

Head Start Impact Study

Presentation at the National Head Start Association's 28th Annual Training Conference
Orlando, Florida
May 16-19, 2001



Today's Goal



- Describe the Head Start Impact Study
- Show how the study will affect your program and families
- Discuss why your support and participation are important



Congressionally mandated study

 National study including 75 grantees/ delegate agencies and 225 centers



Newly entering 3 and 4 year olds

• Longitudinal- children followed through first grade

• Approximately 5,000-6,000 children



- Randomly assign children who have applied for Head Start to either:
 - Head Start Group: Enrolled in Head Start
 - Non-Head Start Group: Not enrolled in Head Start, but can participate in other childcare



 Comparable data collected for both groups

 Study will only be conducted in sites where all children already cannot be served





What are we going to learn from the study?

- How does Head Start help children improve both their readiness for school and their early school performance?
 - Physical well being and motor development
 - Social and emotional development
 - Approaches to learning
 - Language development and emerging literacy
 - Cognition and general knowledge

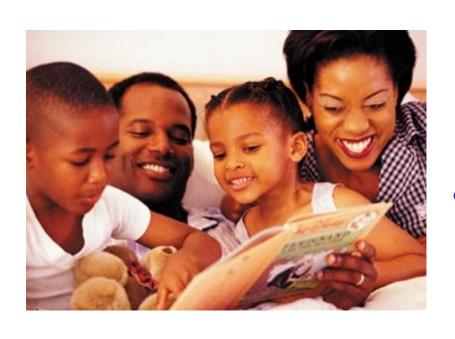


What are we going to learn from the study?

- Under what circumstances does Head Start achieve the greatest impact?
 - Different types of children
 - Children from different home environments
 - Grantee/delegate agencies with different characteristics
 - Different types of childcare and preschool environments



What are we going to learn from the study?



• What parental practices contribute to children's school readiness?

Inform policymakers

 and program managers
 to help make Head Start
 as effective as possible



What do I need to know about the study design?

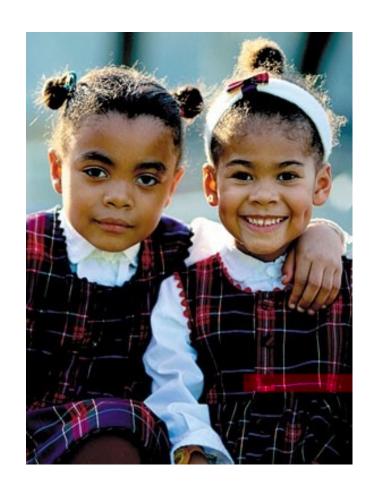
Study conducted in two phases:

- Field test:
 - 8 programs/ 24 Head Start centers
 - Approximately 600 children
 - During fall of 2001 and spring 2002
 - Test study procedures and instruments



What do I need to know about the study design?

- Full scale study
 - Recruitment beginsJune 2001
 - Selection and random assignment in spring and summer of 2002
 - Data collection at Head
 Start programs begins
 in fall 2002





What do I need to know about the study design?

- General random assignment strategy
 - Programs follow application and eligibility process
 - Families told that the program is participating in the study
 - Families told that some enrollment decisions made by lottery
 - Small number of families and children selected for the study- 80 per grantee
 - 48 enrolled in Head Start
 - 32 not enrolled in Head Start

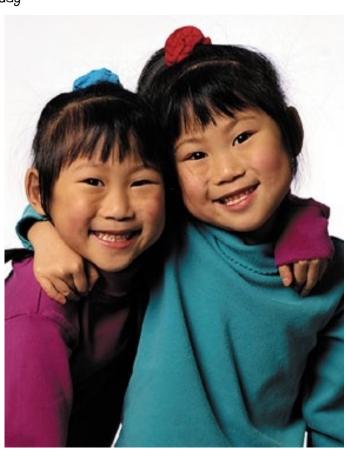


Data Collection Sources

- Parents/ Primary caregivers
- Children
- Program staff, teachers/ other childcare providers
- Care settings- assessment of quality
- Administrative/ school records
- Community stakeholders



Measures



Context information

- Telephone protocols to assess program eligibility
- Site visit protocols to collect contextual information
- Secondary data sources contextual and capacity information



Measures

Child and family measures

- Child assessment
- Teacher's/caregiver's childreport form
- Parent interview





Measures



- Program measures
 - Classroom/ childcare observation
 - Staff survey
 - Center director survey



How will being in the study affect my program?

 Every effort will be made to limit agency burden and provide the necessary resources

• Use of site coordinator

• Identify an agency liaison to coordinate agency study effort



How will being in the study affect my program?

- Support random assignment procedures
- Identify people with whom we need to talk
- Encourage centers and staff to participate
- Work with evaluation team to protect the confidentiality needs of families



How will being in the study affect my program?

 Help provide locating information on families who move

Provide a place to conduct child assessments

• Staff will not be responsible for conducting interviews



What is the benefit to participating and supporting the study?

 Rigorous evaluation of Head Start programs across the nation will be conducted and your type of program will be represented

• You will be able to provide input to the researchers on the process, issues to consider, and the meaning of the findings



What is the benefit to participating and supporting the study?

- In appreciation of participation, incentives will be provided to staff, parents, and children
- Please provide other suggestions about ways to make this evaluation work for your program

