

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

National Institutes of Health

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY



HEALTH

GROWTH

ENVIRONMENT

THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S STUDY

What is the National Children's Study?

The National Children's Study will examine 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. The goal of the study is to improve the health and well being of children.

The study defines "environment" broadly and will take a number of issues into account, including:

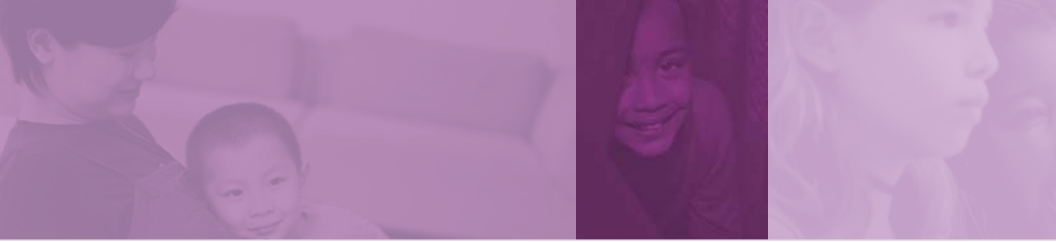
- Natural and man-made environmental factors
- Biological and chemical factors
- Physical surroundings
- Social factors
- Behavioral influences and outcomes
- Genetics
- Cultural and family influences and differences
- Geographic locations

Researchers will analyze 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 role of these factors on health and disease. Findings from the study will be made available as soon as possible as the research progresses.

The study will also allow scientists to find the differences that exist between groups of people, in terms of their health, health care access, disease occurrence, and other 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. It is anticipated that the preliminary results from the first years of the study will be available in 2008-2009.

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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 national in scope**—Unlike other health studies, the National Children's Study includes children and families from different areas of 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 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 or stages of growth and in various situations, and will 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 until after 2025 for results. NCS researchers will begin to analyze information as soon as it is collected. As the children enrolled in the study reach certain



developmental milestones, the NCS will release its findings on these milestones. These 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, as well as from public organizations and private companies**—Rather than taking directions from a specific agency, industry, or company, the National Children's Study relies on a unique, overarching partnership with many components. 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 services, 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 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 are trying to answer a single question related to health and development,



the National Children's Study addresses multiple questions on multiple issues, to provide as much information as possible on health and development. Some example questions are:

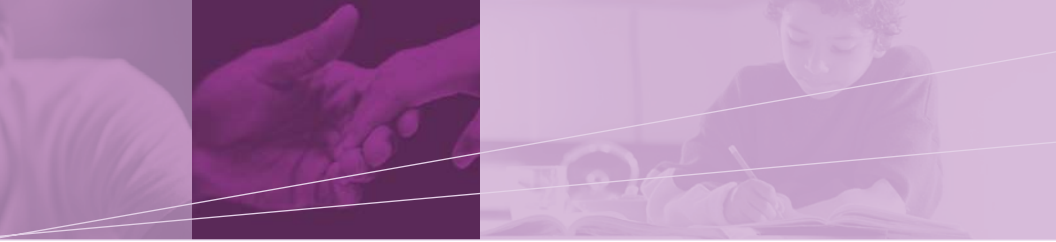
- How do sociocultural factors contribute to the risk of injury?
- Do household pesticides have adverse effects on neurodevelopment?
- How does one's genetic makeup affect asthma severity?

The first phase of the National Children's Study is devoted to planning. What questions will the study try to answer? What aspects of health and life will be measured? How will the information be collected? What are the special population groups that need to be involved? How will the participants' safety and privacy be protected? Who will monitor the conduct of the study? These questions need informed answers before the study can really begin.

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

At this point, the best way to get involved is to **join the Study Assembly**, the primary body for providing feedback during the planning phase. The study Assembly also provides input during the design phase.

By joining the Study Assembly, you will have easy access to information about the planning phase of the study. As a member of the Study Assembly, you will:



- Be part of the National Children’s Study listserv, which provides updates on recent events related to the study;
- Participate in meetings each year to evaluate study design and progress; and
- Provide feedback on how the study is advancing and identify where changes might be needed.

The dynamic dialogue between the Study Assembly and the agencies involved in the study and their partners allows the National Children’s Study to adapt so that it can address changing needs and processes. As the planning and pilot phases end and the implementation phase begins, members of the Study Assembly will have a continuing role in helping to shape the Study.

The Study Assembly is integral to all phases of the study to ensure that the concerns and needs of the participants and the partners are being met.

How can I get more information about the study?

To learn more about the National Children’s Study or to join the Study Assembly, contact:

The National Children’s Study

E-mail: NCS@mail.nih.gov

Internet: www.nationalchildrensstudy.gov

Mail: 6100 Executive Boulevard, Room 5C01, Rockville, MD, 20892-7510

Phone: 301-594-9147

Fax: 301-480-1222

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 (NIH), 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, the principal federal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves. The EPA is the arm of the federal government that protects human health and safeguards the natural environment — air, water, and land — upon which life depends. These four agencies, NICHD, NIEHS, CDC, and EPA, are dedicated to working together to improve the health of our nation's children through the successful completion of the National Children's Study.