

National Survey of Early Care and Education

Project Director A. Rupa Datta, Principal Investigator Bob Goerge

October, 2010 – September, 2014

Project Description.

The National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) uses a dual emphasis on both the usage and availability of early care and education services to document the national representation for the need and availability of early care and education services. The two have not been studied together in a nationally-representative study in more than two decades. The NSECE design includes households with children under 13 years of age, home-based providers of care to children up to age 13, center-based providers of care to children not yet in kindergarten, and individuals working directly with children in home-based and center-based settings.

Research questions.

- How do parents at different income levels pay for their children's care? What kind of help do they need?
- What types of early care and education do parents most need? Is this care available in their area? How do parents balance work and school with child care?
- Which families use care provided by family, friends, and neighbors most often and why?
- What are the characteristics of care available to families?
- What source of revenue do providers rely on, and how are those sources related to the care offered?
- How can we better support early care and education workforce as well as informal care providers and offer opportunities to help them improve the care they provide and offer children?

Sample. Data was collected from four coordinated nationally representative samples: households, center- and home-based providers appearing on state lists, home-based providers not appearing on state lists, and staff working in center-based classrooms. Data were collected from 755 communities across all 50 states and DC. Communities with high densities of low-income families were oversampled.

Methods. Data collection was conducted through web, mail, phone and in-person interviewing.

Progress Update.

NSECE data collection began in November 2011 through mail screening of households and web interviewing of providers. Full field and telephone data collection began January 2012. Interviewing concluded June, 2012. The project team begins data analysis November, 2012, with interim findings scheduled for release in Fall, 2013. Data files will be made available to the research community in Fall, 2014.

Implications for policy/practice

The NSECE will provide the first nationally representative data source on all forms of early care and education (ECE) availability in more than 20 years.

Implications for research

The NSECE will document the nation's current utilization and availability of early care and education, to deepen our understanding of the extent to which families' needs and preferences coordinate with providers' offerings and constraints. The data include a variety of methodological innovations in terms of data collected, methods used for collection, and research questions that can be investigated.

For more information, contact:

Rupa Datta, NSECE Project Director
datta-rupa@norc.uchicago.edu

Bob Goerge, NSECE Principal Investigator
rgoerge@chapinhall.org

Ivelisse Martinez-Beck, NSECE Federal Project Officer
Martinezbeck-Ivelisse@acf.hhs.gov

NSECE questionnaires are available at:
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/cc/nsece/index.html>