

**EARLY CHILDHOOD LONGITUDINAL STUDY  
KINDERGARTEN CLASS OF 1998-99 PHASE IV**

**IMT/OMB Clearance Package**

Prepared by:  
National Center for Education Statistics

June 2006

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Part</u>		<u>Page</u>
A	JUSTIFICATION .....	A-1
	A1. Need for Data Collection .....	A-1
	A1.1 Request for Clearance .....	A-1
	A1.2 Study Overview.....	A-1
	A1.3 Circumstances Necessitating Collection of Information.....	A-2
	A2. Purposes and Uses of the Data.....	A-5
	A2.1 Eighth Grade Study .....	A-6
	A2.2 Spring Field Test.....	A-10
	A3. Use of Improved Information Technology.....	A-13
	A4. Efforts to Identify Duplication.....	A-15
	A5. Collection of Data from Small Businesses .....	A-16
	A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection.....	A-16
	A7. Special Circumstances .....	A-17
	A8. Public Comment and Consultations Outside the Agency .....	A-17
	A9. Payments to Respondents .....	A-22
	A10. Assurance of Confidentiality .....	A-25
	A11. Sensitive Questions.....	A-28
	A12. Estimated Response Burden .....	A-32
	A13. Annualized Cost to Respondents .....	A-35
	A14. Annualized Cost to the Federal Government.....	A-35
	A15. Reasons for Program Changes .....	A-36
	A16. Publication Plans and Project Schedule .....	A-36
	A16.1 Publication Plans.....	A-36
	A16.2 Project Schedule.....	A-38
	A17. Approval for Not Displaying the Expiration Date for OMB Approval .....	A-38
	A18. Exceptions to the Certification Statement.....	A-38
B	COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS .....	B-1
	B1. Statistical Design and Estimation .....	B-1
	B1.1 Introduction .....	B-1
	B1.2 Sampling .....	B-1
	B1.3 Analytical Subgroups and Sample Sizes.....	B-2

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

<u>Part</u>		<u>Page</u>
	B1.4 Sample Weights and Standard Error Calculations .....	B-2
B2.	Data Collection Procedures .....	B-3
	B2.1 Tracking the Sample .....	B-3
	B2.2 Eighth Grade Study .....	B-3
B3.	Methods for Maximizing Completion Rates.....	B-5
	B3.1 Working with Schools.....	B-5
	B3.2 Student Assessments .....	B-6
	B3.3 Parent Interviews.....	B-7
	B3.4 Hard-Copy Instruments.....	B-9
B4.	Individuals Responsible for Study Design and Performance.....	B-10
C	JUSTIFICATION OF THE ECLS-K QUESTIONNAIRES .....	C-1
C1.	Introduction.....	C-1
C2.	Eighth Grade Data Collection.....	C-2
	C2.1 ECLS-K Student Interview .....	C-2
	C2.2 ECLS-K Parent Interview .....	C-6
	C2.3 School Administrator Questionnaire.....	C-17
	C2.4 Teacher Questionnaire .....	C-21
	C2.5 Special Education Teacher Questionnaire.....	C-26
C3.	Eighth Grade Data Collection.....	C-28
	C3.1 Student-Level Information from Teacher .....	C-28
	C3.2 Student-Level Information from Students.....	C-28
C4.	Research Questions for the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K).....	C-29
	REFERENCES .....	C-39

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

### List of Appendixes

<u>Appendix</u>		<u>Page</u>
A	Spring 2007 Grade 8 Student Questionnaire	
B	Spring 2007 Parent Interview	
C	Spring 2007 School Administrator Questionnaire	
D.1	Spring 2007 English Teacher Questionnaire	
D.2	Spring 2007 Mathematics Teacher Questionnaire	
D.3	Spring 2007 Science Teacher Questionnaire	
D.4	Spring 2007 Teacher Background Questionnaire	
E.1	Spring 2007 Special Education Teacher Questionnaire A	
E.2	Spring 2007 Special Education Teacher Questionnaire B	

### List of Tables

<u>Table</u>		
A-1	Number of Completed Student Questionnaires by Method of Completion.....	A-12
A-2	Number of Completed Teacher Questionnaires by Method of Completion ....	A-13
A-3	Federal agency consultants .....	A-18
A-4	Other organization consultants .....	A-20
A-5	Phase IV Technical Work Group member list .....	A-21
A-6	Phase IV Content Review Panel member list .....	A-22

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

### List of Tables (continued)

<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
A-7	Respondent burden chart .....	A-33
A-8	Study costs per year .....	A-35
A-9	Critical project milestones .....	A-38

### List of Exhibits

<u>Exhibit</u>		
A-1	Advance Letter to Parents .....	A-26
A-2	Parent Consent Form .....	A-27
A-3	NCES Affidavit of Nondisclosure .....	A-29
A-4	Confidentiality Pledge .....	A-30

## **PART A. JUSTIFICATION**

### **A1. Need for Data Collection**

#### **A1.1 Request for Clearance**

The Early Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 (ECLS-K) is a major study of school children sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education. Clearances for ECLS-K were granted in 1996 for the kindergarten data collection (OMB No. 1850-0719), in 1998 for the first grade to fifth grade data collections (OMB No. 1850-0750), and for the spring 2006 field test data collection with eighth and tenth grade students and their teachers (OMB No. 1850-0750). The ECLS-K is being conducted by Westat with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and Windwalker Corporation as subcontractors, under contract to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, (ED-04-CO-0059).

At this time, NCES requests a clearance from OMB to conduct the full-scale study of the ECLS-K in the spring of eighth grade (2007), which would involve in-school administration of questionnaire and assessment forms to students, collection of questionnaires from teachers and administrators, and interviews with parents of the ECLS-K.

#### **A1.2 Study Overview**

The following is a summary of the design, sample, and measurement methods planned for the data collection period. More detailed information is provided at later points in this submission. Copies of all instruments and descriptions of the measurement protocols are included in the appendixes.

**Design.** The design of this phase of the ECLS-K calls for two waves of data collection in spring of eighth and tenth grade. Multiple methods of data collection will be used in this study, including (1) small group assessments and self-administered questionnaires of the sampled students, (2) telephone or in-person interviews with the primary parent/guardian (usually the mother), and (3) self-administered questionnaires collected from the sampled school administrators and teachers (regular and special education) of the sampled students.

**Sample—Eighth Grade Study.** The ECLS-K sample for the spring 2007 eighth grade data collection will consist of students eligible (e.g., were not out of the country, deceased, etc.) after the fifth grade data collection, regardless of their fifth grade response status. The fifth grade sample included base year (i.e., kindergarten) respondents and a supplemental sample of first graders who were not enrolled in kindergarten during the base year and so had no prior chance of being sampled. The base year students were selected randomly within a sample of schools located within the boundaries of a geographically representative, demographically heterogeneous sample of 100 primary sampling units (PSUs).

In previous rounds of the ECLS-K, the most important issue was the method of dealing with students who moved out of the school in which they were originally sampled because locating and conducting interviews with these students and their schools and teachers had important study implications. For eighth grade, all movers will be followed without any subsampling to ensure that the final sample is sufficiently large for analysis. Further discussion of the eight-grade sample can be found in section B.1, Statistical Design and Estimation.

**Eighth Grade Data Collection.** The eighth grade data collection includes direct student assessments, which involves collecting students' height and weight, administering student questionnaires, parent interviews, school administrator and teacher questionnaires (both regular classroom and special education teachers). This data collection also involves a small pilot study for testing the functionality of the direct student assessment. Unlike Phase III, self-administered paper and pencil questionnaires will be the mode of data collection for the student assessment while computer-assisted interviewing (CAI) will be the mode of data collection for the parent interview. The student assessments and school administrator and teacher questionnaires will be collected using self-administered paper questionnaires.

### **A1.3 Circumstances Necessitating Collection of Information**

The critical importance of high-quality, equitable education for the continued development and prosperity of the country is a very high priority on the national agenda. Parents, educators, and policymakers are reconsidering the ways children are taught in schools and are looking for more effective approaches to education.

Much of the public discussion on education has focused on the early years, children's development and learning during the early childhood period from birth to age eight, their preparation for formal school, the first school experience, and the progress they make over the first years of school. A number of factors have contributed to the research and policy focus on children's early school experiences. These include (1) the focus on eliminating the achievement gap among various subgroups of children by No Child Left Behind; (2) the changing nature of children's preschool and early school experiences; (3) the increasingly diverse population of children entering school and the demands this places on schools; and (4) the expanding role that schools are expected to play in supporting and nurturing development and learning.

Vital to efforts to improve schools and the education of all the nation's children is a research and data collection program that increases the understanding of the dynamics of school achievement, particularly of those factors that lead to the differential success of important groups of children during the elementary and secondary school years. Yet at present no national database permits a thorough study of children's transition into school and their progress through secondary school.

One of the gaps in the NCES student data is descriptive and longitudinal information on students in kindergarten through high school. This type of data is not currently collected by NCES longitudinal and cross-sectional data collections. To date, NCES longitudinal collections, which provide the most comprehensive look at students, have not focused on the entire span of elementary through secondary school. The center's cross-sectional surveys do not collect data that allow researchers to examine students as they progress through school.

To provide a comprehensive and reliable data set that can be used to inform policies related to the entire spectrum of kindergarten to secondary school education, NCES is conducting the ECLS-K Phase IV.

This study is being undertaken in compliance with the mandate stated in section 404 of the National Education Statistics Act of 1994 (20 U.S.C. 9003):

“The duties of the Center are to collect, analyze, and disseminate statistics and other information related to education in the United States and in other nations, including...conducting longitudinal studies, as well as regular and special surveys and data collections, necessary to report on the condition and progress of education.”



The ECLS-K was launched at a time when U.S. schools and the families, teachers, and administrators who participate in them are facing unprecedented challenges and tasks. Powerful historical forces—including immigration, differential fertility rates of cultural groups, a dramatic increase in the number of women in the workforce, and significant changes in family structure—have produced an increasingly diverse population of children entering school.

These children differ from each other and from past school-entering cohorts not only in language, cultural background, and family composition but also in the diversity in family experiences and the multiplicity of preschool educational and care arrangements. These influences have shaped children's development prior to school entry as children enter kindergarten with different skills, knowledge, and experiences. Coinciding with this increase in the diversity of students is the emergence of a broad national debate about how schools should respond to the challenges posed by the nature and extent of such diversity.

At the same time, educational leaders have mobilized substantial support for new and more ambitious goals for the nation's schools, goals that speak both to issues of equity and quality. These goals include a view of learning that goes well beyond basic skills and includes such skills as conceptual understanding and associated competence in inquiry and problem solving; establishing standards that will identify what all students should know and be able to do, including children with a wide array of learning or other disabilities; providing preprimary and after-school care; coping more effectively with children's alarming susceptibility to conduct disorders and involvement in an array of related antisocial, aggressive, and violent behaviors; and using schools as the central agents for achieving an ambitious agenda of public health and social service initiatives. These reforms have significant implications for school management, teacher training, instruction, student, teacher and school performance assessment, and school-family connections.

The ECLS-K aims to provide a data set that researchers can use to answer policy relevant research questions in elementary and secondary education, defined as kindergarten through tenth grade. Clearly the combination of an increase in the diversity of children's preparation for school and ever more ambitious goals presents schools with difficult, if not daunting, challenges. Little is known, however, about how schools are coping with these challenges or how children from different backgrounds progress through school. The ECLS-K will provide vitally needed empirical evidence to inform the ongoing debate about how to achieve the essential goals of schooling in the context of a rapidly changing society.

Approximately 23,500 children enrolled in about 1,000 kindergarten programs during the 1998-99 school year were selected for participation in the main study. NCES has collected data on this kindergarten cohort twice during the kindergarten and the first grade year (once with a subsample), once in the spring of third and fifth grade and will continue to collect data in the spring of eighth, and, possibly, the tenth grade. Data will also be collected from parents, school administrators, and teachers in an effort to discover the variations in experiences that affect learning.

To prepare for this ambitious undertaking, NCES has designed questionnaires that capture factors that influence learning and assessment instruments that measure cognitive (e.g., language and quantitative skills) growth in students from the elementary through the secondary grades. These assessments must be sensitive to the different curricula taught in schools throughout the United States. Noncognitive status must also be accurately measured, because noncognitive factors also affect how children learn. Therefore, social skills (e.g., the ability to interact with teachers and peers), emotional status (e.g., temperament, antisocial behavior), and physical characteristics (e.g., height and weight) will also be measured.

## **A2. Purposes and Uses of the Data**

The ECLS-K is intended to be a general purpose data set that is designed to serve two purposes: descriptive and explanatory. On the one hand, it will provide descriptive data on a national basis of (1) children's status at entry into kindergarten and at different points in their elementary and secondary school careers, (2) children's transition into school and into the middle and secondary grade levels, and (3) children's school progress through the tenth grade. On the other hand, it will provide a rich data set that will enable researchers to test hypotheses about how a wide range of family, school, classroom, community, and individual variables affect success in school.

Ultimately, the ECLS-K data set will be used by policymakers, educators, and researchers to reconsider the ways in which children are educated in our nation's schools and to develop more effective approaches to education. Policy issues that can be studied by the ECLS-K Phase IV include the identification of school characteristics associated with achievement; the association of parent involvement on adolescents' achievement and development; the transition of different groups of students (e.g., gender, racial and ethnic, and socioeconomic status groups) from elementary school to middle and high school. The ECLS-K Phase IV will gather information on adolescents' values and goals, social capital available to

sample members to examine factors that may influence risk and resiliency, and catalogues their schooling experiences and school programs.

### **A2.1 Eighth Grade Study**

During the spring of 2007, NCES plans to again collect data from children, parents, schools and teachers. The spring study of eighth grade students will be the seventh major point of data collection in the ECLS-K. The spring-eighth grade data collection will involve the entire fifth grade ECLS-K sample of students. Longitudinal research enables researchers to examine each child's development across the span of several years and examine how events at one time point affect experiences at the next. For example, the ECLS-K will be able to address how children's opportunities to learn in the early grades differ across classrooms and schools and what the consequences of those differences are for children's later development. The ECLS-K will also be able to address how family sociodemographic variables and processes are related to children's later success in school.

Longitudinal data will also provide information about children's growth over time, taking into account their different developmental levels early in the kindergarten year. One can expect considerable individual variability in the rate of growth during the later school years. Large differences are likely in the amount of academic knowledge that students bring to kindergarten depending on their family educational support system. These differences at school entry are often maintained if not increased in some areas (e.g., the well-known phenomena of early and late readers). Information collected during the eighth grade will be used to compare children's socioemotional and cognitive skills to not only their skills at entry into kindergarten but also at later points in time.

The data collected in the spring-eighth grade study will advance knowledge about three central topics:

1. Eighth grade data will help complete the picture of **achievement from the elementary through the end of the middle school years**. Different cognitive and socioemotional levels in the early years of schooling can be analyzed for their strength in predicting development, skills, and achievement in adolescence. In addition, school achievement (measured by comparing children's skills at varying points in time) can be linked to outside factors such as parental influences and family processes, school and classroom characteristics, and other environmental constructs.

2. Eighth grade data, used in conjunction with third and fifth grade data, will aid in describing various **types of school instruction** in the later elementary and middle grades. These data will inform researchers about the instructional practices, content coverage, time on task, and methods of providing feedback experienced by different groups of children across the elementary and middle school grades.
3. Information collected in the parent and school interviews will help researchers better understand the **interaction of school, home, and neighborhood contexts**. For example, spring-eighth grade data, together with the data collected at other time points, will allow analysts to explain how parental involvement in children's education affects school performance over the course of the elementary and middle grades. Interactions between parents and schools will also be covered.

These topics are covered in the instruments developed for the spring 2007 eighth grade follow-up study. Some of the items in each instrument are identical to items used in the fifth grade instruments. These items will enable NCES and researchers to draw longitudinal conclusions by linking the eighth grade and fifth grade kindergarten data. Some items are new, as they will be more appropriate for the eighth grade cohort.

The content of the student assessments and the questionnaires are discussed below.

**Student Assessments.** A new direct cognitive assessment will be used in the spring-eighth grade data collection effort. The assessment measures the cognitive domains of reading, mathematics, and science using grade-appropriate items that will provide identical, individual-level scale scores for all students. Some items of the eighth grade assessment are the same as those in the fifth grade instrument. While the structure of the eighth grade assessment battery differs from the previous assessments in that it will be administered in small groups using self-administered paper and pencil instruments, it will continue to be an adaptive two-stage test with a routing test followed by a specific ability level test. The cognitive assessment battery will require about 65 minutes on average to complete (including time for instructions and transitions). In addition, the assessment will include a self-administered socioemotional questionnaire and measures of the students' heights and weights.

**Student Questionnaires.** In addition to collecting data from the school administrators on the availability of various foods in schools, the U. S. Department of Agriculture is interested in conducting a special study of children's nutritional habits by collecting data on the children's food purchasing and consumption habits in school and at home. Major sources of the items include two CDC/Division of Adolescent and School Health Surveys, the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey and the School Health Programs and Policies Survey, as well as the California Children's Healthy Eating and Exercise

Practices Survey. The instrument was developed by USDA for use with the fifth grade data collections and is appropriate for use with eighth graders.

The student-level food purchasing and consumption questionnaire includes items on the purchase of various food and drinks at school (e.g., snack foods, soda) that adolescents can buy at school and the types food and drinks (e.g., fruits/vegetables, milk) consumed at home, at school, at restaurants, and other places in the last week.

The student level questionnaire will also collect information on the students' school experiences and extracurricular activities, family and peer relationships, general health and health behaviors, civic attitudes, and expectations for the future. The student questionnaire is expected to take 20 minutes to complete.

Prior to field testing, the questionnaire was pilot tested to ascertain the amount of time it would take eighth graders to complete it. Two sets of pilot timing tests were conducted with the eighth grade student questionnaire that was included in the previously submitted OMB package (October 2005). The first timing test was conducted with 7 eighth grade students (4 girls/3 boys) and found that the eighth grade questionnaire took an average of 29 minutes and 34 seconds to complete, with times ranging from about 20 minutes to over 38 minutes. With consultation from a member of the Content Review Panel and other subject matter experts, the student questionnaire was shortened and a second pilot timing test was conducted. The second timing test of the eighth grade student questionnaire included 7 girls and 2 boys. The results indicated that the revisions were effective in shortening the administration time of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade student questionnaire by six minutes. Further modifications were implemented to shorten the administration time. In addition, the Content Review Panel, an advisory group to the ECLS-K, reviewed the revised student questionnaire. Several measures in the student questionnaire were modified or replaced based on recommendations of the ECLS-K Content Review Panel prior to field testing. As a result, the student questionnaire was modified substantially from the version included in the previously submitted OMB package (October 2005) prior to field testing.

**Teacher Questionnaires.** The approach for collecting information from the teachers will be similar to that used in the fifth grade; that is the teacher most knowledgeable of the adolescent's performance in each of the core academic subjects (i.e., language arts, mathematics, and science) provides the information relevant to each student's classroom environment, instruction in the core academic subjects, and the professional background of the core academic teacher. For example, the mathematics

teacher completes a questionnaire with items specific to the mathematics instruction that the adolescent received during the school year while the language arts teacher completes a questionnaire with items specific to the language arts instruction.

Eighth grade teachers will also be asked to complete individual ratings scales for each of the sampled students in their classroom. The ratings scales will contain items about the adolescents' skills in areas of language and literacy, mathematics, and science, the adolescents' social skills and behaviors; and information about placements and special services that each adolescent may receive. These data can be used to supplement the direct assessments administered to the sampled eighth graders. In doing so, a picture of adolescents' skills over time will begin to develop and tentative conclusions can be drawn about adolescents' progression in school.

Adolescents' special education teachers/service providers will also be asked to complete questionnaires for students with disabilities, defined as having an Individual Education Program (IEP). These questions will be useful in examining special education curricula and the services being received by adolescents with disabilities.

**Parent Interviews.** A parent interview will be administered to all parents/guardians of the children in the ECLS-K study. The parent instrument will ask about family structure, family literacy practices, and parental involvement in school. Parents will also be asked to report on their children's level of physical functioning, health, and disability status. Because it will have been three years since family information was collected, the parent interview will also include updating the household composition, family income, education levels, and other demographic indicators. The parent interview was not field tested because it includes the same types of questions that have been fielded in the earlier rounds of the ECLS-K as well as other NCES studies (e.g., NHES, ELS:2002, NELS:88).

**School Administrator Questionnaire.** The questionnaire will be completed by the school administrator in the school attended by the students in the study. The School Administrator Questionnaire includes a broad range of questions about the school setting, policies, and practices, at the school level and in the eighth grade, and questions about the principal and the teaching staff. These items will help researchers understand the state and nature of students attending today's schools throughout the nation. Comparisons can be made between students attending various types of schools, including public, private, and parochial and rural, urban, and suburban schools. In addition, the school administrator will be asked to provide with basic information about the school, including grade levels, school type (public or private),

length of school year, and attendance record-keeping practices. Data from this questionnaire can be merged with data from the student and teacher questionnaires and student assessments. Linking these data will allow researchers to determine the degree by which educational outcomes of various student groups are associated with the differences in the schools that the students attend. The questionnaire is similar to that administered in the previous ECLS-K data collections. Consequently, it was not included in the spring 2006 field test.

**A2.2 Spring 2006 Field Test.** In spring 2006, a large-scale field test was conducted to test the student direct assessments and questionnaires, teacher questionnaires, and data collection procedures prior to the national study. A purposive sample of middle and high schools representing different levels of urbanicity from 40 school districts across 5 states (MD, VA, PA, NC, & OH) was selected to participate in the field test. Of the 40 school districts approached, 19 (47%) refused to participate. There were 164 schools with 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms in the 21 participating school districts. Of these, 81 (49%) refused to participate. An additional 31 schools were unable to participate because they did not provide school information before the deadline of the school recruitment phase of the field test. This resulted in a purposive sample of fifty-two schools.

The sampled schools included public, private, and Catholic in districts and dioceses not participating in the national study. A sample of approximately 3,900 students (1,800 eighth grade students and 2,100 tenth grade students) was selected purposively to participate in the field test. All participating students completed a direct assessment that included a reading subtest and either a math or science subtest. In addition, the heights and weights of the eighth graders were measured to evaluate the need for privacy screens during the measurement. Eighth grade students were also asked to complete a 20-minute questionnaire on various topics including their experiences in school, their activities, friends, and diet.

During the spring 2006 field test, student assessment data from 1,525 eighth grade students and 1,838 tenth grade students were collected (about 15 percent and 14 percent, respectively of the field test participants were not assessed because they were either absent on the assessment day or did not have parent consent). These data are currently being processed and analyzed and will be used to finalize the student assessments for the spring 2007 eighth grade and spring 2009 tenth grade data collections.

One-hundred and seventy-four eighth grade teachers also participated in the spring 2006 field test. Teachers completed a questionnaire on their classroom environment, instruction practices in the core academic subjects, and professional background. Teachers also completed individual ratings scales on a student in their classroom. The ratings scales contained items about the adolescents' skills in areas of language and literacy, mathematics, or science (depending on the class the teacher taught), the student's social skills and behaviors; and information about educational placements and special services that the student might receive.

In addition, the field test included an experiment to test the feasibility of offering eighth grade students and teachers the opportunity to complete the questionnaires via the Internet. Web versions of the questionnaires were made available on a secure web site where students and teachers accessed with a unique user name and password. A subset of eighth grade students participated in the student questionnaire web experiment; approximately 870 students were assigned to complete the student questionnaire on the web, while approximately 760 students were assigned to complete it on paper. All 174 participating eighth grade teachers were assigned to complete the questionnaires via the web (n=58), paper copy (n=59), or had a choice of either web or paper (n=57).

Eighth grade students and teachers participating in the field test were asked to complete a short debriefing questionnaire on their opinions of their participation in the field test, such as the quality and appropriateness of the field test materials, the effectiveness of the monetary incentives, and their opinion on the mode in which they were asked to complete the questionnaires (i.e., web or paper). Eighth grade students that completed the student questionnaire were asked about the mode in which they completed the questionnaire, the time it took to complete the questionnaire, the clarity of the items. Eighth grade students that didn't complete the student questionnaire were asked why they did not complete the questionnaire and what could be done to encourage them to complete it. The teacher debriefing questionnaire asked similar questions to the student debriefing questionnaire.

Based on preliminary results of the field test data, students can complete the questionnaire in the spring 2007 eighth-grade data collection. Participating field test students reported that the questionnaire took an average of 21 minutes to complete. They generally provided answers to all questionnaire items and reported that the questions were not difficult to understand. The student questionnaire proposed for the spring 2007 eighth grade data collection is included in the appendix.



The results of the field test also suggested that the student questionnaire would yield a higher response rate if it were offered in paper form. Only 106 of the 870 (12%) students completed the student questionnaire over the Internet, while almost 500 of the 760 (66%) students completed and mailed in the paper version of the questionnaire (see table A-1). The most frequent reasons web-assigned students gave for failing to complete the questionnaire were computer or Internet connection problems, such as computer “crashing,” loss of Internet connection, too slow Internet connection, or misplacement of user name, password, or URL address. As a result, the recommended approach for administering the student questionnaire using a self-administered paper form during the assessment session for the spring 2007 eighth grade data collection.

Table A-1.—Number of Completed Student Questionnaires by Method of Completion

	Method of Completion		Totals
	Web	Paper	
Student Questionnaires	106	497	603

Based on preliminary results of the field test data, the teacher questionnaires are also feasible to administer in the spring 2007 eighth grade data collection. Participating field test teachers reported that the questionnaire took an average of 20 minutes to complete. They reported that the questions were appropriate for the classes they taught and were not difficult to understand. The teacher questionnaires proposed for the spring 2007 eighth grade data collection are included the appendix.

Similar to the results found with the student questionnaire, the field test also suggested that the teacher questionnaire would yield a higher response rate if it were offered in paper form. Across the four questionnaires, only 93 teacher questionnaires were completed over the Internet, while 189 paper teacher questionnaires were completed and mailed (see table A-2). The completion rate for teachers who were assigned to the web (79% for the teacher background questionnaire) was similar to that for teachers who were assigned to paper (81% for the teacher background questionnaire). However, differences were seen for the teachers who were given a choice of completing the questionnaires on either paper or the web (n=57). Of these teachers, only 7 percent completed the teacher background on the web, while 81 percent completed it on paper. Of the teachers who were given a choice and completed a debriefing questionnaire, 77 percent reported that it was easier or more convenient to complete the questionnaire on paper. As a result, the teacher questionnaire will be administered in paper form for the spring 2007 eighth grade data collection.

Table A-2.—Number of Completed Teacher Questionnaires by Method of Completion

Teacher Questionnaires	Method of Completion		Totals
	Web	Paper	
Background	50	94	144
English	18	36	54
Math	12	34	46
Science	13	25	38
Totals	93	189	282

Furthermore, feedback from students and teachers who participated in the spring 2006 ECLS-K field test indicates that a monetary incentive is important to secure participation. Sixty-eight percent (197 out of 289) of students reported on the field test debriefing questionnaire that the \$30 incentive affected their decision to participate in the field test. Eight-nine percent (257 out of 289) of students reported that they still would have participated if the incentive was only \$15. For teachers, 43% (57 out of 134) reported that the \$30 incentive affected their decision to participate in the field test. In addition, 77% of the teachers (101 out of 132) a monetary incentive would be important to secure their participation if they were asked to complete questionnaires on multiple children.

**A3. Use of Improved Information Technology**

Where feasible, available technology will be used to improve data quality and reduce respondent and school burden.

The ECLS-K parent will be conducted using computer-assisted interviewing (CAI). Using CAI will increase data collection efficiency by permitting data preloads, on-line editing, and complex question branching—all of which also reduce respondent burden with faster interviews and eliminate the need to recontact respondents for missing data. Field interviewers will conduct interviews with parents

without telephones by making in-person visits to complete interviews. The CAI system has important features that will improve the quality of the data and reduce the burden on respondents, as follows:

- **Initial Contact:** The CAI system will guide the ECLS-K field interviewer in making contact with the parent at the address provided or with the adolescent at the school and will offer prompts to identify the correct respondent.
- **Skip Patterns:** The CAI system automatically guide interviewers through the complex skip patterns in the parent interviews, reducing respondent burden and the potential for interviewer error and shortening the questionnaire administration time. This will be especially important when interviewing parents of twins, where a large number of questions must be repeated for the second child.
- **Copying Responses:** The CAI system will be programmed to copy responses from one instrument to another to prevent unnecessary repetition of questions and to aid in respondents' recall. For example, information from the same interview that is provided by the respondent earlier in the interview may be useful later in the interview and this can be displayed on the screen at the relevant section to assist the respondent. Finally, and most importantly, information from the previous wave of data collection can be copied to the subsequent wave and verified, eliminating the need to collect the data again.
- **Time Intervals:** The CAI system also provides automated time and date prompts that are very useful in longitudinal studies to assist respondents in remembering specific time periods. In the current wave, the interview can also provide the specific time frame for the interval between the previous and the current wave of data collection, to help respondents recollect information without repeating what they had given at the previous data collection period.
- **Receipt Control:** The CAI system will provide for automatic receipt control in a flexible manner that will be used to produce status reports that allow ongoing monitoring of the survey's progress.

The use of a CAI system for the ECLS-K is critical because of the difficult skip patterns that are created with complex survey instruments and because of the longitudinal nature of the data collection in which the same respondent is interviewed over repeated time periods. Each subsequent data collection point will be able to make use of information obtained at an earlier data collection, thereby reducing respondent burden and interview time. Without CAI, these would be difficult instruments to administer over repeated measurement periods, and respondent burden would be increased.

The contractor will also use a computer-based data management system for managing the sample. The sample management system uses data transmission and networking technology to maintain timely information on respondents in the sample, including contact, tracking, and case completion data. This system will be particularly important as children move from school to school. The use of sample management technology will maximize tracking efforts and hence the response rates.

#### **A4. Efforts to Identify Duplication**

The ECLS-K will not be duplicative of other studies. The kindergarten through fifth grade data collections have focused attention on the educational programs and early childhood experiences of children and on the ways in which children's health, family, and school experiences interact to affect their chances of succeeding in school. The eighth grade through tenth grade data collections will bridge the gap between studies of early childhood and studies of adolescent growth. It will allow researchers and policy makers to examine the continuity of the growth of a cohort of children and relate their growth to variations of their home and schooling experiences.

Furthermore, while a few studies have focused on children's early learning environments (e.g., the Office of Policy and Planning's National Transition Study) or on understanding the structure of elementary schools (e.g., Schools and Staffing Survey) or have sought to evaluate specific programs (The Longitudinal Evaluation of School Change and Performance; Chapter 1: Prospects Study), they either do not provide the longitudinal student-level data that are needed to study the relationships between the school experience and student outcomes and growth or are concerned primarily with only certain segments of the student population.

Studies of adolescents, such as the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS: 88), the Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS: 2002), and the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), can be used to examine adolescents' experiences and transitions in the middle and high school years. While the study of children born to women in the National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth (NLSY) can provide information on children's transition from elementary to middle school, but to do so researchers must compile information on children born in several different years (e.g., Magnuson, 2005) and, even then, the information available is more limited. It does not collect information from children's teachers or schools, for example.

A literature search was conducted to identify and review research studies with the same study purpose and goals as the ECLS-K. To be included in the search the research had to be (1) a survey-based study of a fairly large population, (2) longitudinal in design, and (3) focused on children's cognitive development in the elementary, middle, and secondary grades. Although similar studies were found, they were generally confined to limited geographic areas (e.g., Baltimore, Maryland, and Greensboro, North Carolina), and related studies conducted on the national level (e.g., Prospects, Children of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth [NLSY Child Supplement]) were not based on probability samples of kindergartners. Prospects began with first graders and targeted Title 1 recipients. NLSY79's Child Supplement is based on the children of female sample members of a household-based 1979 sample of 14- to 21-year-olds. NELS: 88 and ELS: 2002 begin with students in the middle and high school grades.

#### **A5. Collection of Data from Small Businesses**

Private, not-for-profit, and proprietary elementary and middle schools may be drawn into the sample. To reduce the perceived burden, the contractor will provide assistance to these facilities as needed. These proprietary and nonprofit facilities will also benefit from the study's other burden-reducing strategies (e.g., instruction kits, toll-free help lines, and prepaid business return envelopes), which were designed for all types of facilities.

#### **A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection**

One of the main goals of the ECLS-K is to measure change in children's cognitive growth and noncognitive status, as well as changes in the contextual variables (i.e., school, classroom, family, and community factors) that affect growth. To measure change, baseline information must be collected and compared to data collected in periodic followups that are linked to the rates of change for school children and their environments.

For the kindergartners, beginning-of-the-year data collection was needed to obtain baseline data on children prior to their exposure to the influences of the school. Through direct and indirect assessments, the baseline study provided measures of the skills, attributes, and knowledge of children as they entered school for the first time. The data collected at the end of the year were used to examine changes in children after they have experienced nearly a year of kindergarten. A similar approach was

used in first grade. In fall of first grade, followups were administered to children in 30 percent subsample of the schools. This data collection was used to examine changes between the end of kindergarten and the beginning of first grade, after a summer break. In the spring of first grade, followup instruments were administered to the full sample, as well as any children who were added to the sample via freshening (see section B1.1 for more information on freshening). This data collection was used to examine changes between the end of kindergarten and the end of first grade.

Additional data collections were completed in the spring of third and fifth grades. After fifth grade, followup instruments will be administered in the spring of eighth grade and, possibly, in the spring of the tenth grade. This frequency of data collection is linked to the rate of change that is expected for children of this age and the desire to capture information about children as critical events and transitions are occurring, rather than measuring these events retrospectively. Without data collection followups, the study of children's cognitive and social development through the secondary school is impossible.

**A7. Special Circumstances**

No special circumstances apply to this information collection.

**A8. Public Comment and Consultations Outside the Agency**

NCES has sought consultation with a range of outside agencies over the life of the ECLS-K. A brief chronology of these efforts follows.

**Consultations with Federal Agencies.** During the early development of the ECLS-K (prior to design contract award), NCES staff met with representatives from a wide range of Federal agencies with an interest in the care and well-being of children. The goal of this activity was to identify policy and research issues and data needs. See table A-3 for the representatives consulted.

Table A-3.—Federal agency consultants

---

Diane Schilder Government Accounting Office	Tom Bradshaw Doug Herbert National Endowment for the Arts
Cindy Prince Emily Wurtz National Education Goals Panel	Jeffrey Thomas National Endowment for the Humanities
Andy Hartman National Institute for Literacy	Patricia McKee U.S. Dept. of Education OESE Compensatory Education Programs
Mary Queitzsch Larry Suter National Science Foundation	Cathie L. Martin U.S. Dept. of Education OIE
Michael Ruffner Bayla White Brian Harris-Kotijen Office of Management and the Budget	Scott Brown Louis Danielson Glinda Hill Lisa Holden-Pitt Kristen Lauer Marlene Simon-Burroughs U.S. Dept. of Education OSEP
John Endahl Jeff Wilde Joanne Guthrie Victor Oliviera U.S. Dept. of Agriculture	Lisa A. Gorove U.S. Dept. of Education OUS, Budget Service, ESVA

---

Table A-3.—Federal agency consultants (continued)

---

Don Hernandez U.S. Dept. of Commerce Bureau of the Census Marriage and Family Statistics	Elois Scott U.S. Dept. of Education OUS, PES, ESED
Tim D’Emillio U.S. Dept. of Education OBEMLA	Richard Dean U.S. Dept. of Education OVAE, Adult Literacy
Naomi Karp Dave Malouf Ivor Pritchard Marsha Silverberg U.S. Dept. of Education IES	Jeff Evans Sarah Friedman Christine Bachrach Peggy McCardle U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services NICHD Center for Population Research
Pia Divine Esther Kresh U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Administration for Children, Youth, and Families	Martha Moorehouse Anne Wolf U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Office of Assistant Secretary for Planning & Evaluation Children and Youth Policy
Gerry Hendershot John Kiley Michael Kogan U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services NCHS	Katrina Baum Bureau of Justice Statistics Department of Justice
Lisa Hudson U.S. Dept. of Education NCES	

---



**Other Organizations Consulted.** After the design contract was awarded, NCES and its contractor consulted several other organizations (see table A-4) that have an interest in the care, well-being, and education of young children. The goal of this activity was again to identify policy and research issues and data needs.

Table A-4.—Other organization consultants

Mary Jo Lynch, Ph.D. American Library Association Office of Research and Statistics	Susan Bredekamp Barbara Willer National Association for the Education of Young Children
Keith W. Mielkek, Ph.D. Children’s Television Workshop	June Million Sally McConnell
Lynson Bobo Project Associate Resource Center on Educational Equity Council of Chief State School Officers	Louanne Wheeler National Association of Elementary School Principals
Evelyn Moore Erica Tollett National Black Child Development Institute	Thomas Schultz Director, Center for Education Services for Young Learners National Association of State Boards of Education

**Organizations Funding Supplemental Studies to the ECLS-K.** Several of the early government consultations have resulted in interagency agreements funding supplemental studies.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Services and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs are continuing to support supplemental and design enhancements to the ECLS-K. The USDA Economic Research Services is funding data collection from children regarding dietary habits, parents and teachers regarding children’s physical activity and families food sufficiency status, as well as measuring children’s height and weight at each data collection point. The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs is funding the development and administration of a questionnaire for special education teachers about sampled children with disabilities they teach. The U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Services; Office of Educational Research and Improvement; and Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs contributed to the study to collect information on and maintain the sample sizes of low-income children and language minority children. The National Institute of Child and Human Development contributed to the study to collect information on the skills and knowledge of a sample of children in fall-first grade.

**Technical Work Group.** In preparation for Phase IV, NCES assembled a work group to provide review and comment on the issues related to the identification of issues to guide development of the survey instruments. The ECLS-K Technical Work Group for contextual issues (see table A-5) met in January 26, 2005, in Washington, DC.

Table A-5.—Phase IV Technical Work Group member list

---

J. Lawrence Aber New York University	Karl Alexander Johns Hopkins University
Lynn Addington American University	David Burkam University of Michigan
Theresa Austin University of Massachusetts-Amherst	Kristin Moore Child Trends
George Farkas Penn State University	Judith Torney-Purta University of Maryland, College
Martha Thurlow University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration Park	Russell Rumberger University of California, Santa Barbara

---

**Content Review Panel.** In addition to the Technical Review Panel, a Content Review Panel was convened to review each of the direct assessment domains for curricular relevance and item validity (see table A-6). The ECLS-K Content Review Panels discussed each domain of the direct assessment domains over conference calls in late January 2006. The Science CRP conference call took place on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006; the Mathematics CRP conference call took place on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006; the Reading/Language Arts CRP conference call took place on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006; and the Social-Emotional CRP conference call took place on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

Table A-6.—Phase IV Content Review Panel member list

<u>Mathematics</u>	<u>Science</u>
Hyman Bass	Russ Conner
University of Michigan	Cranbrook Kingswood School, MI
Andy Porter	Patricia Dung
University of Madison-Wisconsin	Los Angeles Educational Partnership/Los Angeles
Stephen Pape	Unified School District
Ohio State University	Christine O’Sullivan
Sally Atkins-Burnett	Consultant for NAEP, TIMSS, etc.
University of Toledo	Sally Atkins-Burnett
	University of Toledo
<u>Reading/Language Arts</u>	<u>Socioemotional</u>
Vera Gutierrez-Clellan	Sally Atkins-Burnett
San Diego State University	University of Toledo
Yvonne Goddard	Hill Walker
University of Michigan	University of Oregon
Michael Kamil	Kathryn. Wentzel
Stanford University	University of Maryland
Sally Atkins Burnett	Paula Allen-Meares
University of Toledo	University of Michigan

#### **A9. Payments to Respondents**

Of vital importance to longitudinal studies is obtaining high response rates. Given the repeated data collection periods and variety of respondents, maintaining high response rates and minimizing sample attrition are important factors in the success of a longitudinal study such as the ECLS-K. It is more critical for the eighth grade follow-up of the ECLS-K, because of the purposive subsampling of movers in the previous rounds to contain the costs associated with following all movers and the change in schools from elementary to secondary. Obtaining high response rates for all three groups of respondents, students, parents, and school staff, will be a challenge. Although parents and students will be familiar with the ECLS-K from their previous participation, most schools and teachers will not be familiar with the study. Even for parents and students, 3 years will have passed since they were last interviewed. Moreover, the students now that they are adolescents may be less compliant than they were as grade school children. For these reasons, incentives are expected to be an important element in obtaining target response rates for Phase IV data collection activities.

Existing research suggests that the use of incentives can be especially effective in longitudinal studies with ongoing burden. The “Symposium on Providing Incentives to Survey Respondents”, sponsored by OMB and the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS) held in October 1992, considered a number of incentive-related issues including their influence on response rates and nonresponse bias. The symposium participants recommended that OMB “seriously consider the use of incentives” for surveys that targeted difficult respondent populations, including surveys that are part of longitudinal panels. The use of incentives can increase response rates and reduce the number of contacts required to produce a complete thereby resulting in cost savings to projects.

**Incentive Plan.** Parents will receive a token \$2.00 for returning a consent form. In previous rounds parents have been enthusiastic about the study and a relatively small incentive will likely be effective. Students, teachers, and schools, however, must be convinced that the study has important and worthwhile goals and that the data about the students will make a significant contribution to the understanding of early childhood education. Obtaining high response rates and minimizing sample attrition is an overriding goal of longitudinal studies. Maintaining the high cooperation rates achieved in the spring 2004 wave of data collection is of the utmost importance for ensuring that the sample sizes for the eighth grade data collection are of sufficiently large in size to study various groups of students (e.g., racial and ethnic groups, socioeconomic level, etc.). Because some reluctance on the part of students is expected, students will receive a \$15 incentive after the student questionnaire and direct assessments are completed. Providing incentives to adolescents for participating in surveys has been successfully used in other studies such as ELS: 2002 to ensure high cooperation rates. Indeed the use of incentives for sample members in ELS: 2002 provides clear evidence of their effectiveness. Both in an experiment conducted during the first follow-up field test and during the national study where some schools did not allow the payment of cash incentives, students receiving cash incentives had significantly higher response rates than students who did not receive incentives.

While NCES will strive to persuade teachers of the importance of the study, NCES also recognizes that unusually high levels of burden on teachers could have an adverse impact on participation rates. In addition to completing questionnaires, teachers are asked to be data collectors, recording their observations of their eighth grade students on teacher rating scale forms. On average, teachers will spend approximately 20 minutes completing rating scale forms. This estimate is based on the assumption that each rating scale form will take 10 minutes to complete and that teachers will average one to three students (10 minutes per two students per teacher equals 20 minutes or 0.33 hours).

Without remuneration for their role as data collectors, ECLS-K teachers would be subject to unusually high levels of burden. Given the unusual burden of the ECLS-K and experience in other school-based, longitudinal studies with high institutional and respondent burden, NCES knows that remuneration enhances response rates. Therefore, NCES recommends remuneration as an effective tool for helping teachers understand that NCES appreciates their role as data collector. It is for the role of data collector that NCES will remunerate participating teachers. During the spring 2007 eighth grade data collection, teachers will receive \$25 with the questionnaires they are being asked to complete. This is the approach used in Grade 5. The grade 5 experience during Phase III demonstrates the importance of respondent incentives for teachers. Response rates for teacher questionnaires increased from the 62 to 63 percent range achieved in third grade to 78 to 80 percent in fifth grade. These rates were higher than in any previous years of the ECLS-K and are likely attributable to the higher incentives employed in fifth grade. Furthermore, feedback from teachers who participated in the spring 2006 ECLS-K field test indicates that for 75% of the teachers a monetary incentive is important to secure teacher participation if teachers are asked to complete questionnaires on multiple children. The school administrator questionnaire is viewed as burdensome by administrators and requires significant followup to achieve acceptable response rates. To encourage completion, thereby increasing response rates; school administrators will also receive \$25 with their questionnaire.

Schools will be offered an honorarium depending on the number of sampled students in the school as burden increases with the number of students in the school. The honorarium will be mailed to the school after all data collection activities are completed in the spring. Schools with one to four students will be offered \$50 honorarium; schools with five to ten students will be offered \$75 honorarium; and, schools with ten or more students will be offered a \$100 honorarium.

In the ECLS-K, payment to respondents is primarily to defray the time and expense required by their participation in the study. With the exceptions of remuneration for teachers and school personnel complying with their role of data collector, the ECLS-K will comply with the guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.6.

In summary, the remuneration plan for the ECLS-K study of eighth graders is as follows:

1. Parents will receive a token \$2 with the advance package.
2. Students will receive \$15 upon completion of the student interview and direct assessments.

3. Teachers and school administrators will receive \$25 in their questionnaire package.
4. Schools will receive a \$50, \$75, or \$100 honorarium, depending on the number of sampled students enrolled, after all spring data collection activities are completed.

**A10. Assurance of Confidentiality**

The ECLS-K Phase IV plan for ensuring the confidentiality of the project conforms with the following federal regulations; the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a), Privacy Act Regulations (34 CFR Part 5b), the Hawkins-Stafford Amendments of 1988 (P.L.100-297, the National Education Statistics Act of 1994, the U.S. Patriot Act of 2001, the Computer Security Act of 1987, NCES Restricted Use Data Procedures Manual, and the NCES Standards and Policies.

**All respondents** who participate in research under this clearance will be informed that the information they provide is and will be kept confidential and that their participation is voluntary. All respondents receive an introductory letter that explains NCES's and the contractor's adherence to confidentiality (see Exhibit A-1). The parent consent form also includes an explanation of NCES's and the contractor's adherence to confidentiality (see Exhibit A-2). This responsibility to provide confidentiality will also be conveyed to state, district, and other school officials at the time their cooperation is sought.

During any personal or telephone interviewing, respondents will be asked if they received the introductory letter. If the respondent does not recall the letter, the interviewer will summarize the key elements of the confidentiality assurances; namely, no data will be released that links the respondent to his/her responses; participation is voluntary; and there is federal statute that provides protection from disclosure (42 USC 242m, section 308d).

**All data collection staff** must read and sign the contractor's professional ethics statement as well as the Affidavit of Nondisclosure required by NCES. In addition, all contractor staff including data collection staff with access to individual identifying data are required to submit personal screening documents in compliance with ACS Directive (OM:5-101).

## Exhibit A-1. Advance Letter to Parents

Dear parent/guardian

As you may remember, you and your child have been participating in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 (ECLS-K) since your child was in kindergarten. The ECLS-K is sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education's, Institute of Education Sciences and conducted by Westat. The early rounds of the ECLS-K have been so informative that NCES would like to follow the ECLS-K children into middle and high school.

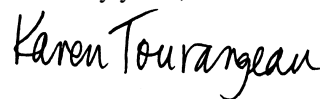
The study is currently gearing up to follow the sampled children for another round of data collection in the 2006-2007 school year. During this round, the children will be assessed at their schools to measure their academic growth. They will also be asked to complete a short questionnaire that asks them about topics such as schoolwork, participation in school activities, and snacks available at school. Their English and math or science teachers will be asked to provide information about their classroom behaviors and performance. As in previous rounds, we will call you for a telephone interview.

It is important that each and every child continue to take part so that the study will accurately describe the experiences of kindergarteners in the United States as they grow and move through elementary school and into middle and high school. The study to date has been very successful because of the cooperation and participation of the children, parents, schools, and teachers. Enclosed is a newsletter with information about the study, as well as some interesting study findings. You can find further information and results from the study at the government's web site at <http://nces.ed.gov/ecls/kindergarten.asp>.

Before we can proceed with the study, we need your permission for your child to continue to participate in the ECLS-K. Please complete the enclosed permission form, including telling us the school your child will attend in the fall, and return it to us in the enclosed envelope. All information collected during the study is confidential. No information about an individual parent or child will be included in any reports. No names will be released in any public files or reports. Since the school will not get any of the information about your child, participation will not affect your child's grades or progress in school.

You and your child are very important to the success of the ECLS-K. If you need to get in touch with us, please call us toll-free at 1-800-750-3517, fax us at 1-800-750-3574, or send an email to [ecls@ed.gov](mailto:ecls@ed.gov).

Sincerely yours,



Karen Tourangeau  
Project Director

«C\_ID»

Exhibit A-2. Parent Consent Form

**Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class 1998-99 (ECLS-K)**

**Parent Consent Form**

You and your child are being asked to take part in the newest round of data collection for the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class 1998-99 (ECLS-K). The ECLS-K, sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences and conducted by Westat, follows a nationally representative sample of children from kindergarten into middle and high school.

The collection of information in this study is authorized by Public Law 107-279 Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part C, Sec. 151(b) and Sec. 153(a). Participation is voluntary. Two dollars for you is enclosed with this mailing. Your child will receive a check for \$15.00 as a thank-you for participating. You may skip questions you do not wish to answer; however, we hope that you will answer as many questions as you can. Your responses are protected from disclosure by federal statute (PL 107-279 Title I, Part C, Sec. 183). All responses that relate to or describe identifiable characteristics of individuals may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose, unless otherwise compelled by law. Data will be combined to produce statistical reports. No individual data that links your name, address, telephone number, or identification number with your responses will be included in the statistical reports. If you have any questions or concerns about confidentiality or your rights in this research study, call Elvira Germino-Hausken at 1-202-502-7352.

I have read the letter and the information above. I freely agree to take part, and allow my child to continue to participate, in the ECLS-K study in middle and high school. I know that data about me, my child, and my family will be released only as described.

NAME OF CHILD:

ID:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent/guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Print your name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
First

\_\_\_\_\_  
Middle

\_\_\_\_\_  
Last

**SCHOOL INFORMATION**

Please provide the information below about the school your child will attend in the 2006-2007 school year.

SCHOOL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NUMBER: (       ) \_\_\_\_\_



**After data collection**, confidentiality is fully protected through the use of password-protected data files and the coding of responses so that no one individual respondent can be identified (specifically or by deduction) through reported variables in the public access data files. NCES monitors the conduct of the contractor to ensure that the confidentiality of the data is not breached. A separate locator database for the sample members is maintained in a secure location.

In addition, the contractor will conduct a thorough confidentiality analysis of the ECLS-K data when preparing the public-use files. This analysis will ensure that NCES has fully complied with the confidentiality provisions contained in PL 100-297. To protect the privacy of respondents as required by PL 100-297, respondents with high disclosure risk will be identified and data that can potentially be used to identify those respondents will be masked.

All contractor staff members working on the ECLS-K project or having access to the data (including monitoring of interviews and assessments) are required to sign the NCES Affidavit of Nondisclosure (exhibit A-3) and a Confidentiality Pledge (exhibit A-4). Notarized affidavits are kept on file by the contractor, and documentation is submitted to NCES quarterly.

During the course of data collection, interviewers will be equipped with laptop computers, which store any necessary preloaded data as well as the information collected during the course of the interviewing for that round. The interviewers will be instructed to keep the computers and any hard-copy case materials in a secure place in their homes when they are not being used. When the interviewer is out working, she is instructed to keep all materials and the computer in her possession at all times. When driving a car to or from her appointments, the computer and all materials will be locked out of sight, so as not to provide an inviting opportunity for burglary. The interviewers will be instructed both to transmit the case and to mail the hard-copy materials on the same day the case is completed.

The laptop configuration will also be designed with security and confidentiality considerations in mind. In order to access any of the applications, the interviewer must enter a project-specific password and her interviewer identification, both of which are checked against encrypted versions of the same data; if the password or interviewer identification is entered incorrectly, the interviewer is “locked out” of the application. In addition to the database design described above, in which data identifying persons or places are kept in separate files from the survey data items, all data files will be encrypted on the computer hard disk.

In the event of a hardware failure in the field, the home office will swap the interviewer's laptop. The contractor will maintain a supply of "hot spares," i.e., laptop computers loaded with all necessary ECLS-K software, which require only the specific interviewer's identification and assignment before being sent out.

All mailing—of laptops, hard-copy case materials, or diskettes—will be done using Federal Express, which has a sophisticated tracking system designed to locate any misdirected packages.

Finally, all CAPI applications will have an audit trail of the case data on the hard disk. This is so that if the main data files are corrupted, the data can be reconstructed from the audit trails.

#### **A11. Sensitive Questions**

The ECLS-K is a voluntary study, and no persons are required to respond to the questionnaires or to participate in the assessments. In addition, respondents may decline to answer any question in the instruments. This voluntary aspect of the survey is clearly stated in the advance letter mailed to respondents and the study brochure, and it is stressed in interviewer training.

The following describes the general nature of the eighth grade instruments.

**School Administrator Questionnaires.** These are not of a sensitive nature and should not pose a problem to respondents.

Exhibit A-3. NCES Affidavit of Nondisclosure

**AFFIDAVIT OF NONDISCLOSURE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Job Title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date of Assignment to NCES Project)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Organizations, State or local agency or instrumentality)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(NCES Database or File Containing Individually Identifiable Information)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that when given access to the subject NCES database or file, I will not

- (i) use or reveal any individually identifiable information furnished, acquired, retrieved or assembled by me or others, under the provisions of Section 406 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1221e-1) for any purpose other than statistical purposes specified in the NCES survey, project or contract;
- (ii) make any disclosure or publication whereby a sample unit or survey respondent could be identified or the data furnished by or related to any particular person under this section can be identified; or
- (iii) permit anyone other than the individuals authorized by the Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics to examine the individual reports.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

(The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of not more than \$250,000 (under 18 U.S.C. 3559 and 3571) or imprisonment for not more than 5 years, or both. The word "swear" should be stricken out wherever it appears when a person elects to affirm the affidavit rather than to swear to it.)

State of \_\_\_\_\_

County of \_\_\_\_\_

Sworn and subscribed to me before a Notary Public in and for the aforementioned County and State this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Notary Public)

## Exhibit A-4. Confidentiality Pledge

### EMPLOYEE OR CONTRACTOR'S ASSURANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF SURVEY DATA

#### Statement of Policy

{Contractor} is firmly committed to the principle that the confidentiality of individual data obtained through {Contractor} surveys must be protected. This principle holds whether or not any specific guarantee of confidentiality was given at time of interview (or self-response), or whether or not there are specific contractual obligations to the client. When guarantees have been given or contractual obligations regarding confidentiality have been entered into, they may impose additional requirements which are to be adhered to strictly.

#### Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality

1. All {Contractor} employees and field workers shall sign this assurance of confidentiality. This assurance may be superseded by another assurance for a particular project.
2. Field workers shall keep completely confidential the names of respondents, all information or opinions collected in the course of interviews, and any information about respondents learned incidentally during field work. Field workers shall exercise reasonable caution to prevent access by others to survey data in their possession.
3. Unless specifically instructed otherwise for a particular project, an employee or field worker, upon encountering a respondent or information pertaining to a respondent that s/he knows personally, shall immediately terminate the activity and contact her/his supervisor for instructions.
4. Survey data containing personal identifiers in {Contractor} offices shall be kept in a locked container or a locked room when not being used each working day in routine survey activities. Reasonable caution shall be exercised in limiting access to survey data to only those persons who are working on the specific project and who have been instructed in the applicable confidentiality requirements for that project.

Where survey data have been determined to be particularly sensitive by the Corporate Officer in charge of the project or the President of {Contractor}, such survey data shall be kept in locked containers or in a locked room except when actually being used and attended by a staff member who has signed this pledge.

5. Ordinarily, serial numbers shall be assigned to respondents prior to creating a machine-processible record and identifiers such as name, address, and Social Security number shall not, ordinarily, be a part of the machine record. When identifiers are part of the machine data record, {Contractor's Manager of Data Processing} shall be responsible for determining adequate confidentiality measures in consultation with the project director. When a separate file is set up containing identifiers or linkage information which could be used to identify data records, this separate file shall be kept locked up when not actually being used each day in routine survey activities.
6. When records with identifiers are to be transmitted to another party, such as for keypunching or key taping, the other party shall be informed of these procedures and shall sign an Assurance of Confidentiality form.
7. Each project director shall be responsible for ensuring that all personnel and contractors involved in handling survey data on a project are instructed in these procedures throughout the period of survey performance. When there are specific contractual obligations to the client regarding confidentiality, the project director shall develop additional procedures to comply with these obligations and shall instruct field staff, clerical staff, consultants, and any other persons who work on the project in these additional procedures. At the end of the period of survey performance, the project director shall arrange for proper storage or disposition of survey data including any particular contractual requirements for storage or disposition. When required to turn over survey data to our clients, we must provide proper safeguards to ensure confidentiality up to the time of delivery.
8. Project directors shall ensure that survey practices adhere to the provisions of the U.S. Privacy Act of 1974 with regard to surveys of individuals for the Federal Government. Project directors must ensure that procedures are established in each survey to inform each respondent of the authority for the survey, the purpose and use of the survey, the voluntary nature of the survey (where applicable) and the effects on the respondents, if any, of not responding.

#### PLEDGE

I hereby certify that I have carefully read and will cooperate fully with the above procedures. I will keep completely confidential all information arising from surveys concerning individual respondents to which I gain access. I will not discuss, disclose, disseminate, or provide access to survey data and identifiers except as authorized by {Contractor}. In addition, I will comply with any additional procedures established by {Contractor} for a particular contract. I will devote my best efforts to ensure that there is compliance with the required procedures by personnel whom I supervise. I understand that violation of this pledge is sufficient grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal. I also understand that violation of the privacy rights of individuals through such unauthorized discussion, disclosure, dissemination, or access may make me subject to criminal or civil penalties. I give my personal pledge that I shall abide by this assurance of confidentiality.

---

Signature

**Teacher Rating Scale Forms.** This information could be regarded as sensitive, because the teacher is asked to assess each sampled student's ability to exercise self-control, interact with others, resolve conflict, and participate in group activities. Other questions ask about the student's problem behaviors and his/her learning disposition (e.g., curiosity, self-direction, and inventiveness). Because schools often emphasize different skills and concepts, teachers will also be asked to rate student's performance in the curricular areas and domains that are included in the cognitive assessments (e.g., language skills, quantitative skills, and knowledge of the physical, social, and biological worlds).

The purpose of the teacher rating scale of students is both to extend the range of domains assessed (e.g., by gathering information about socioemotional development and adaptation to school) and to deepen our understanding of domains that are being tapped in multiple ways (e.g., by gathering information on cognitive development that will complement and confirm results of the direct assessment). Teacher assessments of students' skills will provide several kinds of information. First, teachers will supply information about student's social skills (including ability to exercise self-control, interact with others, resolve conflict, and participate in group activities); problem behaviors (e.g., fighting, bullying, arguing, anger, depression, low self-esteem, impulsiveness, etc.); and learning dispositions (e.g., curiosity, self-direction, and inventiveness). In addition, teachers will be asked to provide information about the subject-specific cognitive skills and development of students, including both expressive and receptive aspects of language development, quantitative skills, and knowledge of the physical, social, and biological worlds.

**Direct Cognitive Assessments and Questionnaires.** The direct cognitive assessments are essential in determining students' performance levels at the time they enter school and changes in their performance as they progress through school. Because schools often use different standards in their own assessments of students, a uniform set of assessment instruments and procedures is needed for the ECLS-K.

The items to be included in the direct cognitive assessments are not themselves sensitive in nature. However, direct assessments of students do raise certain concerns about the assessment procedures to be used. Of primary concern is the length of the assessments. The cognitive assessments are designed to be administered within a 60-minute time period, on average.

NCES has developed instruments appropriate to the ages of the students, and the contractor will make every effort to staff field assessors who have prior experience in working with adolescents to

conduct the direct assessments. Issues specific to working with adolescents will also figure prominently in assessor training. The collection of information from students will be collected with active parent consent. Students may not be questioned about the eight sensitive topics identified in the Protection of Pupil Rights Act (PPRA). Every effort will be made to avoid questions that fall into these sensitive subject areas. Items for which it must be determined whether in OMB's interpretation they fall under the PPRA have been marked with an asterisk, and will be deleted if OMB judges them to be sensitive items within the PPRA definition.

**Parent Questionnaires.** Several topics that will be addressed in the parent questionnaire are sensitive in nature. Questions about parent income, child-rearing practices, parental discipline, parents' judgments about their children's academic skills and abilities and parents' marital satisfaction will be included in the parent questionnaire.

Prior research indicates that each of these topics is correlated with student achievement and helps to predict children's preparedness for and success in school. Collecting data on these topics will allow researchers to go beyond descriptive analyses of children's performance by variables, such as race-ethnicity and sex. Researchers will be able to test hypotheses about how a wide range of family variables affects early success in school. It is, therefore, important to include questions on the sensitive topics listed above in the parent questionnaires.

Results from previous rounds of data collection showed that there were very low levels of missing data in the parent interviews. Thus, although there were sensitive items in the questionnaire, parents were willing to provide the required information.

## **A12. Estimated Response Burden**

The estimated respondent burden for the eighth grade national collection is summarized here and in table A-7. Note that table A-7 has been modified from the version included in the previously submitted OMB package (October 2005) to only include burden hours for the spring 2007 eighth grade data collection (i.e., hours attributable to the concluded spring 2006 field test have been removed from the table).

Table A-7.—Respondent burden chart

<b>Eighth grade followup</b>							
Respondent type	Sample N	Response rate/ selection rate	Number of respondents	Hours per instrument	Number of instruments per respondent	Total hours	Total number of instruments
<b>Spring-Eighth Grade Main Study (Spring 2007)</b>							
Spring School Administrator Questionnaires (SQ)	2,829	0.85	2,405	0.50	1	1,203	2,405
Spring Classroom Teacher Questionnaire (TQ)	6,224	.90	5,602				
English Questionnaire	3,112	.90	2,801	.25	4	2,729	10,916
Science Questionnaire	1,556	.90	1,400	.25	4	1,365	5,458
Math Questionnaire	1,556	.90	1,400	.25	4	1,365	5,458
Teacher Background Questionnaire	6,224	.90	5,602	.167	1	936	5,602
Spring Special Education Teacher Questionnaire (SP)	708	.90	637				
Questionnaire A	708	0.90	637	.083	1	53	637
Questionnaire B	708	0.90	637	.167	2	213	1,274
Spring Student Questionnaire	12,129	0.90	10,916	0.34	1	3,711	10,916
Spring Parent Interview	12,129	0.85	10,310	0.75	1	7,732	10,310
<b>Study Total</b>	<b>34,019<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>29,870<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>19,307</b>	<b>52,976</b>

NA Not applicable

1 Total Sample N represents the total sample size of respondents, with no duplication on the number of listed instruments each respective respondent is asked to complete.

2 Total Number of respondents represents the total number of respondents, with no duplication on the number of listed instruments each respective respondent is asked to complete.

The spring-eighth grade data collection includes direct cognitive assessments with students, student self-administered questionnaires, parent interviews, regular classroom teacher self-administrated questionnaires, classroom teacher rating scales of students, special education teacher self-administrated questionnaires, special education teacher ratings scores of students (receiving services), and school administrator self-administered questionnaires. The total number of respondents (school administrators, teachers, students, and parents) without duplication included in the estimate is 29,870. The teacher, parent, student, and school administrator respondent burden translates into a cost amount of \$294,224 for 16,576 hours.<sup>1</sup> The time students will spend completing the assessments has not been included in the estimated burden, nor has the time teachers and school personnel will spend serving as data collectors because these respondents are being remunerated for their time spent on these activities.

**A13. Annualized Cost to Respondents**

There are no costs to the respondents to participate beyond the time needed to answer the questionnaires, for teachers to collect assessment data, and for the students to participate in the cognitive assessments. These costs are summarized in the previous section describing respondent burden.

**A14. Annualized Cost to the Federal Government**

This information collection activity has been developed in performance of NCES contract ED-04-CO-0059/0009. The period of performance for the ECLS-K, including the field test, and national study, runs from August 2005 through December 2007. The total cost to the government for contractor and subcontractor costs is \$13,952,703. This cost covers one eighth grade data collection, one eighth and tenth grade field test, and the design enhancements. Table A-9 provides the costs by year.

Table A-8.—Study costs per year

Year	Amount
2005	\$2,790,541
2006	\$9,766,892
2007	\$1,395,270

<sup>1</sup> An hourly rate of \$17.75 was used to translate teacher, parent, student, and school administrator response time into a dollar amount. This rate is based on the National Compensation Survey. See U.S. Department of Labor (2004). *National Compensation Survey: Occupational Wages in the United States*: July 2003. Washington, DC: Bureau of Labor Statistics. Available online at <http://www.bls.gov/ncs/ocs/sp/ncbl0658.pdf>.



Any changes in the cost of the information collection to the government resulting from the field test experience will be reported to OMB in memoranda describing the changes and their rationale.

**A15. Reasons for Program Changes**

This submission requests data collection approval for the eighth grade follow-up main study. The response burden chart (table A-7) has been modified from the version that was previously submitted in October 2005 due to the results of pilot testing of the instruments, modifications suggested by the Content Review Panel and other instrument reviewers, and results of the Spring 2006 field test.

**A16. Publication Plans and Project Schedule**

**A16.1 Publication Plans**

In addition to the delivery of the data to NCES, the contractor will produce a restricted-use file and a public-use file, with codebooks and user manuals. All data will be merged to the child level. These files will include all instrument variables and any relevant associated variables, such as composites or scores. These variables will be in the format of the Electronic Code Book (ECB), and a record layout will be provided so that analysis packages other than SAS/PC and SPSS/PC could be used (e.g., analysis packages for the Macintosh).

The ECB allows users to browse through the different data files, creating lists of variables for further analysis. These variables may either be examined as code book items (including full variable descriptions with unweighted frequencies) or may be used to subset other variables. The ECB software also writes out SAS and SPSS code to read in the data files, should the user want to conduct further analyses using either statistical package. The ECB will be delivered with a user's guide that provides details on the contents of the data files, hardware/software needs and considerations, ECB features, installation procedures, and step-by-step descriptions of how to use the ECB.

In addition to the public-use and restricted-use files, a public-use longitudinal file will be provided. This public-use data file combines data from the kindergarten and first grade, third grade, fifth

grade, and eighth grade years. It will contain cross-year weights so that analysts can examine children's growth and development between kindergarten and eighth grade. To streamline the file, certain discreet pieces of data, such as the household roster that lists all household members and their relationship to the sampled child, are not included on the file. Instead, composite variables summarizing these data will be added to the file.

The data file user's manual will include an introduction to the purpose and scope of the ECLS-K, as well as how the ECLS-K fits in the overall picture of NCES/U.S. Department of Education data collection efforts; a description of the ECLS-K design and questionnaires; information about sampling and weighting; a discussion of the data collection effort; a review of the data preparation activities, including coding and editing and the systems that supported that work; a guide to the layout of the data file and to the layout of the codebook; and an explanation of any anomalies or pitfalls that users may encounter while using the data.

NCES understands the legal and ethical need to preserve the confidentiality of the ECLS-K survey data, and, with the contractor, has extensive experience in developing public use data files that meet the government's requirements to maintain individual confidentiality. The researchers have experience on other surveys meeting the standards set forth in "Statistical Standards for Maintaining Confidentiality." A variety of masking strategies will ensure that individuals may not be identified from the public data files. These strategies include omitting key identification variables such as name, address, telephone number, school name and address, and state or ZIP Code from the public use file; collapsing categories or developing categories for continuous variables to retain information for analytic purposes while preserving confidentiality; and "topcoding" continuous variables.<sup>2</sup>

The confidential, restricted-use file will be a superset of the public-use file. That is, the restricted-use file will contain all variables, including variables that have been changed for confidentiality reasons.

Other ECLS-K Phase IV reports or publications include the detailed methodological reports (one for the field test and full-scale study) describing all aspects of the data collection effort and psychometric properties of the assessment instruments.

---

<sup>2</sup> Topcoding refers to the process of recoding outlier values to some acceptable end value. For instance, everyone with a personal income higher than \$100,000 may be recoded to \$100,000 to eliminate the outliers.

**A16.2 Project Schedule**

The schedule for the ECLS-K is demanding. Table A-10 details the critical project milestones.

Table A-9.—Critical project milestones

---

Start of 8th grade data collection	September 1, 2006
End of 8th grade data collection	August 19, 2007

---

**A17. Approval for Not Displaying the Expiration Date for OMB Approval**

No exemption from the requirement to display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection is being requested for the ECLS-K.

**A18. Exceptions to the Certification Statement**

No exceptions to the certification statement identified in item 19, “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions,” of OMB Form 83-I apply to the ECLS-K.