

California Child Care Study

FAQs

August 2018

What's the purpose of the California Child Care study?

The purpose of this study is to collect data on the characteristics of families and child care providers participating in state funded subsidized child care programs. These data will be used to get a clear picture of the subsidized childcare landscape in the state of California. By collecting data on the characteristics of providers, families, and children in the subsidized child care system, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and the California Department of Education (CDE) will be better able to administer programs and make informed policy decisions.

How is the study funded?

The study is being funded by CDSS through a combination of state general funds and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

Who will be included in the study?

Licensed family child care homes, license-exempt child care providers (including family, friend, and neighbor care), and center-based programs that received a voucher or were contracted to provide care in March 2017 through any of the following subsidy programs: CalWORKs Stage 1, CalWORKs Stage 2, CalWORKs Stage 3, General Child Care and Development Program, Alternative Payment Program, Migrant Child Care and Development Program & Migrant Alternative Payment Program, and California State Preschool will be included in the sample. The sample is not limited to a type of subsidized care or program size. Families that received subsidized care in March 2017 from the sampled providers will also be included in the study.

Are Head Start programs or other federally funded programs included in the study?

Subsidized child care paid for with federal funds only (e.g., Head Start), it will not be included in the study. However, if a program receives state and federal funding, they will be included in the study and the families served through the state funded program will be eligible for the survey.

Why did you select March 2017 as the date of interest?

Data from March 2017 were the most recent records we could access from CDE and CDSS at the time of the data request to develop a statewide sample of providers. For this reason, we will be asking agencies, providers, and families questions about the subsidized care they provided or received during that timeframe.

Who will be notified if our agency is chosen for the study? What administrative data will you collect?

We will initially reach out to the staff person listed as the main contact to receive communications from CDE and CDSS regarding child care subsidies managed by your agency or program. In cases where CalWORKs Stage 1 subsidies are administered by a contractor, we will notify the county welfare office contact first and then request they connect us with the appropriate agency. Once we've identified the correct contact, we will provide them with a list of sampled providers selected for the study and work with them to prepare and extract data on provider and family contact information, family characteristics, payments to providers, family fees and copayments, and notice of actions issued by the agency.

How will agencies inform parents and providers of the survey?

If a provider in your agency's service area is selected for the study, we will reach out to you for your administrative data and provide a letter for you to share with providers and families letting them know that they may also be contacted as part of the study. This letter will be sent in both English and Spanish, and there will be instructions on how to access the materials in Tagalog, Cantonese, and Vietnamese.

How are providers selected to participate?

The initial list of providers will be obtained from CDE, CDSS, and several county agencies for which data is not available at the state-level. We will develop our survey sample with geographic clusters and stratification to ensure that the final sample is representative of the various characteristics of children, families, and providers across the state (i.e., geographic region, urban vs. rural, agricultural vs. non-agricultural, average family income, race/ethnicity composition, and percent of children living in poverty). The final sample will include about 25 geographic clusters. Within each cluster, we will randomly select and then recruit 14-16 providers. We will sample about 380 providers in total.

How did you determine the geographic regions for sampling?

We worked jointly with CDE and CDSS to review existing regional assignments and opted to use the same six regional divisions used by the Department of Social Services (see here for more information).

How are families selected to participate?

Families will be randomly selected from each of the sampled providers. The local agencies will provide a list of children and families that received subsidized care in March 2017 (note: families that are no longer receiving care are still included if they received care in March 2017). We will then randomly select up to three families from each provider's list.

Is participation voluntary? How do providers and families consent or refuse to participate?

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Both providers and families will be receiving notification via mail and email if they have been selected to participate in the survey. This notification will include a copy of the Participant Bill of Rights and a consent form. The consent process is slightly different for child care providers and families as providers will complete an online survey and families will complete a phone survey. When the provider goes to complete the online survey, they will be shown a copy of the consent form and asked if they would like to participate in the study. If they decline, they will not be included in the study. When families complete the phone survey, the interviewer will confirm that the family received a copy of the consent form and the Participant Bill of Rights and ask if they would like to participate or decline participation in the study.

How will you ensure a representative sample if the study is voluntary?

We will develop a backup, matched list of providers to reach out to if a program is unreachable or refuses to participate. To encourage participation, we will work with local agencies and providers to spread the message and share the importance of this project with providers and families in their service area. We will continuously monitor our response rate to ensure that it is representative of the providers and families in the sample. For example, if we find that families in CalWORKS or license-exempt providers have a low response rate, we will do additional outreach to target those groups and ensure that a particular program, population, or region is not underrepresented.

Can providers without internet access participate in the survey?

Yes, providers without internet access can still participate. If we do not have an email address on file for providers, we will continue to reach out to them by mail and over the phone. They will have the option to complete the survey by phone or by mail.

Will the survey be available in other languages?

The family and provider surveys will be available in English, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Cantonese.

Will selected families, providers, and agencies be compensated for participating in the study?

Yes. Families will receive \$25 for completing the family interview, and providers will receive \$40 for completing the online survey. We will conduct a capacity assessment with agencies to discuss the level of effort it will take for them to compile the data. We will then work with the agency to determine what type of financial support will be needed.

When will families, providers, and agencies be contacted about the study?

We will begin reaching out to agencies in spring 2018 and providers selected for the study in the summer of 2018. We will begin reaching out to families selected for the study in summer 2018.

When will the study be complete? Will there be a public report?

We anticipate ending data collection at the end of 2018. We will conduct the analysis and develop the final report and data set between January and April of 2019. A final report will be publicly available by the end of April 2019. CDSS and CDE will determine how the report will be shared.