

# Social Determinants of Health in the National Children's Study

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## Introduction

"Observational research and intervention studies show that the foundations of adult health are laid in early childhood and before birth (WHO, 2003)." Childhood socioeconomic circumstances shape adult disease risk (Galobardes et al., 2004; Smith et al., 2000) and children from poor families experience chronic health problems (Newacheck, 1994). Low socioeconomic status is associated with higher stress (Orpana and Lemyre, 2004), higher rates of perinatal complications, reduced access to resources that buffer the negative effects of perinatal complications, increased exposure to lead, less home based cognitive stimulation (McLoyd, 1998), and elevations in immune responses in adolescents with asthma (Chen et al., 2003).

The goal of the National Children's Study is to investigate basic mechanisms of environmental and social determinants of health, both risk and protective, beginning in pregnancy and continuing into adulthood.

A number of workshops have been held on topics related to this issue. These include *workshops on the impact of stress in pregnancy, parenting, the media, racism, the rural environment, and time-use issues*. Reports of these can be found on the Study Web site: [www.nationalchildrensstudy.gov](http://www.nationalchildrensstudy.gov)

## Study Visits

**Pregnancy:** 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimesters

**Birth**

**Year 1:** 1 month, 6 months, 12 months

**Year 2:** 18 months

**Years:** 3, 5, 7, 9, 12, 16, 20

Data collection begins 2007

## Foundations for Adult Health are Laid in Childhood

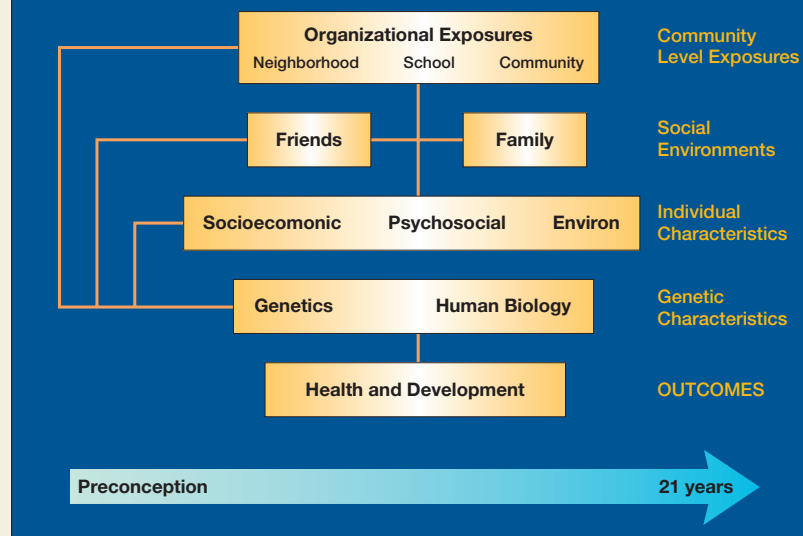


## Psychosocial/Behavioral Exposure Domains:

- **Demographics:** nativity, age, household composition, languages spoken, marital status, race/ethnicity, residential history, SES
- **Culture:** background, beliefs, attitudes, practices
- **Family structure:** including household composition
- **Family process:** relationships, division of labor, conflict resolution, domestic violence
- **Neighborhood:** social and economic characteristics
- **Religion/Spirituality:** identity, beliefs, practices
- **Parental competencies:** IQ, social competence, knowledge of child development, personality
- **Parenting practices:** warmth, limit-setting, discipline techniques, cognitive stimulation, health care management
- **Psychological stress:** social and economic stress, job strain, racism/discrimination, parenting
- **Social support:** instrumental, emotional and network support
- **Parental Psychopathology:** depression, other diagnoses
- **Public policies:** food stamps, benefits, health insurance
- **Child care:** type, stability, ratio of adults to children, hours/day, quality
- **School:** quality, ratio of students to teachers, SES, diversity of students, discrimination
- **Diet:** maternal, child (including breastfeeding)
- **Smoking, alcohol consumption, substance abuse**
- **Physical activity**

## Multiple Levels of Measurement

Adapted from Lynch JW, *Australas Epidemiol.* 2000; 7:7-15



## Outcomes Domains:

Social emotional, cognitive, neurobehavioral, and physical health and development.

IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S STUDY:  
SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

STUDY ASSEMBLY MEETING

November 29-30, 2005 • Washington, DC