

## TV-Viewing Data in the NLSY79 Child/Young Adult Surveys

The NLSY79 Child dataset provides researchers with the opportunity to study the long-term effects associated with television watching. Also available since 2006 are variables about time spent on video games. All variables can be accessed free of charge at [www.nlsinfo.org/investigator](http://www.nlsinfo.org/investigator).

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**Mother-report.** Starting with the first NLSY79 Child survey in 1986, questions on television viewing are posed to mothers for each of her children in the *HOME-Short Form* sections of the Mother Supplement (and in the Child Supplement in the 2000 survey). Mothers report the following:

- number of hours per day the TV is on in the home
- whether parents discuss TV programs with child
- hours child spends watching TV on a typical weekday and weekend day

**The HOME-SF scores.** TV viewing is included in the computation of the HOME scores, according to the age of the child. For children ages 3-5 a question estimating the number of hours the TV is on is used in the total HOME score and emotional support subscale score. The total and cognitive stimulation HOME scores for children ages 6 and older include the single TV question about whether the child discusses programs.

**Temperament assessment.** Two questions related to TV are reported by mothers in the child surveys as part of the Temperament scales for children ages 4 to 6 years:

1. How often child obeys when told to turn off TV
2. How often child turns off TV with no protest

**Child-report.** Children age 10 and older indicate in the Child Self-Administered Supplement (CSAS) the following TV-viewing information:

- time spent watching TV on a typical weekday after school, typical Saturday and Sunday
- who decides how much TV child watches (father, mother, stepfather, etc.)
- family rules governing TV viewing
- how much they share with their parents about what they watch
- how often they argue with their parents about watching TV
- how often in past week TV or other privileges were taken away
- how often parents limit time child spends watching TV or playing video games

**Video games.** Starting in 2004, children ages 10 and older report whether they like to play video games after school. Since 2006, children ages 10 and older have been asked how many hours they play video games on a typical weekday and on a typical Saturday. Starting in 2008, children also estimate how many hours they play video games on a typical Sunday.

**Young Adults.** Since 2000, young adults (children 15 and older) report on the extent of their TV viewing time by estimating weekly hours spent watching. From 1996 to the current survey, young adults enrolled in grades 1-12 indicate how often their parents limit TV or video game time and, since 2002, how viewing patterns might vary after school or during the summer. Starting in 2000 young adult parents report to what extent they respond to their own children's behavior by withholding TV or other privileges. Starting in 2006, Young Adults report hours per week spent playing video games.

**NOTE:** In 1981, NLSY79 mothers completed a detailed time-use series, in their own interview, including time spent watching TV. In the 1984 main Youth survey, mothers were asked about TV watching as part of a health behaviors series.

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## Research on TV viewing from the NLSY79 Child & Young Adult Surveys:

Chou, Shin-Yi, Inas Rashad and Michael Grossman. "Fast-Food Restaurant Advertising on Television and Its Influence on Childhood Obesity." *The Journal of Law and Economics* 51, 4 (November 2008): 599-618.

Foster, E. Michael and Stephanie Watkins. "The Value of Reanalysis: TV Viewing and Attention Problems." *Child Development* 81, 1 (January/February 2010): 368-375.

Huang, David Y.C., H. Isabella Lanza and M. Douglas Anglin. "Trajectory of Adolescent Obesity: Exploring the Impact of Prenatal to Childhood Experiences." *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 23, 6 (August 2014): 1090-1101.

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

Munasib, Abdul and Samrat Bhattacharya. "Is the 'Idiot's Box' Raising Idiocy? Early and Middle Childhood Television Watching and Child Cognitive Outcome." *Economics of Education Review* 29, 5 (October 2010): 873-883.

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The **NLSY79 [Child and Young Adult](#)** data set profiles the development of the children of the mothers in the National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth/1979 (NLSY79) Cohort. The availability of comprehensive child data, coupled with longitudinal information on the family background, education, employment histories, and economic well-being of the NLSY79 mothers, provide researchers with an opportunity to examine the linkages between maternal-family behaviors and attitudes and subsequent child development. The current NLSY79 Child/YA data release represents 14 survey rounds (1986-2012) of Child data, 10 Young Adult survey rounds (1994-2012), and the complete histories of the NLSY79 mothers (1979-2012).

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