

How do I obtain NLS data?

NLS data are made available to researchers through Investigator (www.nlsinfo.org/investigator). Investigator allows users to search for variables of interest for any NLS cohort, create simple tabulations of the data, extract data files for analysis, and access documentation. NLS public data are immediately available and free of charge. See below for information on obtaining restricted-access NLS data such as the geocoded files.

Where do I get more information?

Visit the NLS website (www.bls.gov/nls/) for online access to questionnaires and other documentation, a searchable, annotated bibliography of NLS research, news releases, updates, information on obtaining restricted-access data, 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.

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

NLS Director

Jeff Groen (BLS), groen.jeffrey@bls.gov

NLS Principal Investigators

NLSY97:

Lowell Taylor (NORC),
taylor-lowell@norc.org

NLSY79:

Randy Olsen (CHRR),
randy.olsen@chrr.osu.edu
Rosella Gardecki (CHRR),
rosella.gardecki@chrr.osu.edu

NLSY79 Child/Young Adult:

Elizabeth Cooksey (CHRR),
elizabeth.cooksey@chrr.osu.edu



NLSY79 Child and Young Adult Fact Sheet

What is the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979?

The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) is a longitudinal survey of more than 12,600 individuals who were between the ages of 14-22 when first surveyed in 1979. Interviewed annually through 1994, respondents have been interviewed on a biennial basis since 1996. The design and content of the NLSY79 enables users to study the social, economic and demographic experiences of the respondents and their families over a 35 plus year period. The National Longitudinal Surveys are sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

What are the NLSY79 Child and Young Adult Surveys?

Funded by BLS and the 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, attitudes, and work expectations. This "Young Adult" interview, 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, access to a computer and computer training, 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 1986-2012 Child files and the 1994-2012 Young Adult files. A preliminary 2014 Young Adult data release is planned for early 2016 with a complete 1986-2014 NLSY79 Child and Young Adult release by the end of 2016. The Child and Young Adult surveys cover a variety of topics, including:

- demographic and family background
- health, activity, and nutrition
- education
- home environment and family relations
- cognitive development
- mental health and well being
- motor, social, and emotional development
- employment
- attitudes and expectations
- income and assets
- sexual activity
- civic engagement

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 during each round of the survey.

NLSY79 Children and Young Adults: Sample Sizes by Age and Race/Ethnicity

Sample Groups	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998 ²	2000 ³	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010 ⁴	2012
Total interviews	4,971	6,266	5,803	6,509	7,089	7,103	7,067	6,417	7,467	7,538	7,816	7,660	6,997	6,323
Birth to age 14	4,970	6,231	5,666	6,430	6,109	6,431	5,834	3,392	3,229	2,514	1,972	1,354	895	515
Age 15 ¹ and older	1	35	137	379	980	1,672	2,143 ²	3,025	4,238	5,024	5,844	6,306	6,102	5,808
Hispanic or Latino	937	1,158	1,304	1,483	1,546	1,520	1,550	1,193	1,625	1,649	1,737	1,667	1,521	1,367
Black	1,604	1,895	1,994	2,133	2,350	2,330	2,229	1,914	2,412	2,455	2,550	2,521	2,217	2,020
Nonblack/non-Hispanic	2,430	3,213	2,505	2,893	3,193	3,253	3,288	3,310	3,430	3,434	3,529	3,472	3,259	2,936

¹Starting in 1994, children who turned age 15 by December 31st of the survey year are interviewed as Young Adults.

²Young Adults age 21 and older were not fielded in 1998.

³In 2000, 38 percent of the black and Hispanic child and young adult oversamples were not fielded but were restored to the sample in 2002.

⁴Starting in 2010, young adults over age 30 are interviewed only every other round (every four years).

Cohorts in the National Longitudinal Surveys

NLSY97-women and men ages 12-16 as of December 31, 1996

NLSY79--women and men ages 14-21 as of December 31, 1978

NLSY79 Child and Young Adult-children born to women of the NLSY79

NLS of Older Men-men ages 45-59 in 1966 (discontinued after 1990)

NLS of Young Men-men ages 14-24 in 1966 (discontinued after 1981)

NLS of Mature Women-women ages 30-44 in 1967 (discontinued after 2003)

NLS of Young Women-women ages 14-24 in 1968 (discontinued after 2003)