



Privacy Impact Assessment

For

Early Reading First National Evaluation

Date

November 15, 2006

System Owner:

Dr. Ricky Takai

Office of Institute of Education Sciences
U.S. Department of Education

1. What information will be collected for the system?

The system consists of the names and addresses of children in the evaluation and their parents as well as demographic information--such as race/ethnicity, age, educational background, and family income; names of preschool staff in the evaluation; parent and preschool staff responses to survey questions, children's results from early literacy and language assessments and teacher reports of children's social and emotional outcomes. Information collected will include the following: Names; addresses; demographic information such as race/ethnicity, age, educational background, and family income for children in the sample and their parents; and preschool staff answers to interview questions. Specific data collection activities will include direct in-person assessments of children, telephone surveys of parents, self-administered teacher surveys and teacher ratings of children, self-administered preschool director surveys, informal grantee director in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and extraction of records on children.

2. Why is this information being collected?

The information in this system is used for the following purposes:

- (1) To fulfill the requirements under section 1226 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), for an evaluation of the Early Reading First program; and
- (2) to provide information on effective practices in Early Reading First for the purpose of improving the program.

3. How will the information be used?

The system contains records on Early Reading First children and their parents and project staff from Early Reading First programs participating in the national evaluation. In addition, the system contains records for children, parents, and staff in some preschools not receiving Early Reading First funds. The evaluation will obtain a sample of sites from the universe of applicants that applied for Early Reading First (ERF) grants that were awarded in 2003. The treatment group consists of 28 grantees that received ERF funds. The comparison group consists of 37 applicants that did not receive ERF funds and that received average scores from peer reviewers in the interval below the average score of the lowest-scoring funded application. A random sample of three to five preschool classrooms was selected from each ERF grantee in the treatment group and each unfunded applicant site in the comparison group. In each site, up to 33 children were randomly selected from those whose parents have given consent for them to participate in the study. Parents of children in those classrooms were asked to sign a consent form with contact information.

4. Will this information be shared with any other agency or entity? If so, with which agency or agencies/entities?

Information is disclosed internally to administer the program. However, it is not shared externally, except as required by law, or under the routine uses listed in the Privacy Act System of Records notice. These disclosures may be made on a case-by-case basis, or if the Department has complied with the computer matching requirements of the Act, under a computer matching agreement. Such disclosures may include: for litigation purposes, to the Department of Justice for FOIA advice, to contractors conducting Department business, for law enforcement, to a member of Congress at the request of the data subject, or to a consumer reporting agency regarding a valid and overdue claim.

5. Describe the notice or opportunities for consent that would be or are provided to individuals about what information is collected and how that information is shared with other organizations.

There is not notice or opportunities for consent since information is provided voluntarily.

6. How will the information be secured?

All physical access to the Department site, and the sites of Department contractors where this system of records is maintained, is controlled and monitored by security personnel. The computer system employed by the Department offers a high degree of resistance to tampering and circumvention. This security system limits data access to Department and contract staff on a "need to know" basis, and controls individual users' ability to access and alter records within the system.

The contractor, Decision Information Resources, Inc. (DIR), and its subcontractors Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) and the Center for Improving the Readiness of Children for Learning and Education (CIRCLE) at University of Texas-Houston Health Sciences Center have established a set of procedures to ensure confidentiality of data. All employees sign a pledge that emphasizes the importance of confidentiality and describes their obligations. Access to sample selection data is limited to those who have direct responsibility for providing the sample and maintaining the sample-locating information. At the conclusion of the research, these data are destroyed. Identifying information is maintained on separate forms and files, which are linked only by sample identification numbers. Access to the file that links sample identification numbers with the respondents' identification and contact information is limited to a small number of individuals who have a need to know this information. Access to the hardcopy documents is strictly limited. Documents are stored in locked files and cabinets. Discarded material is shredded. Computer data files are protected with passwords, and access is limited to specific users. Especially sensitive data are maintained on removable storage devices that are kept physically secure when not in use. An Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved the data collection protocol and the procedures used to ensure confidentiality. The parent consent form required for children's participation in the study states that information collected about the child will be kept confidential. The interviewers' introductory comments given at the beginning of each parent and grantee director interview includes all the information that respondents need for deciding to give informed consent (verbal) for that interview.

7. Is a system of records being created or updated with the collection of this information?

The system is covered under the system of records notice entitled Early Reading First National Evaluation, dated November 15, 2006, (71 FR 66506-66508).