Administrative Data on Federal Policies and Programs That Support Young Children with Disabilities

Resource Guide for Researchers | November 2020

About this Resource

This resource guide provides information for researchers about administrative data collected on federal policies and programs that (in whole or part) support young children with disabilities.

Three datasets are highlighted in this resource guide:

- **Head Start Program Information Report**, or PIR, collected by the Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- **Section 618 data from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**, collected by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education
- **ACF-801 case-level data collected as part of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)**, collected by the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

This resource guide summarizes various features of these data, including the timing of data collection, level of data (i.e., child level, program level, or state level), key variables related to children with disabilities, and data archive availability (i.e., in which government funding years [FY] the information was collected, and where the data are housed). We also include limitations of the datasets and contact information for federal agency staff in charge of the data.

An important note for researchers considering using these data: While many federal programs serving young children default to using the term "disability" as defined by IDEA, the IDEA statute gives states flexibility in how to define disability within their state and how to determine eligibility for IDEA services. This flexibility means that a child may be diagnosed with a disability in one state but not in another.[1,2] Because the definition of disability and the guidelines for determining eligibility for services vary across states, the IDEA definition cannot be used to make generalizations to the national level.

Finally, all three of these datasets report information about children served by federal programs and policies and do not include information on other children who are eligible (but not served) in Head Start, by CCDF subsidies, or by IDEA Part C or Part B, Section 619 services. Researchers should consider this limitation when interpreting and reporting findings.

CCEEPRA
Child Care and Early Education Policy and Research Analysis

About Each Dataset

Head Start Program Information Report (PIR)

The Program Information Report (PIR) is an administrative data source from the Office of Head Start. Annual reports are from Head Start grantees, which include Head Start, Early Head Start, American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start, and Migrant/Seasonal Head Start. Head Start provides early childhood development services to expectant families, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers through federal funds granted to local organizations. As part of its mission, Head Start reserves 10 percent of its slots for children with disabilities. In the PIR, Head Start uses the IDEA definition of disability, and therefore, the numbers and percentages of children with disabilities in the PIR dataset are also reflected in IDEA data described below.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Section 618

Section 618 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that each state submit data about infants and toddlers, birth through age 2, who receive early intervention services under Part C of IDEA and children with disabilities, ages 3 through 21, who receive special education and related services under Part B of IDEA. Section 618 data are collected by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to meet statutory requirements of Section 618 of IDEA. The data monitor each state's implementation of IDEA, a federal law that ensures appropriate education for children with disabilities. Data are also used to report on IDEA's implementation to Congress and the public and are used by OSEP to determine priorities for funding technical assistance and monitoring. Data are reported by 60 states and entities that receive IDEA Part B formula grants and 56 states and entities that receive IDEA Part C formula grants.

ACF-801: Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), part of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), is issued to states to fund child care subsidies for families from low-income households. The Office of Child Care (OCC) collects case level (e.g., family level) and aggregate data that describe families and children receiving CCDF services, the settings in which children are served, and the providers serving the children. States can report these data to OCC every month or quarter and can report full-population or sample data. OCC publishes average monthly statistics based on a federal fiscal year (FFY), and these reports provide state and national data adjusted to reflect only families and children served with CCDF funds.

Head Start Program Information Report (PIR)

Timing of data collection

- Annual data collection by federal fiscal year (October–September)*

Data level

- Child-level counts aggregated by grantee

Key variables related to children with disabilities (Ages 0-5)

- Timing of child's diagnosis
- Diagnosis before or after enrollment
- Primary diagnosis
- Whether the child received services

Data archive

- Archived data files available starting in FY09

Data availability

- Public data sets, reports, summaries can be found at the Office of Head Start's Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center.

Limitations

- Data are provided in aggregate at the grantee level; therefore analyses about individual children are not possible with these data.

Contact at Administration for Children and Families

- Dayana Garcia, Office of Head Start: dayana.garcia@acf.hhs.gov
- Head Start Enterprise System help desk: help@hsesinfo.org

**Due to the impacts of COVID-19, the 2019–2020 PIR will not be collected.*

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Section 618

Timing of data collection

- Annual data collection

Data level

- State-level aggregated data

Part B reporting entities include the 50 states, the District of Columbia (DC), Puerto Rico (PR), Virgin Islands (VI), Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), outlying areas, and freely associated areas. Part C reporting entities include the 50 states, DC, PR, VI, and outlying areas.

Key variables related to children with disabilities

- **Part B (Ages 3-21)**
  - Child Count
  - Dispute Resolution
  - Exiting from Special Education (Ages 14-21)
  - Educational Environments
  - Discipline
  - Assessment
  - Personnel
  - Maintenance of Effort Reduction, and Coordinated Early Intervening Services
- **Part C (Ages 0-2)**
  - Child Count
  - Dispute Resolution
  - Exiting from Part C Services
  - Settings

Data archive

- Archived data files available starting in FY05

Data availability

- State-level data files: https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/state-level-data-files/index.html
- Static data tables: https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/static-tables/index.html
- Annual report to Congress: https://www2.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/osep/index.html

Limitations

- When the Office of Special Education Programs flags issues around data quality or privacy concerns, they may suppress certain data. Also, data collection has changed over time, so not all data elements are available in historical files.

Contact at U.S. Department of Education

- Meredith Miceli, Office of Special Education Programs: Meredith.Miceli@ed.gov; osepIDEAdata@ed.gov

ACF-801: Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)

Timing of data collection

- Monthly/quarterly data collection published on a FFY basis (October–September)

Data level

- Case-level aggregated data

Key variables related to children with disabilities

- Child with a disability (as defined by Section 602 of IDEA)
- Child is eligible for early intervention services (under Part C of IDEA)
- Child is eligible for services (under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973)
- Child with a disability (as defined by the state)

Data archive

- Archived sample case-level data files available starting in FFY 2001. Data collection of disability status began in October 2016 (FFY 2017).

Data availability

- Annual reports available at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/ccdf-statistics
- FY2017 sample case-level data available at https://www.childandfamilydataarchive.org/cfda/archives/cfda/studies/37627

Limitations

- Some states are not yet collecting these disability-related data.*
- Issues with definitions and reluctance on parents' part due to stigma may lead to underreporting.
- Child care programs may not have access to these data and may have not yet implemented data sharing agreements.

Contact at Administration for Children and Families

- Helen Papadopoulos, Office of Child Care: helen.papadopoulos@acf.hhs.gov

** All lead agencies in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and territories (i.e., Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and Virgin Islands) collect and report full population or sample data.[3]*

References

[1] Government Accountability Office. (2019). *Special education: Varied state criteria may contribute to differences in percentages of children served.* GAO Report #19-348, Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office. Available at https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/698430.pdf.

[2] Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center. (2015). *States' and territories' definitions of/criteria for IDEA Part C eligibility*. Available at https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/topics/earlyid/partc_elig_table.pdf.

[3] Brown, B. & Ghertner, R. (2020). *A compendium of administrative and survey data resources in the Administration for Children and Families*. OPRE Report # 2020-10, Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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