Designing a Nationally-Representative Survey of Providers for Estimation of Key CACFP Rates

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Estimating participation rate and saturation rates for CACFP

- Participation rate = \(\frac{\text{(# of children receiving meals through CACFP)}}{\text{( # of eligible children)}}\)

- Saturation rate = \(\frac{\text{( # of child care providers participating in CACFP)}}{\text{( # of child care providers)}}\)
Data items required

- Number of children receiving meals
- Number of eligible children (income, child care usage)
- Number of providers participating by type (family child care home, community-based center, etc.)
- Number of all providers of that type
Example: National Survey of Early Care and Education

• Five samples and questionnaires to cover the usage and provision of early care and education
  • Center-based providers
  • Home-based providers from state lists
  • Workforce members (classroom-assigned center-based and home-based)
  • Households with children under age 13
  • Informal home-based providers

• Multi-mode data collection including web, telephone, in-person, paper-and-pencil.
Constructing the NSECE provider sampling frame

• ‘Frame-building' exercise to construct universe of community-based and 'listable' home-based providers.
  • Significant variation across states and provider types in licensing, license-exempt, and other requirements.
• Geocode frame to sample providers in low-income areas, and rest of country
• Even with 22,000 sampled providers, heterogeneity of providers makes state-level estimates unreliable for most states.
• Data captures CACFP participation only in combination with other government programs
• Providers can be matched with child enrollment numbers, and by income-level of location
• Households' usage of child care can be classified by provider type and by mealtime exposure (meal provision by providers is not captured)
• Household and provider data together can describe children within and outside of reach of current CACFP rules.
Important challenges for key rate calculations

• % of center-based providers covered by licensing lists varies considerably by state
• % of home-based providers covered by licensing lists varies even more by state
• Providers cannot generally report the income levels of their enrolled families
• Many children are regularly enrolled in multiple types of care, mealtime exposure is needed
• Response error likely for non-participants
Other opportunities

• Collecting actual provider names participating in CACFP to match to licensing data on licensed capacity and to geocode provider locations to match with census demographic data.

• Use ongoing national household studies that capture child-care usage to estimate usage of CACFP-eligible providers for denominator in rate calculations.