

Broad Coalition urges HHS Secretary Kennedy to Halt Restructuring of Federal Research Office on Children and Families

More than 130 organizations call for preserving the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation at the Administration for Children and Families

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, February 24, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, more than 130 nonprofit organizations, research institutions, professional associations, and companies sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. calling on the Department to immediately halt the restructuring and effective dismantlement of the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). More than 650 individual researchers, practitioners, and former government officials also signed the letter.

Representing a broad spectrum of the research, evaluation, human services, and child welfare communities, the signatories emphasized that OPRE has served administrations of both parties for decades as one of the federal government's most effective and respected evaluation units — producing rigorous, independent evidence on Head Start, the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), child welfare services, and child care programs serving millions of American children and families.

The letter was also sent to the Assistant Secretary for Children and Families Alex Adams, Director of the Office of Management and Budget Russ Vought, and the chairs and ranking members of relevant congressional committees with oversight and appropriations jurisdiction.

"In less than 10 days, more than 130 organizations and hundreds of individuals came together to defend one of the federal government's most important evaluation offices," said Nick Hart, President and CEO of the Data Foundation. "The breadth of this coalition — from major research associations to Head Start programs to child welfare advocates — reflects just how widely OPRE's work touches American communities. We urge Secretary Kennedy and the Administration to halt this restructuring, consult with Congress and stakeholders, and allow ongoing research to reach completion. The American people deserve to know whether the programs serving their children and families are working."

On February 13, 2026, HHS notified OPRE staff and vendors of the decision to restructure the

office, with changes expected to take effect within two weeks. The decision was made without meaningful consultation with Congress, the research community, or the state and local partners who rely on OPRE's evidence.

The letter urges Secretary Kennedy to:

1. Immediately halt the restructuring and preserve OPRE's existing research and evaluation functions, staff, and vendor relationships during a meaningful review period.
2. Engage in transparent consultation with Congress, the research community, state and local partners, and other stakeholders.
3. Ensure that all ongoing research and evaluation projects are allowed to reach completion so that the American public receives the findings their tax dollars have funded.
4. Uphold the evidence-building principles and institutional roles established by the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act, signed into law by President Trump in 2019.

The letter notes that congressional appropriations for FY 2026 largely supported OPRE's functions as written, raising serious questions about whether the restructuring is consistent with congressional intent.

[READ A FACT SHEET ABOUT THE OPRE RESTRUCTURING](#)

[READ THE LETTER](#)

Organizations signing the letter include:

ABC Parenting Institute
Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy
Addiction Science Defense Network
Advance Illinois
AdvancED Consulting, LLC
Allies for Children
Alluvial Learning Strategies
America Forward
American Association for Public Opinion Research
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Educational Research Association
American Evaluation Association
American Statistical Association
Arete Data Labs
Artichoke Evaluation, LLC
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management

Association of Population Centers
Association of Public Data Users
Aster Policy Analytics
Beyond Measure, LLC
Black Caucus of the Society for Research in Child Development
Bowman Performance Consulting
California Budget & Policy Center
Campbell-Kibler Associates, Inc.
Center for Employment Studies
Center for Law and Social Policy
Center for Open Data Enterprise
Center for the Study of Social Policy
Child Health Partnership
Children First (PA)
Children's Aid
Civic Leaders for Illinois Children
Coalition for a Healthier Frederick County
Coco Canary Consulting
Collaborative Solutions Consulting
Community Endeavors Foundation
Community Research Solutions
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics
Data Foundation
Data Quality Campaign
Data Works, Inc
dataindex.us
EDGE Partners
Education Law Services
Educational Methods Group, LLC
Evaluation Plus
Evaluation Thought Partners, LLC
Families USA
Family Connects International
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences
First Up
Foundation for Child Development
Free Government Information
Ginkgo Leaf Writing & Consulting
Good Science Project
Government Information Watch
Gregson Consulting, LLC
HealthConnect One

Healthy Families America
Help Me Grow National Center
HIPPIY US
Horizons for Homeless Children
ICPSR, The Data Consortium
Illinois Action for Children
Illinois Head Start Association
Inclusion Matters by Shane's Inspiration
InnovateEDU
Institute for Child Success
Intention 2 Impact, Inc.
J. Solomon Consulting, LLC
J. Torres Consulting
JDF Research
Kaptive
KEL Advising
Kids Forward
Lopez Education
Lotus Early Learning
Massachusetts Head Start Association
MDC, Inc.
Mighty Crow
Minnesota Coalition for Family Home Visiting
Minnesota Prenatal to Three Coalition
Morton Insight Group
National Association for Welfare Research and Statistics
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Council on Family Relations
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives
National Women's Law Center Action Fund
New Moms
Next Interior
Nicholas County Empowerment Corporation
Nitamising Gimashkikinaan Our First Medicine
NRHA Parents as Teachers
ODW Consulting
Ozark Area Community Action Corporation
ParentChild+
Parents as Teachers National Center
Peace-Work
Pennsylvania Child Care Association

Pennsylvania Head Start Association
PLACE, LLC
Population Association of America
Prevent Child Abuse America
Prevent Child Abuse Illinois
Program and Policy Insight, LLC
Project Evident
Public Advocacy for Kids
Public Profit
Research Allies for Lifelong Learning
Results for America
Seedlings to Sunflowers Non profit child care and family center
Shared Services Leadership Coalition
Smart Sitting
Smart Start of Mecklenburg County
Society for Prevention Research
Society for Research in Child Development
Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness
Strategies for Children
TEAM for West Virginia Children
TERSHA LLC
The Nanny Network, LLC
Third Sector
Thrive Nonprofit Solutions
TLC Family Care
TOOTRiS
True North Evaluation
Two Gems Consulting Services
Two Rivers Head Start Agency
UBUNTU Research and Evaluation
UnidosUS
Vehicles for Change
Vincent Evaluation Consulting, LLC
Voices for Utah Children.
Washington Evaluators
Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP
Wisconsin Head Start Association
ZERO TO THREE

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