



NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION

January 6, 2015

Office Management and Budget
Paperwork Reduction Project

Attn: Desk Officer for the Administration for children and Families

To whom it may concern:

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to submit our comments regarding the proposed Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) (Federal Register Volume 79, Number 236 (Tuesday, December 9, 2014) Page 73077).

The National Head Start Association believes that every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, has the ability to succeed in life if given the opportunity that Head Start offers to children and their families. It is the national voice of more than a million children in Head Start and Early Head Start programs in the United States. Head Start and Early Head Start represent a national commitment to providing early learning opportunities for the children who are most at-risk and who have been proven to benefit most from early learning experiences.

The Head Start FACES study has provided important insights into the growth and impact of the Head Start program over time. NHSA appreciates the comprehensive design of the survey tools for families and family service workers that include an effort to understand Head Start's two-generation impact. For the Core staff surveys, we offer the following recommendations to enhance the utility of the study findings.

Head Start Program Director Survey

- In section B, "Staff Education and Training," ask about support for staff earning CDA credentials as well as college degrees.
- In section E, "Curriculum, Classroom Activities, and Assessment," the curricula listed are primarily for literacy and omit both common math curricula like Building Blocks and the many social-emotional curricula that programs use. If the question is intended to only focus on literacy, we suggest stating this explicitly.
- On question H7, "leadership institute offered by Head Start" may confuse those familiar with both the Office of Head Start's leadership institutes and the National Head Start Association's leadership institutes. We recommend clarifying the option.
- In section N, "Use of Program Data and Information," a question should be added about whether partnerships are in place with school systems or State Longitudinal Data Systems to assign and track children by unique identifiers.
- On question O4, an option for "extending hours per day or days per year" should be included.
- In section I, background questions should include whether the director was at any point a Head Start parent.
- On question I2d, an option for "Family Services Staff" should be included.
- On question I6, an option for "state/national TA does not match our local needs" should be included.

Center Director Survey

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The National Head Start Association, an independent membership organization, advocates on behalf of the entire Head Start community and provides training and resources to Head programs nationwide.

- In section A, “Staffing and Recruitment” following the question about teachers leaving the program an additional question should probe whether those teachers left because of low salaries, degree requirements, or better compensated positions in local schools.
- Section E, “Curriculum, Classroom Activities, and Assessment” refers only to academic subjects and omits the curriculum, activities, and assessment tools in place to support children’s social-emotional development. We strongly recommend incorporating this important component of Head Start here or in a dedicated section.
- On question H7, clarify whether “leadership institute” refers to OHS or NHSA.
- In section I, background questions should include whether the director was at any point a Head Start parent.
- On question I2d, an option for “Family Services Staff” should be included.

Head Start Core Teacher Survey

- Section A, “Classroom Activities” should include questions about deliberate support for social-emotional development.
- On question A7, the curricula listed omit both common math curricula like Building Blocks and the many social-emotional curricula that programs use.
- Following question A32 about professional development opportunities, we recommend adding a question about what teachers perceived as the relative usefulness of trainings from various sources (mentors, program staff, consultants, state T/TA, etc.) for various areas (curriculum implementation, classroom management, etc.).
- In section D, background questions should include whether the director was at any point a Head Start parent.
- Given the research of Dr. Robert Whitaker and others about the impact of Head Start teachers’ compensation, depression, and stress on their relationships with children, we recommend adding questions about teachers’ income (whether it meets their family needs, whether they rely on public subsidies), their mindfulness practices, and their stress levels.

FACES represents an exciting opportunity to document Head Start’s legacy of innovative practices and high-quality comprehensive services for the children who need them most. Thank you again for the chance to share our comments. If you have any questions, you can contact me at yvinci@nhsa.org.

Sincerely,



Executive Director
National Head Start Association