Using Administrative Data to Study Children
PAA 2020 Workshop Proposal

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1 Objectives, goals, and expected outcomes

The objective of the proposed workshop is to increase awareness and use of administrative data on child welfare in the United States and to foster interdisciplinary dialog about the opportunities provided by such data for population research. The National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) provides multiple large-scale time-series administrative data products offering a variety of detailed information on the U.S. child population. Microdata products can be linked internally or to external sources. However, NDACAN data are underutilized.

The goals of the proposed workshop are therefore to provide participants with information and skills to enable and encourage them to use NDACAN data in their research. These goals include:

- introducing participants to the features and limitations of NDACAN data products;
- illustrating procedures for accessing, manipulating, and combining public and restricted data;
- demonstrating prior uses of administrative child welfare data and facilitating discussion about potential uses.

Our expected outcomes are an increase in use of NDACAN data products in population research, and the development of networks across the population and child welfare research communities.

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2 Benefits to PAA 2020 attendees

PAA attendees will benefit from increased awareness of the availability of a large-scale, high-quality source of data that remains underutilized in the population research community. Workshop participants will benefit particularly by receiving detailed introductions and practical guidance from NDACAN staff members about the archive’s three flagship administrative data series—the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (ACFARS), the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), and the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). The workshop will also preview new historical data currently being incorporated into the archive. Moreover, though interdisciplinary discussions of prior and potential research, participants will help each other generate ideas and solve problems in their respective fields.

3 Target audience

The workshop has two target audiences. The first is the set of population researchers—economists, sociologists, demographers and public health scholars—who are already regular attendees of PAA annual meetings and whose current or future work relates to family dynamics, transitions to adulthood, population health, and/or social policy. For this audience the objective of the workshop is to increase awareness of NDACAN data and its potential uses.

The second audience is the set of quantitative child welfare and family policy researchers who are not regular PAA attendees. For this audience the objective of the workshop is to offer practical aid in accessing and using NDACAN data and to introduce them to theoretical and methodological debates in the population research community. We will publicize the workshop among this audience, drawing new attendees to the PAA annual meeting.

4 Logistics

The workshop will include a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 25 participants. The preferred days for the workshop are Tuesday, April 21 or Wednesday, April 22. The workshop will require presenters to have access to a projector, a projector screen, and WiFi.

5 Schedule and activities

- 8:30–8:45am, Welcome, Alexander F. Roehrkasse
  - Introduction of participants, their research experience and interests, and their goals for the workshop
- 8:45–9:15am, Introduction to NDACAN, Erin McCauley
  - Overview of NDACAN data products and procedures for accessing them
- 9:15–10am, AFCARS and NCANDS, Christopher Wildeman
  - Presentation of the archive’s principal holdings of data on foster and adoptive care and child abuse and neglect
  - Discussion of prior and potential uses of AFCARS and NCANDS data
• 10–10:15am, Break
• 10:15–10:45am, NYTD, Erin McCauley
  – Presentation of the archive’s principal holdings of youth transitions data
  – Discussion of prior and potential uses of NYTD data
• 10:45–11:00am, New Acquisitions, Alexander F. Roehrkasse
  – Presentation of new historical acquisitions to NDACAN and their potential uses
• 11:00am–11:30pm, Linking NDACAN data, Christopher Wildeman
  – Overview of possibilities, limitations, and procedures for linking NDACAN administrative data sets to each other and to other sources
• 11:30am–12:15pm Conclusion, Alexander F. Roehrkasse
  – Facilitated discussion of participants ideas and questions about research projects using NDACAN data
  – Open discussion of trends and challenges in using administrative data in child welfare and population research

6 Presenter profiles

Alexander F. Roehrkasse is a postdoctoral associate at the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research at Cornell University, where he is an affiliate of the Center for the Study of Inequality and the Cornell Population Center as well as a staff member of the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect. His work focuses on inequality, families, and quantitative and historical methods, and his research and writing has appeared in *American Sociological Review*, *European Journal of Sociology*, and *The Lancet: Public Health*. Alexander earned his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley in May 2019. [CV]

Christopher Wildeman is Associate Vice Provost for the Social Sciences, Director of the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research, and Director of the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect at Cornell University, where he is also a Professor of Policy Analysis and Management (PAM) and Sociology (by courtesy). His research and teaching interests revolve around the consequences of mass imprisonment for inequality, with emphasis on families, health, and children. He is also interested in child welfare, especially as relates to child maltreatment and the foster care system. [CV]

Erin McCauley is a doctoral candidate in the joint Sociology and Policy Analysis and Management program at Cornell University. She conducts research on the intergenerational consequences of incarceration for health and inequality, as well as the experience of incarceration for those with unique health needs. She employs a diverse set of methods in her research, ranging from semi-structured interviews to econometric analysis. Erin is currently pursuing research projects related the intergenerational effect of incarceration on sexual health and fertility and the risk of mortality by police for those with disabilities. [CV]