

Using Child Care Provider Surveys to Inform Policy Responses to COVID-19

July 30, 2020

Webinar Series on

Building CCDF Lead Agencies' Capacities to Use Data to Inform Policy Responses to COVID-19

Housekeeping

- The webinar is being recorded.
- The recording, slides, and transcript will be posted online.
- All participants are muted.
- Type your **questions** or **comments** into the chat box at any time.

We'll take questions at the end of each presentation with a fuller discussion at the end of the webinar.

Child Care Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Center

Supported through the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and managed through a contract with the Urban Institute in partnership Mathematica

Meryl Barofsky and Alysia Blandon, OPRE Project Officers

Julia Isaacs, Project Director; Teresa Derrick-Mills, Co-Principal Investigator; Peter Willenborg, Project Assistant

Goal: Assess and build the research and evaluation capacity of CCDF Lead Agencies

To learn more, see our [Building Child Care Research Capacity](#) web page

POLL

Why Focus on Child Care Surveys in the Time of COVID-19?

- Many organizations are conducting surveys at this time
 - “A List of COVID-19 Child Care Surveys and Data Analyses”
- Developing and fielding surveys during the COVID-19 pandemic, with uncertainty and rapid change, is particularly challenging

What We Will Cover Today

Child Care Provider Surveys

1. Why they are important for informing policy decisions, [Daphna Bassok, University of Virginia](#)
2. Practical considerations, [Anna Markowitz, University of California, Los Angeles](#)
3. Tips for developing good survey questions, [Heather Sandstrom, Urban Institute](#)
4. A state agency perspective on using surveys to inform policy, [Jenna Conway, Virginia Department of Education](#)
5. Resources
6. Your questions

Using Surveys to Inform Early Childhood Policy: Lessons & Practical Considerations from Two State Partnerships



Daphna Bassok

Associate Professor,
University of Virginia



Anna Markowitz

Assistant Professor,
University of California,
Los Angeles

Goals of the Presentation

- Highlight how surveys can inform early childhood policy using concrete examples
- Share tips about how to collect meaningful survey data
- Present findings from our first round of COVID-19 surveys
- Describe how our next round of surveys can help inform action

The Study of Early Education through Partnerships

- Two research policy partnerships
- Louisiana Department of Education and Virginia Department of Education
- States focused on making *systemwide* improvements to early childhood education



Our Surveys: Pre-COVID-19

	Study of Early Education in Louisiana (SEE-LA)	Virginia Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five Evaluation (PDG B-5)
Pre-COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fall 2018, fall 2019• All Head Start, pre-K, and subsidized private child care centers serving children birth through 5 in two Louisiana parishes• All leaders, teachers, assistant teachers• >80 % response rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spring 2019• All publicly funded settings serving children birth through 5 in communities participating in the PDG• Leaders, teachers, and family day home teachers working >30 hours a week• >75% response rate overall

Our Surveys: During COVID-19

	SEE-LA	PDG B-5
During COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• April–May 2020• All subsidized private child care centers serving children birth through 5 in in two Louisiana parishes• All leaders, teachers, and assistant teachers invited in fall 2019• >60% response rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• April–May 2020• The same publicly funded settings serving children birth through 5 in communities participating in the PDG• Same <i>teachers</i> as invited in spring 2019• >75% teachers, >85% family day homes

Surveys as a Tool to Inform Policy

- Provide concrete evidence on topics often informed by anecdotes
- Powerfully articulate the scope of challenges facing early educators
- Measure the impacts of policies
- Target resources to those who need them most
- Help refine programs to better meet providers' and early educators' needs

Examples from Virginia's Teacher Recognition Program: Surveys as a Tool for Targeting Resources

Surveys can:	Finding	Policy change
Target resources to those who need them most	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Forty percent of child care lead teachers have a household income below \$25,000Over a third of child care lead teachers report running out of food and not having enough money for more	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In Year 2 of the Recognition Program, only teachers in family child care homes and child care centers will be eligible

More examples from Virginia's Teacher Recognition Program: Surveys as Tools for Programmatic Improvement

Surveys can:	Finding	Policy change
Help refine programs to better meet providers' and early educators' needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ About a quarter of teachers said the eligibility rules for the Recognition program were “not at all clear” or “only a little bit clear”▪ A quarter indicated they did not know they needed to stay at their site to receive the recognition payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ In Year 2, VDOE is enhancing communications for sites and teachers▪ Investing in text messages as a communication tool

The Role of Surveys in the Wake of COVID-19

- All the same justifications for surveys are even more pronounced in the current context
- Our partners need concrete information about what is happening on the ground to effectively target resources and supports
- How can we collect useful survey data in the current context?

Practical Considerations for Administering Surveys

- Key concerns for data quality
- Three strategies we've used to address these issues:
 - Investing in partnerships
 - Identifying and recruiting a specific sample
 - Using incentives and communicating clearly
- Concerns specific to COVID-19
- Preliminary findings from our COVID-19 surveys

Key Questions for Data Quality

- Who are the people we wish to survey, and how do we get answers from “hard-to-reach” participants?
 - High response rates are essential for informing policy
- How can we ask questions that are clear to all our participants?

Build Partnerships to Boost Participation

- Make real partnerships with folks you'll be surveying to build community buy-in
 - Communicate with the community throughout all survey phases
 - Workshop surveys with community leaders
 - Co-create a strategic follow-up plan

Identify and Recruit a Specific Sample

- Use partnerships or other resources to create a specific list of whom you intend to survey
 - Allows you to calculate response rates easily
 - Identify problem areas that need more specific or alternative follow-up strategies
 - Know who you can generalize to

Use Incentives and Communicate Clearly

- Provide incentives (we provided \$25 gift cards)
- Ensure anonymity/confidentiality
- Think about branding
- Reach out in creative ways
 - Surveys via text and mobile compatibility
 - Driving paper copies of surveys to centers

Key Issues for COVID-19 Surveys

- Everyone is constrained: is the survey worth participants' time and energy?
 - We wrote shorter emails and cut the survey length by 25 percent
- Use questions from other surveys and validated scales to facilitate comparability
- Pay attention to language
- Gather key sociodemographic data
- Get creative in getting surveys to participants
- Use some write-in questions

Study of Early Education in
Louisiana COVID-19 Survey
Report, No. 1 | June 2020

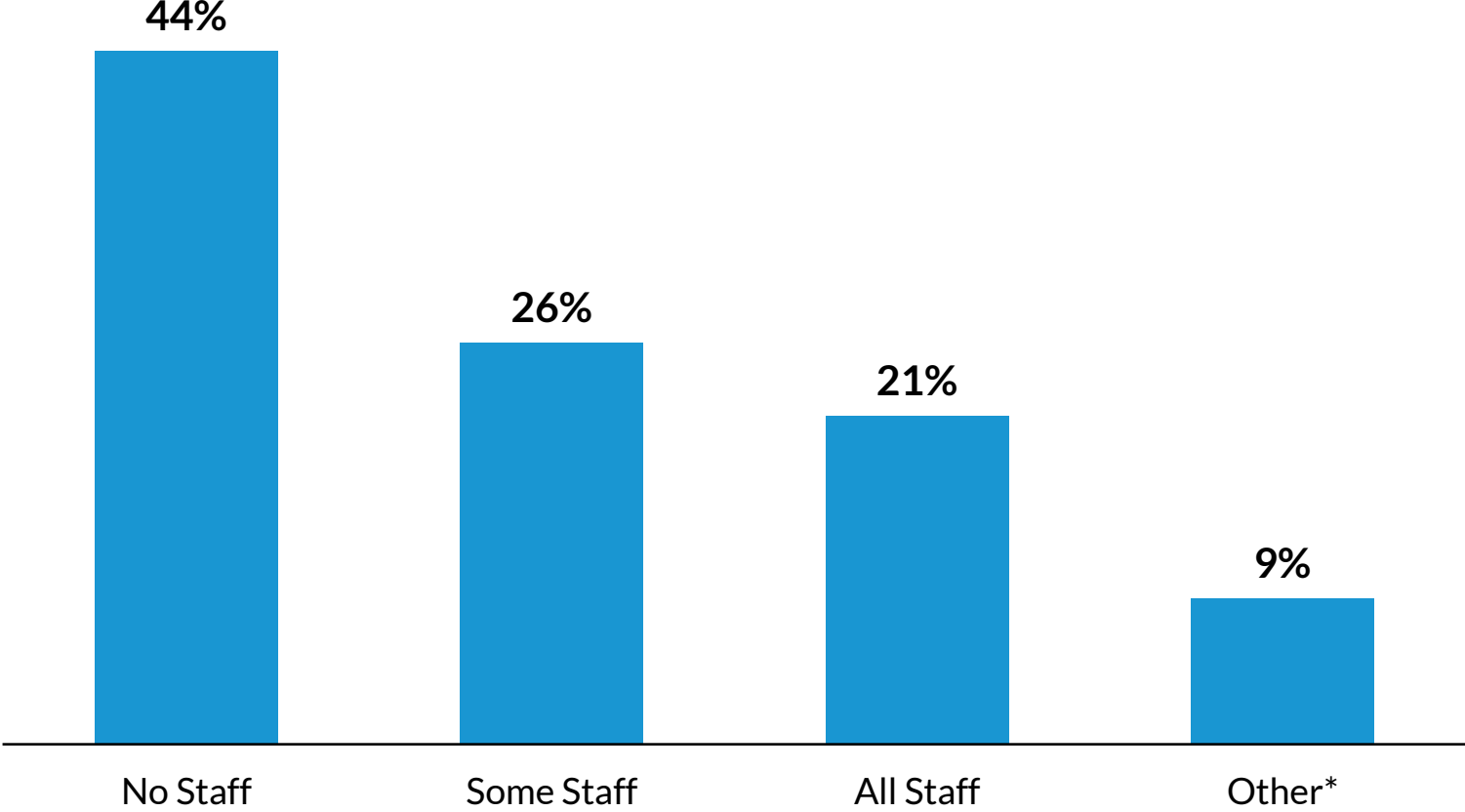
Updated July 1, 2020



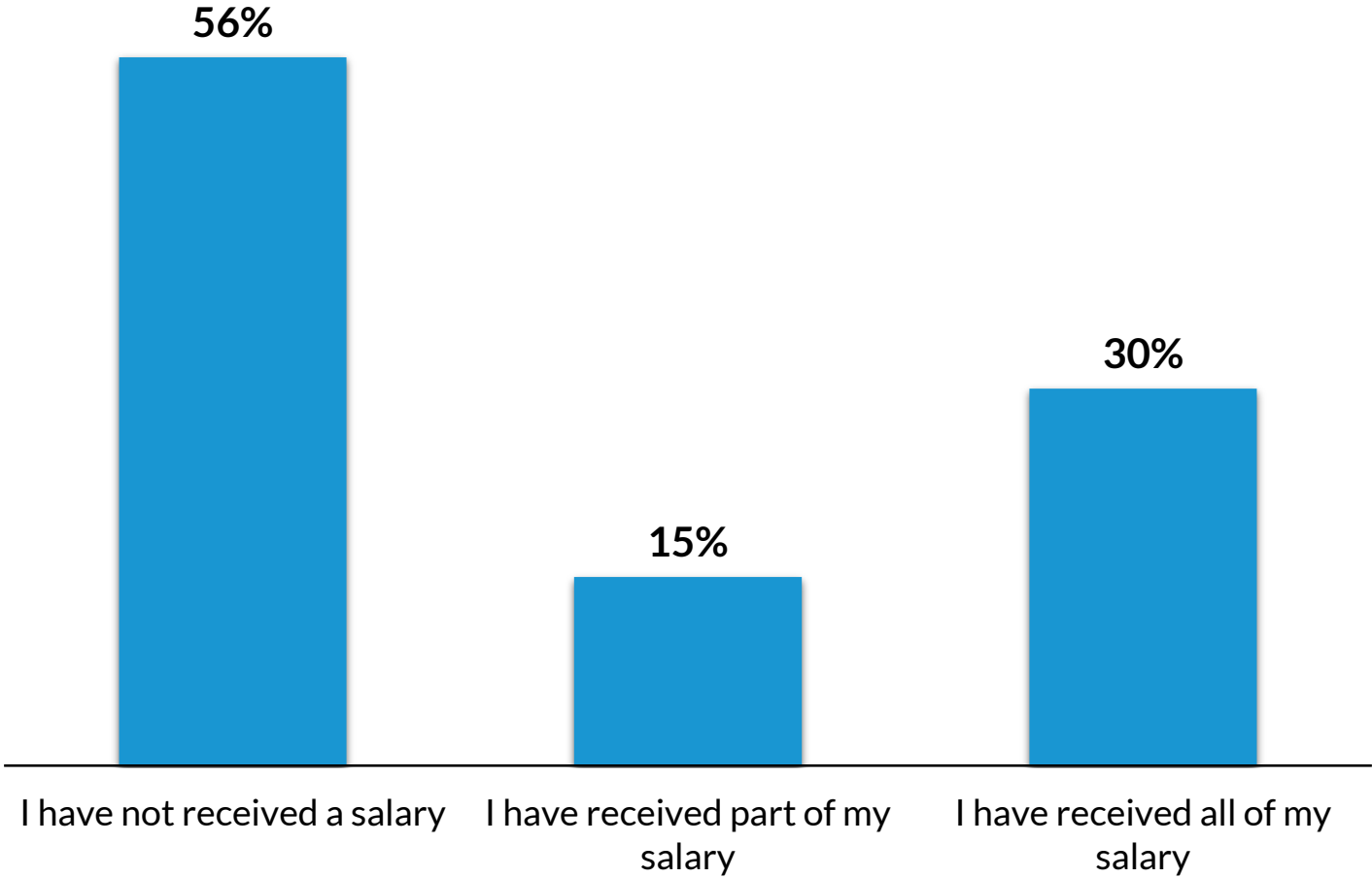
**Child Care Leaders' Experiences
with COVID-19: First Findings
from the Study of Early Education
in Louisiana**

Findings from Our Recent Report

Three-Quarters of Leaders Reported Closed Sites; One-Fifth Continued to Pay All Staff



Most Site Leaders Did Not Receive a Salary



Leaders' Financial Well-Being and Mental Health

- 78 percent of leaders reported it was at least somewhat difficult to live at their current level of income
- One-third of leaders reported they were food insecure
- Nearly one-quarter of leaders currently had no form of health insurance
- One-third of leaders reported clinically relevant levels of depressive symptoms

Center Responses to COVID-19

- 93 percent of centers began new cleaning procedures
- 78 percent implemented temperature checks
- 60 percent changed group sizes
- 28 percent made accommodations for at-risk employees
- Many leaders funded these efforts with their own money; the average amount spent was \$700

The Promise of Survey Data for Shaping Policy and Recovery

- Document *changes* in outcomes of interest to target recovery dollars to areas of real need
- Document what child care teachers and leaders have been doing
- Opportunities to address:
 - Ensuring high-quality child care in a COVID-19 context
 - Addressing the trauma and mental health of both children and educators

Lessons Learned/For Next Time...

- Consider how relevant questions will be in the context of COVID-19's uncertainty
- Think harder about what “employed” and “unemployed” mean during COVID-19
- Communicate results back to the communities you are working with—dissemination continues to be a growing edge

Questions?

Please type your questions for Daphna and Anna into the chat box, while they are fresh.

Tips for Developing Good Survey Questions



Heather Sandstrom

Principal Research Associate
Urban Institute

What Are Your Research Goals? Who Do You Need to Collect Data on to Address Your Research Questions?

- Child care providers are a broad and diverse group; differ by:
 - Care setting
 - Licensing
 - Payment
 - Funding sources
 - Ages served
 - Schedules
 - Accreditation
 - Quality Rating and Improvement System participation
- If you understand the characteristics of your target population, you can write questions that are appropriate and easy to answer.

How Should You Collect Your Data?

Common survey modes include:

- **Telephone survey:** Good when the survey is long, but expensive and harder to schedule
- **Web survey:** Convenient but may be harder to reach people with limited computer access and skills
- **Paper survey:** Good for short surveys, but not complex ones; good for reaching people with limited computer access, but takes longer to administer if mailing

Tips for Writing Questions

- ✓ Keep surveys short, simple, and to the point
- ✓ Borrow from and rework existing questions
 - Search the Child Care & Early Education Research Connections website
- ✓ Consider the provider's English language proficiency
- ✓ Be careful with word choice

Tips for Writing Questions, Continued

- ✓ Use specific time frames (pre-COVID-19 or currently?)
- ✓ Consider the order of questions
- ✓ Avoid two questions in one joined with “and” or “or”

EXAMPLE:

“Please rate how satisfied you have been with your salary and employee benefits.”

Tips for Response Options

- ✓ Use meaningful, balanced, and mutually exclusive response options
- ✓ A neutral option is okay

EXAMPLE:

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement about working in this program?

My coworkers and I are treated with respect on a day-to-day basis.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Tips for Response Options, Continued

- ✓ Avoid “Don’t Know” or “No Opinion”
- ✓ Include a response option for “Other, Specify”

EXAMPLE:

What was your major for the highest degree you have or have studied for?

1. Elementary education
2. Special education
3. Child development or psychology
4. Early childhood education or early or school-age care
5. Other _____

Tips for Response Options, Continued

✓ Avoid “Check All That Apply” and “All of the Above”

EXAMPLE:

In the past 12 months, have you done any of the following activities to improve or gain new skills in working with children?

- Participated in any workshops? YES or NO
- Participated in coaching, mentoring, or ongoing consultation with a specialist?
YES or NO
- Attended a meeting of a professional organization? YES or NO
- Enrolled in a course at a community college or four-year college or university?
YES or NO

Make Sure to Test Your Survey

- Testing identifies problems before launching the survey
- Testing can be done at many stages of survey development
 - *Early in the design phase:* Expert panel review
 - *During survey development:* Cognitive testing
 - *With full draft:* Pretesting

Questions?

Please type your questions for Heather into the chat box, while they are fresh.

Comments



Jenna Conway
Chief School Readiness Officer
Virginia Department of
Education

Questions

We welcome questions you may have for the panel of presenters. To ask a question, please type your question into the chat box.

Related Resources

See the [Building Child Care Research Capacity](#) web page for:

- [“A List of COVID-19 Child Care Surveys and Data Analyses”](#) (July 2020)
- [“Request in Search of COVID-19-Related Child Care Surveys and Data Analyses”](#)
- “Tips on Developing Surveys of Child Care Providers” (forthcoming)
- Webinars (Slides from past webinars; these slides are forthcoming)
- Other resources

See the [OPRE website](#) for slides, audio recordings, and transcripts of webinars, (posted a few months after each webinar)

See the [Study of Early Education through Partnerships](#) web page for the Louisiana (July 2020) Report

If you have questions, feel free to email me (Julia Isaacs) at Jisaacs@urban.org.

Related Webinars

- Today's webinar is the first in a two-part series on Building CCDF Lead Agencies' Capacities to Use Data to Inform Policy Responses to COVID-19
- Join us for Part II (early fall 2020): **Conducting Rapid Analyses for Data-Based Decision Making to Support Policy and Practice for COVID-19**
- Slides from earlier three-part webinar series, *Building Capacity of CCDF Lead Agencies to use Data in Policy Decisions* (July 2019–February 2020) can be found on the [Building Child Care Research Capacity](#) web page

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