

The Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration and Evaluation Project (HtE) seeks to learn what services improve the employment prospects of low-income persons who face serious obstacles to steady work. The project is sponsored by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

The HtE project is a multi-year, multi-site evaluation that employs an experimental longitudinal research design to test four strategies aimed at promoting employment among hard-to-employ populations. The four include: 1) intensive case management and job services program for Rhode Island Medicaid recipients with serious depression; 2) job readiness training, worksite placements, job coaching, job development and other training opportunities for recent parolees in New York City; 3) pre-employment services and transitional employment for long-term participants receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF); and 4) two-generational Early Head Start (EHS) services providing enhanced self-sufficiency services for parents, parent skills training, and high quality child care for children in low-income families in Kansas and Missouri.

The purpose of the current document is to request approval of the 36-month parent survey and direct child assessments in Kansas and Missouri. The research team plans to collect parent-reported surveys assessing parents' employment, education and economic outcomes, child outcomes, as well as aspects of parental psychological well-being, parenting, family functioning and routines, and child care use. This data collection effort will also include direct assessments of young children's cognitive, socioemotional and behavioral development.

The follow-up survey and direct child assessments at the 36-month follow-up in Kansas and Missouri will be used for the following purposes: to study the extent to which EHS services with enhanced self-sufficiency services (enhanced EHS services) affect employment, earnings, income, and welfare dependence of low-income parents with young children; to study the impacts of enhanced EHS services on child well-being and school readiness; to examine the impacts of enhanced EHS services on key aspects of parental psychological well-being, parenting, family functioning and routines, and child care that might account for the effects of the intervention on young children; to collect data on a wider range of outcomes measures than is available through welfare, Medicaid, Food Stamps, Social Security, and UI records. The 36-month data collection elements have the potential to significantly add to this study's contribution to the literature by examining the sustained impacts of enhanced EHS services on low-income parents and children. Directly addressing young children's developmental needs can help parents overcome obstacles to sustained employment and economic self-sufficiency. Likewise, directly addressing employment and economic needs can improve their ability to better their own financial circumstances, indirectly benefiting children. This study adds to the literature by informing whether a two-generational approach, particularly a child-focused program with enhanced employment and economic self-sufficiency services, can have wider-ranging effects on young children than a program focused on either parents or children, but not both.