Obtaining High Rates of Parental Consent: Additional Evidence for the Field Enrollment Specialist (FES) Approach

May 14, 2011

Presentation to the AAPOR Annual Conference, Phoenix, AZ
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Studies involving children require active rather than passive consent
  – Can add to parent and teacher participation

Research on active consent has generally found three types of effects on data:
1. Lower participation rates
2. Nonresponse bias in terms of demographic characteristics of participants
3. Nonresponse bias in estimates of behaviors, such as achievement scores, alcohol use, and drug use

Little guidance in the literature regarding best practices

This paper examines consent procedures in two rounds of an early childhood study
  – The Universal Preschool Child Outcomes Study (UPCOS)
Universal Preschool Child Outcomes Study (UPCOS)

- Conducted with First 5 Los Angeles (First 5 LA) and Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP)
- Conducted between 2007 and 2011 to learn about performance of children served by LAUP
- Includes child assessments, classroom observations, parent and staff interviews, and teacher-child ratings
Universal Preschool Child Outcomes Study – Phase 2 (UPCOS2)

- **UPCOS2 Consent Distribution and Collection Strategy**
  - **Key Staff**
    - UPCOS coordinator
    - Center liaison
  - **Other Consent Procedures**
    - Parent meetings
    - Talking with parents during child pick-up and drop-off
    - Used field staff (in-person coordinator)
    - Call providers
    - Pick up forms from school staff person

- Consent procedures showed importance of in-person strategy for future studies
UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL CHILD OUTCOMES STUDY – PHASE 4 (UPCOS4)

- **UPCOS4 Consent Distribution and Collection Strategy**
  - **Key Staff**
    - UPCOS coordinators
    - Center liaison
    - Field enrollment specialists (FESs)
  - **FES Consent Procedures**
    - Consent materials
    - Interacting with staff, teachers, and parents
    - Consent distribution and collection
Comparing UPCOS2 and UPCOS4

• UPCOS Sample Releases
  – UPCOS2: 103 distinct releases
  – UPCOS4: 16 distinct releases

• UPCOS Consent Rates
  – UPCOS2: 91%
  – UPCOS4: 94%

• FES used in UPCOS4
Previous Mathematica Studies Show Similar Results

- **Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES)**
  - **Consent Rates**
    - FACES 2006: 92%
    - FACES 2009: 94%
  - **Program Participation**
    - FACES 2006: 95.5% return Teacher Child Reports
    - FACES 2009: 97% return Teacher Child Reports

- **FES used in FACES 2009**
Examined 2 rounds of UPCOS with different consent strategies
- UPCOS2 relied heavily on project and center staff
- UPCOS4 relied on targeted in-person approach

UPCOS4 has fewer sample releases and 94% consent rate
Recommendations

- Consider using this targeted in-person consent collection strategy
  - Increase consent rate
  - Increase cost effectiveness
Thank You!

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