

The underlying structure of the archive consists of specially processed and documented research products and data sets linked to a comprehensive child care taxonomy which includes a searchable database, metadata elements that describe and categorize archive holdings, and an indexing system. These features interface with end users through the interactive web site.

**Taxonomy.** During the developmental phase, a taxonomy of child care terms and variables was developed for the CCRCA's underlying database. This feature is designed to allow end users of the web-site to conduct sophisticated searches with ease. The taxonomy will be continually expanded and refined during the operational phase as research products are added to the archive and new variables are identified.

**Metadata**—or data about data—that describe archive holdings were developed in accordance with Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) standards used by nationally recognized archives and information systems. As new products are acquired and indexed in the CCRCA, the metadata will continue to evolve.

**Documents.** During the developmental phase, more than 2,000 research documents were identified and catalogued for inclusion in the CCRCA data base. Abstracts and other information about these documents will be available through the CCRCA Web site and, where possible, the full text of the documents will be available to users. Through ongoing efforts, including coordination with researchers and other organizations, the grantee will continuously expand CCRCA holdings.

**Data Sets.** A major function of the CCRCA will be to process, house, and preserve quality data sets and related documents from studies on child care and early care and education, either directly or in partnership with other archives. The CCRCA currently holds two data sets that have been processed to make them useable and accessible to the larger research community. Data processing includes: sub-setting of child care-relevant variables and formatting for easy download to statistical packages for analyses; variable labeling; application of weights; and maintenance of subject confidentiality. The amount of data processing required before inclusion in the CCRCA will vary depending on the number and types of variables in a data set and the amount of processing completed by the owner of the data prior to submission.

**Special Topic Archive.** During the developmental phase, the CCRCA subcontracted with the Inter-University Consortium for Social and Political

Research (ICPSR) at the University of Michigan to develop a special topic archive (STA) for the CCRCA. The intent was to use the established, ongoing services of ICPSR to begin processing important policy-relevant data sets and making them web-accessible to the research community. The grantee will be expected to support and further develop the CCRCA special topic archive or offer a comparable arrangement to maintain and expand these services. The Statement of Work between ICPSR and BRI Consultants can be obtained through the ACYF Operations Center listed above.

**Data Standards and Documentation.** The archive also sets standards and establishes procedures for documentation of data sets. Early in the operational phase, data documentation and code books will be developed for archived data sets to make these data readily available to other researchers and facilitate secondary analysis. A related goal is to increase the average quality of child care research through systematic improvements in the underlying quality of data.

**Content Development.** Once the archive is operational, data contributors and end users of research will be able to access data and published research, as well as special materials such as research summaries or methodology briefs. This activity will involve ongoing acquisitions and development to ensure that the needs of contributors and users are met.

**Data Contributors.** Any child care investigator, regardless of the funding source, is encouraged to house data with the CCRCA. Since 2000, all research grantees funded by the ACYF Child Care Bureau have been required to plan for the archiving of their data. The intent is that grantees will prepare their data sets according to sound data processing and documentation practices, and house those data sets at the CCRCA within two years after the end of their funding period. The CCRCA will provide technical support to contributors regarding data entry, processing, analysis, and documentation. Apart from research that is sponsored by the Child Care Bureau, there are a large number of studies underway or recently completed that focus on child care or early education or contain relevant variables. Thus, the archive will increasingly house analytic data sets from a variety of sources. For example, the CCRCA might archive specially prepared analytic data sets from State child care agencies or networks of resource and referral agencies; large data sets from major Head Start studies or national surveys with child care

variables; or small local studies. A "Handbook for Data Contributors" was created under the development contract and will be available for dissemination early in the operational phase.

**Data Users.** Many researchers will use the CCRCA to access public data sets for secondary analysis. The CCRCA must maintain a system of data access for primary data sets as well as specially constructed analytic files and interactive tools. For example, some researchers might need to extract child care data from national longitudinal studies in which child care is embedded in a larger set of issues. Some may need to combine child care data from two or more data sets to create a linked data file. Others may need to conduct simple analyses of large data sets like national census estimates or State administrative data. Support for data users will continue to grow over the next several years, as the CCRCA becomes known to a wider set of technically sophisticated users.

### Component 3. Technical Assistance and Collaboration

The Technical Assistance and Collaboration component provides interface and support for data contributors and users as well as for the Child Care Policy Research Consortium and other collaborative endeavors undertaken by the Child Care Bureau.

#### Technical Assistance

Early in the operational phase, the CCRCA will establish technical support for the archive, much of it delivered through on-line services. This function will include such features as:

- Frequently asked questions and answers;
  - An e-mail help desk;
  - Short briefing papers on common technical issues;
  - Prototypical research designs and methodological applications developed to encourage new researchers and promote a high standard of quality in emerging studies;
  - Innovative tools such as CD-ROMs and a range of ready-to-use formats that make archived data sets more easily accessible to the research community;
  - Information on CCRCA services, products and new acquisitions;
  - Technical guidelines for data processing and access.
  - Electronic mail services to facilitate networking and information exchange among researchers, policy makers, and other stakeholders; and
  - Access to a database on designs and measures for researchers in this field.
- The CCRCA will also provide training and technical assistance opportunities