<https://acfmaint-stage.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/survey-staff-recruitment-training-and-professional-development-early-head-start-2023>

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## Promoting Child Welfare

National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/national-survey-child-and-adolescent-well-being-nscaw-1997-2014-and-2015-2022>

Supporting Evidence Building in Child Welfare

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/supporting-evidence-building-child-welfare-2016-2021>

Building Capacity to Evaluate Child Welfare Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families (CWCC)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/building-capacity-evaluate-child-welfare-community-collaborations-strengthen-and>

Building Capacity to Evaluation Interventions for Youth/Young Adults At-Risk of Homelessness (YARH)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/building-capacity-evaluate-interventions-youth/young-adults-child-welfare-involvement>

Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/title-iv-e-prevention-services-clearinghouse-2018-2023>

State Child Welfare Data Linkages Descriptive Study

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/state-child-welfare-data-linkages-descriptive-study>

Child Welfare Study to Enhance Equity with Data (CW-SEED)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/child-welfare-study-enhance-equity-data-cw-seed>

Secondary Analysis for the National Incidence of Child Maltreatment

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/secondary-analyses-data-national-incidence-child-maltreatment>

Spotlight: Prevention Services Evaluation Partnerships: Building Evidence for Mental Health, Substance Use, In-home Parent Skill-based, and Kinship Navigator Programs and Services

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/prevention-services-evaluation-partnerships-building-evidence-mental-health-substance>



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## Human Trafficking: Improving Services for Survivors

Evaluation of the National Human Trafficking Hotline Program

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/evaluation-national-human-trafficking-hotline-program-2016-2021>

Spotlight: Human Trafficking Policy and Research Analyses Project

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/human-trafficking-policy-and-research-analyses-project-2019-2024>

Building Evidence for Trafficking Interventions and Response (BETIR)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/building-evidence-trafficking-interventions-and-response-betir#:~:text=The%20Building%20Evidence%20for%20Trafficking,Office%20of%20Planning%2C%20Research%2C%20and>

## Recognizing Cultural Diversity

National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/center-research-hispanic-children-families-2013-2018-and-2018-2023>

Tribal Early Childhood Research Center (TRC)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/tribal-early-childhood-research-center-trc-2016-2020>

African American Child and Family Research Center

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/african-american-child-and-family-research-center>