# NLS News

**U.S. Department of Labor**
**U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics**

## Child and Young Adult 2008 Full Release Now Available

The full 1986–2008 NLSY79 Child and Young Adult dataset from the 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY79), containing information collected biennially from NLSY79 mothers and their children, has now been released. The cohort for this dataset consists of children aged 14 years and younger (a group known as the NLSY79 children) and those aged 15 years and older (designated as young adults) as of December 31 of the survey's calendar year. The 2008 survey year (the latest year for which data are available) gathered information on 1,354 children and 6,306 young adults. Information on children and their family background has been updated in the 2008 public release for all of the 8,266 children born to mothers interviewed as of that survey round. The data collected about the children can be linked easily with information collected from their mothers in the main NLSY79.

## General Content of the Child and Young Adult Surveys

The NLSY79 child survey uses the mother's report, assessments administered to the child by the interviewer, and the child's self-report to gauge children's health, abilities, achievement, problems, activities, attitudes, school progress, and home environment. Beginning in 1988, children aged 10 years and older have answered a self-administered set of questions about their families, friends, jobs, schools, after-school activities, computer use, religious attendance, and use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs. As of 1994, NLSY79 children aged years 15 and older are no longer administered cognitive and other assess-

ments like those given to their younger counterparts. Instead, the young adults participate in a personal or telephone interview similar to their mothers', covering work experience, military experience, schooling, training, family background, health, fertility, income and assets, dating and relationships, attitudes, smoking, and drug and alcohol use. In 2008, the oldest young adults interviewed were 37 years of age.

## How to obtain child and young adult data

Researchers can access the Child and Young Adult dataset through the NLS Investigator on the Internet at **www.nlsinfo.org/investigator**. Data documentation, including a user's guide, also can be found through the NLS Investigator.  □

## NLSY97 Geocode Release Includes Migration Distance Variables

The 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY97) geocode release for rounds 1 through 12 is now available for users who complete the accessing agreement required by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Geocode variables include the State and county of the respondent's current residence, the State and county of the additional residences where the respondent has lived since the previous interview if the respondent has moved between counties, the unemployment rate in the region of the respondent's current residence, and the State FIPS code and UNITID (an institutional identifier assigned to institutions of higher education by the Federal Interagency Committee on Education) for the colleges the respondent attended.

In addition, to support research on respondent mobility, a series of variables has been created for the respondent to show the distance from the address at each interview date to the address at every other (earlier) interview date. These variables supplement the geocode data on State and county of residence. The geocode data do not give a location for the respondent's residence; rather, they provide distances between the various places the respondent has lived. This pairwise matrix of variables enables various types of migration research by allowing respondents to consider distances between residences and to identify their return to an area where they lived in the past. In cases where there is no address, respondents are coded to the centroid of the ZIP code (when known) or the centroid of the county (if only the county is known).

More information on the construction of the migration distance variables, including a discussion about the quality of respondent address data, can be found in Attachment 103 of the NLSY97 User's Guide Geocode Codebook Supplement. (See the Documentation link in the NLS Investigator, on the Internet at **www.nlsinfo.org/investigator**).

(Note to NLSY79 users: The migration distance variables are also available on the NLSY79 geocode CD, released earlier in the year; see NLSY79 Appendix 20. Applications for geocode CDs are on the Internet at **www.bls.gov/nls/geocodeapp.htm**.)  □

## Timetable for NLSY Data Releases and Collections

The following is the latest schedule for NLSY79 and NLSY97 data collections and data releases:

- **NLSY97 Survey**. NLSY97 round-12 data were released in July 2010.

Round-13 interviews ended mid-April 2010, with round-13 data scheduled for release June 2011. Round 14 data collection began in the fall of 2010.

- **NLSY79 Main Survey**. Round-23 data from the NLSY79 main survey were released in May 2010. Round-24 data collection is currently underway, with round-24 data to be released in early 2012.

- **NLSY79 Child Survey and NLSY79 Young Adult Survey**. Both surveys are fielded during the same approximate timeframe as the main NLSY79 survey. The latest full data release, which includes the 2008 data collection, took place in the fall of 2010, (See the related article in this issue of the newsletter.) Data collected in 2010 will be released in 2012.

All public NLS data can be accessed at **www.nlsinfo.org/investigator**.Each cohort's dataset includes a merge of all previous rounds released from that cohort.  □

## Spotlight: Retirement and Pension Variables in the NLSY79

The NLSY79 dataset includes substantial retirement and pension information. As can be expected, more information has been gathered in recent survey years as the cohort has matured.

### Pension plan variables

Beginning in 1994, the Employer Supplement section on benefits has included details on pensions, with questions asked for each job that a respondent works at 20 or more hours a week. Respondents answer questions on the following subjects:

- Number of plans the respondent is participating in
- Number of plans the respondent is eligible for with each employer
- Knowledge of each plan
- Number of years enrolled in a plan

- Type of plan Employer contributions
- Employee contributions
- Whether the respondent has a choice of investment strategy
- Value of the retirement account at the time of interview (including respondent earnings and employer contributions)

Starting in 2002, respondents who have left one or more jobs with a pension plan also answer a series of questions about what happened to their pension account after their departure. First they indicate at what point they were entitled to receive the money (immediately after they left, at some point in the future, a combination of the present and the future, or never). Then they provide information on what they did with the money: transferred it to another retirement or investment account, took a cash settlement, left the money in the plan, currently are receiving repeated payments, or haven't received any money yet/just left the job. If they cashed out any portion of the pension, they are asked what they did or plan to do with the money. If they did not cash out the pension, they indicated whether they could continue to contribute to the plan through another employer.

In addition, in 1994–2004 and 2008, questions added to the Asset section of the questionnaire began to track retirement savings. Prior to 1994, this information was collected through responses to other questions about assets. In 1994, separate pension questions were included.

In 2004, questions were added about hypothetical changes to the Social Security program and the introduction of personal retirement accounts.

### Retirement Income Variables

NLSY79 respondents report their pension income (and their spouse's/partner's pension income) as part of an "any other income?" question, which asks the respondents about receiving income from "any other source such as interest on savings or bonds, dividends, pensions or annuities, net rental income, royalties, alimony, or any other regular or periodic source of income." From 1980 on, respondents answered a set of questions about whether they or their spouse had received any income during the

past year from veteran's benefits, worker's compensation, or disability benefits. Starting in 1994, if a respondent had a partner, the same income information was collected from the partner. More limited information on income was collected on partners in earlier years.

### Retirement Expectation Variables

Respondents answered a new series of retirement expectation questions in 2008 (with a sample of the respondents also having answered the questions in 2006). Working respondents first provided a definition of their own retirement, choosing from "select all that apply" definitions of what retirement means to them:  a reduction in hours of work per week, stopping working entirely, beginning to receive retirement payments from a pension, beginning to receive retirement payments from Social Security, quitting a career job to work at a more fun or more satisfying job, beginning to receive benefits from a defined contribution plan, becoming eligible for health care provided by Medicare, expecting to work out of necessity, or never planning to stop working. Respondents also estimated the probability that they would not be working for pay at ages 67, 65, and 62.

Respondents answered questions about any retirement preparation they had undertaken: calculating the projected retirement income they would need, consulting a financial planner, reading magazines or books about retirement, using a computer program to help with planning, and attending meetings on retirement planning. If respondents attended retirement meetings, they indicated whether the meetings were organized by their employer or their spouse's  or partner's employer and whether the meetings were voluntary or mandatory.

### Pension Variables in Other NLS Cohorts

*NLSY97 pension-related variables*. Each survey year, NLSY97 respondents report information on the market value of the savings in their pension or retirement funds. In the 1997 *Parent Questionnaire*, parents of the NLSY97 respondents also answered questions about the value of their pension accounts.

*Original Cohort pension-related variable*s. The Mature Women and Older Men respondents provided information on pension plans for nearly all survey years, while the Young Women cohort includes pension plan information starting in 1991. In addition, the 1989 Mature Women dataset features a special pension-matching project that links information gathered directly from plan providers with information reported by respondents.

## Accessing Retirement and Pension Variables

NLSY79 retirement and pension data can be accessed free of charge through the NLS Investigator on the Internet at **www.nlsinfo.org/investigator**. Use "retirement" and "pension" as search words.  ☐

## Features of Updated Investigator: Browse Index Function and Variable Type Search

The NLS Investigator allows users access to NLS variables to identify, select, and extract data and to create tables indicating either the frequency distribution of a variable or a cross-tabulation of two or three variables. The recently updated NLS Investigator provides easier variable searches for both new and veteran NLS users.

NLSY97 users can now enjoy two recently added features on NLS Investigator: the Browse Index function and the Variable Type search.

*Browse Index function*. This function allows NLSY97 researchers to browse variables grouped by topic. The browse index initially displays 12 key variable groups: Education, Training, and Achievement Scores; Employment; Household, Geography, and Contextual Variables; Dating, Marriage, and Cohabitation; Sexual Activity, Pregnancy, and Fertility; Children; Parents, Family Process, and Childhood; Income, Assets, and Program Participation; Health; Attitudes, Expectations, and Non-cognitive Tests; Crime and Substance Use; and Survey Methodology. When a user chooses a key topic, it can then branch into related subtopics, which may in turn branch into more specific subtopics.

For example, a user can start by clicking on "health" and then select among subtopics such as general health, height and weight, mental health, health care usage, stressful events, and health knowledge. If the user clicks on "stressful events," a list of events appears for selection:  death in the family, victim of crime, homelessness, hospitalization of household member, household member in jail, household member unemployed, or divorced parents. At any point, the user can access codebook information for the variables associated with that topic or subtopic.

The Investigator Browse Index function can be combined with the traditional variable search option. Continuing the previous example, if the user chooses the "stressful events" subtopic as the selected index, he or she can narrow the search by including the search criteria "survey year" to select, for instance, only those stressful event variables from the 2008 survey year.

*Variable Type search*. Many types of variables can be found within the complex NLS datasets. NLS Investigator now allows NLSY97 users to search by variable type, thus cutting down on the number of variables a user needs to comb through. Researchers can pick from the following variable types:  ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery), created variables, event history, machine checks, methodology variables, parent response, respondent response, roster items, screener response, symbols, and transcript survey. To access this search option, click on the Search tab and choose the "Variable Type" option.

The Investigator Browse Index function and the Variable Type search are currently available for NLSY97 data and will eventually be available for NLSY79 data as well. To learn about these and other features found in the updated NLS Investigator, users can access an NLS Investigator User's Guide by clicking on the Help link, **www.nlsinfo.org/InvestigatorGuide/investigator_guide_TOC.html**.  ☐

## NLSY Terms to Know: "Youth Cohorts"

New users of NLS data may find the term "youth cohorts" confusing when they dis-cover that half of the "youth" respondents are now in their forties and fifties. Here is some background on the "youth cohort" name:

NLSY79 respondents have been interviewed for 31 years, and NLSY97 respondents are now in their 13th round of surveys. When these cohorts were originally interviewed, the respondents were 14–21 years (NLSY79) and 12–16 years (NLSY97). Describing these groups as youth cohorts made sense at the time of the early rounds and helped to differentiate them from the NLS original cohorts, four groups that had been interviewed since the mid-to-late sixties.

Today, both the NLSY79 and NLSY97 respondents are still referred to as youth cohorts, despite the fact that the NLSY79 respondents are now 45–52 years and NLSY97 are 25–29 years.  ☐

## Frequently Asked Questions

The NLS staff encourages researchers to contact NLS User Services with questions and problems encountered while accessing and using NLS data or documentation. Every effort is made to answer these inquiries. Following are some recent questions and answers that may be of general interest to NLS users:

*Q1. Is it possible to download an entire NLS cohort's dataset?*

A1. You cannot download the entire dataset. Instead, you will need to preselect variables from NLS Investigator (**www.nlsinfo.org/investigator**). In the past, users installed a dataset (along with search and extraction software) locally to their computers. With advances in broadband capabilities, access to NLS data became possible over the Internet, so the choice was made to focus on developing and maintaining the Internet version of the dataset rather than continue maintaining a locally installed version.

*Q2. What does it mean when the codebook indicates that a variable is edited?*

A2. If codebook information indicates that a variable has been edited, then the

variable has been updated in some way in order to correct it. Often, the corrected variable will have a name with the suffix "_EDT." In rounds that have two identical variables, but one has the "_EDT" suffix, users should use the edited version of the variable. The original variable remains in the codebook for historical reference.

*Q3. How do I match an NLSY79 parent with his or her NLSY79 child? I have selected the variables I want to analyze, but I can't figure out how to do the matching.*

A3. The match is accomplished by merging mainfile data into the Child/YA file. From the mainfile, include the variable R00001.00 (the respondent ID number). In the Child/YA file, include variables C00001.00 and C00002.00, which are the Child ID and Mother ID variables, respectively. C00002.00 is the mother's id variable from the mainfile (R00001.00). Then, in SAS/SPSS/Stata, merge the mainfile data into the Child/YA file by matching R00001.00 with C00002.00. To help users, these ID variables are automatically included in the tag sets they make in Investigator.

For more detailed instructions on how to merge mother-child data, users are encouraged to read through the step-by-step tutorial provided on the BLS Web site. (See "Child-Young Adult Tutorial: Linking NLSY79 mothers with children" at **www.bls.gov/nls/nlsy79ch.htm**.)

*Q4. I noticed that some respondents of the NLSY79 come from the same household. Some even appear to be spouses. Is there a way to determine which respondents are married to each other? I would like to obtain more detailed information about some married couples than is otherwise possible from just the general information collected on spouses.*

A4. Yes, there is a way to link a respondent who is married to another respondent. In NLS Investigator, select the NLSY79 cohort and choose "Common" as the Area of Interest. Variables R00001.50 to R00001.66 give the respondent ID number and the relationship code of the other respondent interviewed.

*Q5. Did those NLSY97 respondents who took the ASVAB ever find out their scores?*

A5. Respondents' scores were mailed out about 9 months after the end of data collection and included information on how to interpret their scores. The score reports emphasized the Interest Finder component of the tests rather than the tests themselves.

*Q6. My copy of the NLSY97 Geocode CD does not include country-of-birth variables for the respondents' parents and grandparents. Can you tell me how to access these variables?*

A6. The variables for country of birth for parents and grandparents have been removed from the geocode releases because they were deemed too sensitive to be released.

These data are accessible, upon approval, by going to the BLS National Office in Washington, DC, and using the data there. Other variables available only at the BLS are the NLSY79 and NLSY97 zip code and Census Tract files, the 1996 NLSY97 School Survey, and the 2000 NLSY97 School Survey. More information on viewing these confidential files can be obtained at **www.bls.gov/nls/nlsfaqs.htm#anch25**.

Some limited information on parents' country of birth can be found in the NLSY97 public release by using the region-of-birth variables (Example: PAR_MEXCAM or PAR_SAMERICA). □

## Completed NLS Research

The following is a listing of recent research based on data from the NLS cohorts that has not appeared in its current form in a previous issue of the *NLS News* (see the *NLS Annotated Bibliography* at **www.nlsbibliography.org** for a comprehensive listing of NLS-related research):

Abe, Yasuyo, Betesh, Hannah, and Datta, Atreyee Rupa. "A Longitudinal Analysis of Early Self-employment in the NLSYs." *Small Business Administration Research Summary* 367, August 2010. [NLSY79, NLSY97]

Ang, Siew Ching, Rodgers, Joseph Lee, and Wanstrom, Linda. "The Flynn Effect Within Subgroups in the U.S.: Gender, Race, Income, Education, and Urbanization Differences in the NLSY-Children Data." *Intelligence* 38,4 (July 2010): 367–384. [Children of the NLSY79]

Bellair, Paul E., and McNulty, Thomas L. "Cognitive Skills, Adolescent Violence, and the Moderating Role of Neighborhood Disadvantage." *Justice Quarterly* 27,4 (August 2010): 538–559. [NLSY97]

Biello, Katie Brooks, Sipsma, Heather, and Kershaw, Trace. "Effect of Teenage Parenthood on Mental Health Trajectories: Does Sex Matter?" *American Journal of Epidemiology* 172,3 (August 2010): 279–287. [NLSY97]

Cunha, Flavio, Heckman, James J., and Schennach, Susanne. "Estimating the Technology of Cognitive and Noncognitive Skill Formation." *Econometrica* 78,3 (May 2010): 883–931. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79]

Datar, Ashlesha, Kilburn, M. Rebecca, and Loughran, David S. "Endowments and Parental Investments in Infancy and Early Childhood." *Demography* 47,1 (February 2010): 145–162. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79]

Davis, Shannon N., and Wills, Jeremiah B. "Adolescent Gender Ideology Socialization: Direct and Moderating Effects of Fathers' Beliefs." *Sociological Spectrum* 30,5 (September 2010): 580–604. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79]

Dew, Jeffrey, and Eggebeen, David J. "Beyond the Wage Premium: Fatherhood and Asset Accumulation." *Research in Human Development* 7,2 (April–June 2010): 140–158. [NLSY79]

Fischhoff, Baruch, Bruine De Bruin, Wändi, Parker, Andrew M., Millstein, Susan G., and Halpern-Felsher, Bonnie L. "Adolescents' Perceived Risk of Dying." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 46,3 (March 2010): 265–269. [NLSY97]

Gius, Mark Paul. "Health Insurance and

Young Adults: An Analysis Using the NLSY." *Atlantic Economic Journal* 38,3 (September 2010): 381–382. [NLSY79]

Goldin, Claudia. "From the Valley to the Summit: A Brief History of the Quiet Revolution That Transformed Women's Work." In *Inequality and Society: Social Science Perspectives on Social Stratification*. J. Manza and M. Sauder, eds. W. W. Norton and Company, April 2009. [NLSY79, Young Women]

Hofferth, Sandra L. and Goldscheider, Frances K. "Family Structure and the Transition to Early Parenthood." *Demography* 47,2 (May 2010): 415–437. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79 Young Adult]

Huang, Fali, and Lee, Myoung-Jae. "Dynamic Treatment Effect Analysis of TV Effects on Child Cognitive Development." *Journal of Applied Econometrics* 25,3 (2010): 392–419. [Children of the NLSY79]

Kane, John, Spizman, Lawrence, Rodgers, James, and Gaskins, Rick. "The Effect of the Loss of a Parent on the Future Earnings of a Minor Child." *Eastern Economic Journal* 36 (Summer 2010): 370–390. [NLSY79]

Lee, Kyunghee. "Developmental Trajectories of Head Start Children's Reading and Home Environment Scores: Across Ethnicities." *Journal of Social Service Research* 36,4 (July 2010): 321–345. [Children of the NLSY79]

Margerison Zilko, Claire E., Rehkopf, David, and Abrams, Barbara. "Association of Maternal Gestational Weight Gain with Short- and Long-term Maternal and Child Health Outcomes." *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* 202,6 (June 2010):574.e1–e8. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79]

McLeod, Jane D., and Knight, Syndee. "Association of Socioemotional Problems with Early Sexual Initiation." *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 42,2 (June 2010):93–101. [Children of the NLSY79]

Meisenberg, Gerhard. "Reproduction of Intelligence." *Intelligence* 38,2 (March 2010) 220–230. [NLSY79]

Órtiz, Eduardo, Lee, Sang-Lim, Berry, E. Helen, and Toney, Michael B. "Descriptive Comparisons of the Internal Migration of Mexican Heritage vs. Other Heritage Hispanics in the United States." *Population and Society* 6,1 (May 2010): 31–62. [NLSY79]

Reynolds, John R., and Baird, Chardie L. "Is There a Downside to Shooting for the Stars? Unrealized Educational Expectations and Symptoms of Depression." *American Sociological Review* 75,1 (February 2010): 151–172. [NLSY79]

Rodgers, William M., III, and Stratton, Leslie S. "Male Marital Wage Differentials: Training, Personal Characteristics, and Fixed Effects." *Economic Inquiry* 48,3 (July 2010): 722–742. [NLSY79]

Ryan, Andrea Kay. "The Lasting Effects of Marijuana Use on Educational Attainment in Midlife." *Substance Use and Misuse* 45,4 (March 2010): 554–597. [NLSY79]

Sandy, Jonathan, and Duncan, Kevin. "Examining the Achievement Test Score Gap Between Urban and Suburban Students." Education Economics 18,3 (September 2010): 297–315. [NLSY97]

Straus, Murray A., and Paschall, Mallie J. "Corporal Punishment by Mothers and Development of Children's Cognitive Ability: A Longitudinal Study of Two Nationally Representative Age Cohorts." *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma* 18,5 (2009): 459–483. [Children of the NLSY79]

Teachman, Jay D. "Family Life Course Statuses and Transitions: Relationships with Health Limitations." *Sociological Perspectives* 53,2 (Summer 2010): 201–219. [NLSY79]

Wildeman, Christopher. "Parental Imprisonment, the Prison Boom, and the Concentration of Childhood Disadvantage." *Demography* 46,2 (May 2009): 265–280. [NLSY79, NLSY97] ☐

# NLS News

## NLS Contact Information

NLS News is published quarterly by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. It is distributed both nationwide and abroad without charge to researchers using NLS data, as well as to other interested persons.

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