

The National Longitudinal Surveys

Sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), NLS data collection and user services are provided, under contract, by CHRR at The Ohio State University and NORC at the University of Chicago. Funding for the NLSY79 Child/Young Adult survey is provided by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

NLS cohort topics include:

Demographic and family background, education, military experiences, job characteristics and training, labor market status and histories, marital and family characteristics, income and assets, transfers of time and money, retirement, geographic location and mobility, health, nutrition, and physical activity, fertility and parenting, sexual activity, attitudes and expectations, behaviors and perspectives, environmental characteristics, and civic engagement.

Additionally, NLSY79 Child and Young Adult surveys include:

Assessments of the quality of the home environment, cognitive development, temperament, and motor, social and emotional development.

How do I obtain NLS data?

National Longitudinal Surveys data are made available to researchers through the Investigator website at:

nlsinfo.org/investigator. Investigator allows users to search for variables of interest for any NLS cohort, create simple tabulations of the data, extract data sets for analysis, and access documentation. NLS public data are immediately available and free of charge.

Where do I get more information?

Visit the NLS website at: nlsinfo.org for online access to questionnaires and other documentation, a searchable, annotated bibliography of NLS research, news releases, updates, information on obtaining restricted-access data, such as geocoded files, and much more.

Questions about NLS data should be directed to NLS User Services:

usersvc@chrr.osu.edu or **614-442-7366**.

Questions about BLS publications and restricted-access NLS data should be directed to: NLS_info@bls.gov or **202-691-7410**.

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NLSY79 CHILD and YOUNG ADULT Fact Sheet

National Longitudinal Surveys



What are the National Longitudinal Surveys?

The National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS) are a set of surveys sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor. These surveys have gathered information at multiple points in time on the labor market experiences and other significant life events of several groups of men and women. Each of the NLS samples consists of several thousand individuals, many of whom have been surveyed over several decades.

What are the NLSY79 Child and Young Adult Surveys?

Funded by BLS and the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), the NLSY79 Child and Young Adult surveys contain comprehensive information on the experiences of children born to female NLSY79 respondents. The collection of data on these NLSY79 children began in 1986, and a battery of cognitive, socioemotional, and physiological assessments has been administered biennially since that year. Their mothers also provide reports on their children's health, temperament, motor and social development, behavior problems, school activities, and home environments. Beginning in 1988, children age 10 and older have answered a self-administered set of questions about family, friends, jobs, school, after-school activities, computer use, religious attendance, smoking, alcohol and drug use, and more.

Starting in 1994, children who have reached age 15 by December 31 of the survey year complete a questionnaire that is similar to the main NLSY79 survey and asks about work experiences, training, schooling, health, fertility, parenting and attitudes. The Young Adult questionnaire, conducted primarily by

telephone, replaced the child assessments for young adults 15 years or older. Young adults also report on sensitive topics such as parent-child conflict, participation in delinquent or criminal activities, use of controlled and uncontrolled substances, sexual activity, volunteer activities, and expectations for the future.

The data collected about the children can be linked with information collected from their mothers in the main NLSY79 survey. The NLSY79 Child and Young Adult surveys are a valuable resource for studying how individual and family characteristics and experiences affect the well-being and development of children, adolescents, and young adults. The most recent public use data release contains the complete set of 1986-2018 Child files and the 1994-2020 Young Adult files.

How was the sample designed?

The NLSY79 Child and Young Adult samples include the biological children of female NLSY79 respondents, who were born in the years 1957 to 1964 and living in the United States when the NLSY79 began in 1979. Starting in 1988, child interviews are restricted to those living at least part time with their mothers. Young adults are eligible for interview regardless of residence. The table below shows the number of children and young adults assessed and interviewed in select rounds of the survey. Beginning in 2016, the Child survey is no longer conducted. However, interviewed NLSY79 mothers completed the Mother Supplement for children in the household at least part-time who were 0 to 13 years of age as of the end of 2016, and children 12 and older were included in the Young Adult data collection.

Number of interviews by age and race/ethnicity for selected surveys: NLSY79 Child and Young Adult

Sample	1986	1990	1994 ⁱ	1998 ⁱⁱ	2000 ⁱⁱⁱ	2004	2010 ^{iv}	2016 ^v	2020
Total interviews	4,971	5,801	7,086	7,066	6,415	7,537	6,997	5,391	4,354
Child			6,107	4,923	3,390	2,513	895	39 ^{vi}	—
Young Adult			979	2,143	3,025	5,024	6,102	5,352	4,354
Hispanic or Latino	937	1,303	1,546	1,550	1,192	1,648	1,521	1,156	939
Black	1,604	1,994	2,347	2,228	1,913	2,455	2,217	1,754	1,384
non-Black or non-Hispanic	2,430	2,504	3,193	3,288	3,310	3,434	3,259	2,481	2,031

i. From 1994-2014, children age 15 and older by the end of the survey year were interviewed as Young Adults. Beginning in 2016, the Young Adult has included children 12 and older by the end of the survey year.

ii. Young Adults age 21 and older were not fielded in 1998.

iii. In 2000, 38 percent of the black and Hispanic child and younger young adult (15-20) oversamples were not fielded, but were restored to the sample in 2002.

iv. Starting in 2010, young adults over age 30 are interviewed only every other round (every four years).

v. Starting in 2016, children 12 to 14 were included in the Young Adult sample.

vi. Mother Supplement only.