

**Moderator's Guide:**  
**National Children's Study (NCS)**

**Project:** NCS Message and Materials Testing Focus Groups  
**Client:** NIH/NICHD  
**Date:** TBD 2010

**Study Purpose**

The NICHD will conduct research with women and health care providers to explore knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about the National Children's Study (NCS) and to test draft educational messages and materials to promote the NCS and encourage participation.

**Intended Outcomes**

The findings of this research will inform communication efforts related to the National Children's Study and be used to guide the development of future study materials developed for these audiences.

**Summary of Planned Focus Group Activities**

<b>Discussion Categories</b>	<b>Approximate Time for Discussion</b>
Opening Remarks and Introduction	10 minutes
Issue A: Knowledge/Attitudes about NCS	20 minutes
Issue B: Message/Materials Testing	40 minutes
Issue C: Assessment of the NCS Brand	15 minutes
Closing	5 minutes
<b>Total Time Available</b>	<b>90 Minutes</b>

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

### Opening Remarks and Introduction

Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm the moderator for today's group. The main purpose of our discussion is to get your opinions about some health education materials that have been developed.

I have nothing to sell today. This is a consumer opinion project. I am a consultant and have been asked to lead our discussion tonight.

Feel free to make positive or negative comments about any of the things we'll be discussing tonight. This is a free-flowing discussion and there are no wrong answers. I also want to assure you that I had nothing to do with creating the materials we'll be looking at tonight. I will not be offended in any way by anything you say so please feel free to speak your mind.

### Disclosures

1. Discussion Group Setting:  
Mention mikes, mirrors, observers, and audio taping  
You'll see that there's a mirror behind me. There are observers sitting behind the mirror taking notes. They're doing this so I can listen to what is being said and not have to be distracted by writing notes. These notes will give us an accurate report on what is being said.
2. The session is being taped so I can write an accurate report afterward, not of "who said what," but "what was said." Your name will not be used in the report.

### Guidelines

To make this a useful research session, there are some guidelines to follow:

1. Please talk one at a time and in a voice at least as loud as mine.
2. I need to hear from everyone, and to the degree possible, let's have equal "air time," so that everybody talks about the same amount—nobody talks too much and nobody talks too little.
3. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions I ask—there are different points of view. It's valuable for me to hear all points of view, so it's especially important to speak up when you disagree with what someone else has said. I also want to assure you that I won't be hurt or penalized by any criticism you might have.
4. I may need to move to another topic sooner than you are ready, and I may have to cut a conversation short in the interest of time. If I interrupt you it is not personal; I just want to get to everything that is planned. You're welcome to speak to me after the group so I can be sure I get all your thoughts and comments.

\* Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 90 minutes, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: NIH, Project Clearance Branch, 6705 Rockledge Drive, MSC 7974, Bethesda, MD 20892-7974, ATTN: PRA (0925-0590). Do not return the completed form to this address.

**Permission** At any time you can excuse yourself to go to the restroom or to get more food or beverages. I ask that only one person should be up or about at a time.

**Self-Intros** Before we get started, let's introduce ourselves to each other. Let's go around the room and tell us:

- Your first name
- An activity you like to do to relax (a favorite leisure-time activity)

### **Issue A: Knowledge/Attitudes about the National Children's Study (20 minutes)**

During our discussion today, we'll be focusing on your opinions about health studies and some educational materials related to them.

1. Are you aware of or familiar with any health studies either nationally or in your community?

**Probe:**

If so, what are they? What are they trying to learn?

Have you ever participated in a health study before?

If so, why or why not?

Any other thoughts you'd like to share about health research?

2. Would you or have you ever looked for information about health studies?

**Probe:**

If so, where did you look?

What information were you looking for?

Were you satisfied with the information you found? Why or why not?

3. What comes to mind when I say, "National Children's Study."

**Probe:**

Have you heard of this Study?

What do you think a study with this name would be researching?

Who would be involved with this study?

- Sponsors (e.g., government, hospitals, corporations)
- Participants (e.g., children, women)

**SAY: The National Children's Study will examine the effects of environmental influences on the health and development of more than 100,000 children across the United States, following them from before birth until age 21. The goal of the Study is to improve the health and well-being of children.**

4. If another woman asked for your advice about participating in the National Children's Study, what would you tell her?

**Probe:**

Where did *you* hear this information?

Why do you think it is important or meaningful?

Why do you think this information is credible?

5. If you wanted more information about the National Children's Study, where would you go to get it?

**Probe:**

Would you talk to a health care provider? Someone else?

Would you go to a Web site? (Which one)?  
How do you decide which information to trust and listen to?

6. Where would you want to hear information about the National Children's Study? Who would you want to hear the information from?
7. What kind of information, if any, would you like to receive about the National Children's Study? How would you like to receive this information?

### **Issue B: Testing of Messages and Materials** **(40 minutes)**

Now I would like to get your opinion about a couple of materials developed for the National Children's Study. These materials might later be given out at doctor's offices or clinics, community events, or other places where women might gather. I would like you to take some time to review this piece.

As you read through each statement, I'd like you to:

➔ **Point to instructions on flipchart**

- **Underline** phrases or sentences you think are important
- **Circle** things that are not clear or you don't understand
- **X-out** things you think should be deleted
- Write the main message at the bottom of the sheet

1. What was the main message of this piece?

**Probe:**

Was this a new idea, or something that you've heard before?

Was the message clear? Was it easy to understand?

Was there any information missing? [If yes] What information was missing?

2. Do you trust this information?

**Probe:**

What makes you trust this information?

What would make you more likely to trust this information?

3. What information in this piece do you think is most important?

**Probe:**

What makes this important to you?

How helpful is this information? Would it influence your decision to participate in the National Children's Study? Why?

4. Was there anything you read that surprised you?

**Probe:**

What made it surprising?

Do you consider it important information?

5. Was there any information in the piece that you found confusing or difficult to understand?

**Probe:**

What makes this area confusing or hard to understand?

How could it be changed to be clearer?

6. Did you mark anything in the piece that should be deleted?  
**Probe:**  
What could be changed about this content to make it better?
7. **[Only if there is a testimonial or personal story approach]** Look at the section with the personal story. What did you think about this section?  
**Probe:**  
Did you relate to the story?  
Did the story help to support or explain the main point of the fact sheet?  
Is this something you would read? Were you interested in the story?  
Did anything bother you about the story?
8. Is there any information that is important for you to know that was not included in this piece?
9. What other changes or additions would you suggest to improve the piece?
10. Is this piece trying to get you to do something? [If yes] What is it trying to get you to do?  
**Probe:**  
Would you take this action? Why? Why not?
11. This material was created to inform you about the National Children’s Study. Did this material answer any questions or ease any concerns, if any, you had about the Study?  
**Probe:**  
What questions did it answer? What concerns? How?
12. Did this material raise any new questions or concerns about the Study?  
**Probe:**  
What concerns? How did the piece increase your concerns?
13. How could we improve this material?

### **Issue C: Assessment of the NCS Brand** **(15 minutes)**

1. If you had to describe the Study in one word, what would it be?
2. When you read these materials about the Study, how did they make you feel?  
**Probe:**  
Positive feelings?  
Negative feelings?
3. What are the benefits are of participating in the Study?  
**Probe:**  
Benefits to your child?  
Benefits to the larger community?  
Which of these benefits do you value most?

4. Imagine the Study making a promise to its participants. What do you think that promise should be?
5. What do you think sets this Study apart from other medical research studies?
6. Twenty years from now, what do you think that this Study will be known for?
7. Now that you have reviewed these materials, what would you tell another woman if she came to you for advice about participating in the National Children's Study?  
**Probe:**  
Would you recommend that she consider joining the Study?

## **Closing**

**(5 minutes)**

Thank you for sharing your feedback. I'm going to leave the room for just a minute to talk with my team members in the back room to make sure we've covered everything. I'll be right back.

→ Check with observers.

Thanks for coming today and providing your opinions. Your comments have been very helpful and insightful. Please leave behind all the handouts that I gave you today.

If you'd like more information about the topics we discussed tonight, you can (hand out a business card with the following information on it):

- Visit [www.nationalchildrensstudy.gov](http://www.nationalchildrensstudy.gov) or
- Call **1-877-865-2619**

Also, here is some information that might be helpful to answer any additional questions about the National Children's Study.