

## B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

### B.1 Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

The potential respondent universe for the Tracking Participants of the Head Start Impact Study is the same as reported for the Head Start Impact Study. The sampling universe for the Head Start Impact Study is all Head Start grantees/delegate agencies operating in all 50 states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the district of Columbia that do not specifically target the following special populations: grantees/delegate agencies serving migrant children; Head Start programs operated by Tribal organizations; children enrolled in Early Head Start; new grantees/delegate agencies (i.e., grantees/delegate agencies that are in operation for less than two years); and programs involved in FACES 2000.

The starting point for creating this initial population of Head Start grantees/delegate agencies was the 1999-2000 Program Information Report (PIR) database maintained by ACYF. Migrant and Tribal Organization grantees/delegate agencies can be readily identified from this database, and “new” programs were identified as those grantees/delegate agencies that were listed in the 1999-2000 PIR but which were **not** listed in the 1998-1999 PIR (i.e., eliminating grantees/delegate agencies that were in operation for approximately less than two years). Early Head Start children were identified and excluded once the sample of grantees/delegate agencies has been selected.

### B2. Procedures for the Collection of Information

#### Sampling Procedures

In fall 2002, a sample of 4,667 children was randomly selected off the applicant lists to a sample of Head Start centers. This sample was randomly assigned within centers (in a few cases, within programs) to either a treatment or control group in a sample size ratio of 1.5. An attempt will be made to contact all parents of children sampled in fall 2002. The Head Start Impact Study Sampling Plan is included in Appendix C.

#### Data Collection Procedures

Field staff will be used to conduct the tracking of Head Start Impact Study participants. Highly experienced, skilled and trained field teams consisting of site coordinators and interviewer/assessors will be used under the supervision of the tracking study’s operations director. An operations director will implement the data collection plan and ensure monitoring and quality control tasks are conducted in an

efficient, organized, and timely manner to continue the collection of high quality tracking data and achieve the high response rates consistently realized in the HSIS.

Site coordinators will serve in a pivotal role as the primary local contact, enlisting cooperation and maintaining participation of respondents; coordinating all tracking activities in the site; managing field staff; and ensuring quality control. They will report to the central office operations director and her staff and will manage a measurement team consisting of field interviewers/assessors. The size of the team and the time allocated will be adjusted according to the number of cases and their location within the site.

### **B.3 Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Nonresponse**

Locating families for tracking is the primary goal of this data collection. We will employ several strategies to minimize sample attrition and obtain a high response rate.

Minimizing attrition requires continuing to engage families who have participated in the past, convincing families who have not participated in recent rounds to rejoin the study, and finding a strategy to assess children in cases where the family has moved more than 70 miles away from the study area. Each of these three components required to minimize attrition are discussed below.

**Engaging Current Participants.** To keep respondents interested in continuing their participation, we will emphasize that the Head Start Impact Study is a ground-breaking and important study. We will submit to respondents a brochure that explains the study to the parents/primary caregivers and details the importance of their response to tracking information. Advance letters also will be mailed out with the brochure that explains the study's significance.

Incentives can motivate parents to participate by demonstrating the extent to which we value their time and insights. We will provide an incentive of \$20 for the each respondent to acknowledge the value of their continued participation as a respondent for this study.

**Converting Families Who Have Refused in the Past.** Through every data collection of the original HSIS, the interviewers tried to contact each family who was randomly assigned to the study. The only exceptions were cases that have been determined to be "hard refusals." These were individuals who told us—in no uncertain terms—that they do not wish to participate in the study and did not want to hear from a representative of the HSIS again. While respondents can be encouraged and often persuaded to participate, participation *is* voluntary. It is important for the integrity of the study that respondents participate at will. We will try to re-engage all of these families for the this tracking effort.

#### **B.4 Tests of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken**

The tracking instrument used in this study has been used in prior rounds of the Head Start Impact Study and found to be effective.

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

The contractors who worked on the initial design for the Head Start Impact Study (28200-0022) and the third grade follow-up (contracts 23302-008706TK001 and HHSP23320062929YC), include Westat (prime contractor), Chesapeake Research Associates, Abt Associates, Urban Institute, and the American Institutes for Research. The primary project staff for these organizations are listed below. The contract for the Tracking Participants of the Head Start Impact Study has not yet been awarded. Given that the design of the study is already complete, and that there will be no statistical analysis of the data, only the contractor and its staff will be consulted on statistical aspects of design.

##### *Project Staff*

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