

Administration for Children and Families

**Office of Planning, Research and
Evaluation
and
Office of Head Start**

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“To enable the establishment of a panel of independent experts under the National Academy of Sciences to review and provide guidance on appropriate outcomes and assessments for young children....”

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Setting the context

- Overview of OPRE
- Overview of Head Start

Research and Evaluation at OPRE

■ Division of Child and Family Development

- Head Start
- Child Care
- Child Welfare

■ Division of Economic Independence

- Employment
- Welfare
- Strengthening Families and Healthy Marriage

Research and Evaluation in Head Start

- FACES
- Head Start Impact Study
- Early Head Start Evaluation
- Child Outcomes Research Support Grants
- ACF Head Start Assessment Grants
- NICHD Early Childhood Assessment Grants

Head Start Participants

- Low income children and families
- 906,000 children in 19,800 centers (PIR,2006)
- Pregnant women and children ages 0-5

Special Populations

- Children from minority groups
- English language learners
- Migrant and seasonal workers
- Children with disabilities

Head Start Services

- Comprehensive services for child development
- Emphasis on family involvement
- Center and home based services
- Part-day and full-day programs
- Service linkages
- Locally determined curriculum
- Performance standards

Head Start assessments are used for:

- Planning and individualizing instruction
- Assessing children's progress
- Identification of special needs and abilities
- Program improvement
- Accountability
- Research and evaluation

Goals

- Identification of key outcomes that should be the focus of early childhood programming, and the topics that assessments should address
- Identification of assessment strategies and instruments that are state-of-the-art

Topics of interest

- Assessment across the age range, children ages 0-5
- Children from cultural and linguistic minority groups
- Children with disabilities
- Consideration of assessing contextual features that influence children's outcomes

Topics of Interest (cont.)

- Consideration of different types of assessments for different purposes, and their potential linkages
- Defining criteria for determining suitability of different assessment strategies

Topics of interest (cont.)

- Considering acceptability of assessment strategies for different audiences
- Examining how assessment information is translated into action steps (e.g., linking with curriculum)
- Identifying areas where assessment tools are inadequate, and priorities for future research and development