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# National Longitudinal Survey of Youth | 1979 Children and Young Adults

## *Longitudinal Data for Research on Child Development*

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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 a unique opportunity to examine the linkages between maternal-family behaviors and attitudes and subsequent child development.

NLS data and documentation are available, at no cost, for online search and extraction at <http://www.nlsinfo.org/>. 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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### NLSY79 Mothers



- Women in the NLSY79, a nationally representative longitudinal survey of more than 12,600 individuals who were age 14-21 in 1979.
- The design and content of the NLSY79 enable users to study the social, economic, and demographic experiences of the respondents and their families over a 30-year period.

### NLSY79 Children

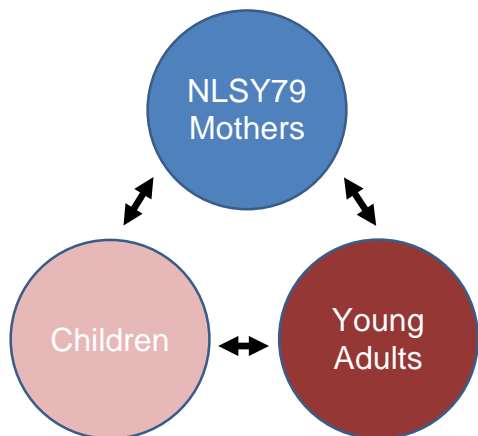
- Biological children of NLSY79 Mothers; surveyed biennially since 1986.
- Surveys use mother interviews, direct assessments, and self-report of topics such as:
  - Cognition (memory, reading, math)
  - Health, illness, and injuries
  - Socio-emotional development
  - Behavior problems
  - Schooling and after-school activities
  - Attitudes and expectations
  - Risk-taking
  - Substance use and smoking
  - Religion and volunteering
  - Parent/child interactions
  - Friendships/dating
  - Home environment

### Young Adults

- Starting at age 15, NLSY79 children are given an in-depth Young Adult questionnaire more suited to their life stage. Ages 15-30 are interviewed biennially (1994 – present), ages 31+ are interviewed every 4 years.
- Topics include education, training, employment, health, dating, fertility and parenting, marriage and cohabitation, household composition, parent-child conflict, sexual activity, delinquent or criminal activities, substance use, computer use, pro-social behavior, political attitudes, and their expectations for the future.

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**Intergenerational Linkages.** The NLSY79 Child-Young Adult files can be combined with information from the complete longitudinal record of their mothers, by merging with extracts from the NLSY79 main Youth.



The NLSY79 main Youth file contains histories of employment, education, income, training, work attitudes, aspirations, health, marriage, fertility, household composition, and residence. Information is also available on childhood adversity, substance use, illegal activities, aptitude, and social-psychological scales such as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem, the Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control, women's roles, the Pearlin Mastery, and the CESD depression scale. The Child dataset contains information about the mother, including: family background, household composition, quarterly maternal work histories before and after each child's date of birth, educational background of household members, and prenatal care. The Child dataset also includes information on the childcare experiences during the first three years of life for all children of a least one year of age.

**Geographic & Contextual Data.** Geocode files are available for all survey years for the NLSY79 main youth, which can be merged with the NLSY79 Child and Young Adult dataset. Researchers can connect the children and young adults, over time, with community characteristics such as population size, birth/death and marriage/divorce rates, median family income, poverty levels, educational attainment levels, crime rates, school characteristics, etc.

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**Research & Policy Applications.** NLSY79 Child & Young Adult data have been used in more than 2000 papers and publications. Topics include:

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|----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Attitudes Transmission           | Family Structure       | Poverty and Welfare         |
| Childcare                        | Health Trajectories    | School Performance          |
| Cognitive Impacts and Outcomes   | Home Environment       | School to Work Transitions  |
| Community Service                | Maternal Employment    | Socio-Emotional Development |
| Early Sexuality and Childbearing | Non-Normative Behavior | Transmission of Behaviors   |
| Educational Attainment           | Parenting              | Volunteering and Voting     |

Access the searchable, annotated NLS bibliography at: <http://www.nlsbibliography.org/>

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CHRR at The Ohio State University and NORC at the University of Chicago are responsible for the design, collection, and distribution of the NLSY79 data and documentation. The surveys are sponsored by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) with support from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

For information on the NLS data or documentation visit the NLS website (<http://www.nlsinfo.org/>) or contact NLS User Services ([usersvc@chrr.osu.edu](mailto:usersvc@chrr.osu.edu)).



<http://www.bls.gov>

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