

THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S STUDY

The Study will also allow scientists to identify differences among groups of people, in terms of their health, health care access, disease occurrence, and other health issues, so that these differences or disparities can be addressed. The National Children's Study will be one of the richest information resources available for answering questions related to children's health and development and will form the basis of child health guidance, interventions, and policy for generations to come. The findings will also inform scientists and the public about how these factors influence adult health.

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Study Sponsors

The Children's Health Act of 2000 authorized the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and a consortium of federal agencies to conduct the National Children's Study. The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) join the NICHD in planning and conducting this Study. The NICHD and NIEHS are both part of the National Institutes of Health, the biomedical research arm of the federal government. Both the CDC and the NIH fall under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



What is the National Children's Study?

The National Children's Study is examining the effects of environmental influences on the health and development of more than 100,000 children across the United States, following them from before birth until age 21 years. The goal of the Study is to improve the health and well-being of children.

The Study defines "environment" broadly and takes a number of issues into account, including:

- Natural and man-made environmental factors
- Biological and chemical factors
- Physical surroundings
- Social factors
- Behavioral influences and outcomes
- Genetics
- Cultural and family influences and differences
- Geographic locations

Researchers are analyzing how these elements interact with each other and what helpful and/or harmful effects they might have on children's health and development. By studying children through their different phases of growth and development, researchers will be better able to understand the roles these factors play in health and disease. Findings from the Study will be made available as the research progresses, so that the public can benefit from any information as soon as possible.

For additional copies of this brochure, contact the NICHD Information Resource Center at 1-800-370-2943 or NICHDInformationResourceCenter@mail.nih.gov.

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National Institutes of Health
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY





What makes this Study different from other U.S. health studies?

The National Children's Study has a number of features that make it unique:

- **The Study is truly national in scope**—The National Children's Study includes children and families from 105 locations (counties or groups of counties) across the country, from varied backgrounds, and of different family types, to allow investigation of issues important to the diverse U.S. population.
- **The Study takes a broad approach to “environment”**—This Study includes the wide range of biological, physical, genetic, social, cultural, and other factors comprising a child's environment that can affect health and development.
- **The Study is long-term in design**—This Study is called a longitudinal study because it collects information on the same group of people from before birth into adulthood. By following children and families for 21 years or more, the Study will collect information about health at different ages and stages of growth and in various situations, to shed light on the factors that influence health and development as people grow.
- **Results will be made public as the Study progresses**—Even though the Study will span more than 20 years, the world won't have to wait that long for results. Study researchers will begin to analyze information as soon as it is collected. As the children enrolled in the National Children's Study reach

certain developmental milestones, the Study will release its findings related to these milestones. The results may lead to new questions about children's health and the environment that can be answered later in the course of the Study.

- **The Study involves partners from multiple government agencies (federal, state, local), as well as from public organizations and private companies**—The National Children's Study represents a unique, overarching partnership with many components and does not rely on one specific agency, industry, or company to function. Federal, state, and local agencies, universities, academic and professional societies, medical centers, communities, organizations, industries, companies, and other private groups all play vital roles in this partnership. The partners are involved in advising on various phases of the Study, from its design to its conclusion, to ensure that the results are accurate, unbiased, and reliable.
- **The Study uses state-of-the-art technology**—By using the most up-to-date, cutting-edge programs and communications methods available, the Study will provide the most accurate and reliable results possible. These technologies will help to track the progress of children and families, ensure that measurements are taken accurately, manage and ensure the confidentiality of information collected in the Study, and maintain communication between all those involved in the Study for 21 years or more.

- **The Study examines many questions**—Unlike other studies that aim to answer a single health or development question, the National Children's Study addresses multiple questions on multiple topics, to provide as much information as possible on the whole of health and development. Some examples of research questions are:

- How do neighborhood factors contribute to the risk of injury?
- Do household pesticides have adverse effects on brain development?
- How does one's genetic makeup affect asthma severity?

The first phase of the National Children's Study was devoted to planning. For example, the Study focused on trying to define the precise questions the Study must answer to address the major children's health issues, how information would be collected, what special population groups needed to be involved, and how participants' safety and privacy would be protected. The second phase of the Study, preparing for recruitment, is now underway. Recruitment will begin in some Study locations by 2009 and in other locations in subsequent years.

How can I get involved with the National Children's Study?

To get involved with the National Children's Study, you may:

- Join the Study's active listserv, which gives you easy access to information about the Study and its progress;

- Participate in meetings to evaluate Study implementation and progress; and
- Provide feedback on how the Study is advancing and identify what changes might be needed.

If you are interested in participating in the National Children's Study, please contact the Study Center nearest you. There are active Study Centers across the country that are preparing for recruitment. Contact information for each Center is available by e-mailing the Study at **NCS@mail.nih.gov**. Or, for a list of current Study Centers, visit the Study's Web site at **http://www.nationalchildrensstudy.gov**.

How can I get more information about the Study?

To learn more about the National Children's Study or to join the Study's listserv, contact:

The National Children's Study

E-mail: NCS@mail.nih.gov

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