

**Building Strong Families:  
OMB Supporting  
Statement for the Second  
Follow-Up Data  
Collection – Part A**

**Appendices**

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Submitted by

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**APPENDIX A**

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR 36-MONTH FOLLOW-UP SURVEY**

QUESTION-BY-QUESTION JUSTIFICATION OF 36-MONTH SURVEY QUESTIONS

Question #	Constructs/Items	Justification
IN1-IN7, FS1-FS4	Information for proper identification of sample members	This information ensures that we are speaking to the right person.
FS5a-FS9	Whether and when BSF focal child was born	This demographic information helps to identify the BSF focal child and clarify the age of the BSF child. Respondents who answered these questions at the 15-month follow-up are not asked FS6-FS9.
FS10-FS13, FS17.1	BSF focal child's name	This information will be used to identify the BSF focal child for subsequent follow-ups and to fill in the BSF child's name in later survey questions. Respondents who answered these questions at the 15-month follow-up are not asked these questions.
FS17	BSF focal child's gender	This key demographic characteristic has been linked to the satisfaction and stability in the parents' relationship (Lundberg and Rose 2003). It can be used for subgroup analysis and to identify the BSF focal child for subsequent follow-ups. Respondents who answered this questions at the 15-month follow-up are not asked this question.
FS17.3- FS17.6	BSF child's birth weight	This measure is an important indicator of the child's health at birth. It will be used for subgroup analysis. We will examine whether participants whose children are born with low birth weight benefit more or less from BSF. Respondents who answered these questions at the 15-month follow-up are not asked these questions.
FS19	BSF partner's name	This information will be used to fill in the BSF partner's name in later survey questions.
FS25-FS26	Marital and relationship status of BSF couple	A central goal of BSF is to encourage healthy relationships and marriage among participants. Therefore, documenting the current status of the BSF couple's romantic relationship is essential to the BSF impact analysis. These questions are adapted from the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study, Surveys of New Parents.
FS26.1- FS26.3	When and why romantic relationship with BSF partner ended	Since encouraging healthy relationships and marriage is a key goal of the program, it is important to understand when and why the romantic relationship between the BSF couple ended. These questions were adapted from the Fragile Families surveys.
FS27-FS29	Likelihood of marriage with BSF partner	It is important to examine these measures in the BSF impact analysis because they are key indicators of movement toward marriage. Questions involving these measures were asked in the Fragile Families surveys.
FS33	Whether living with BSF partner	Whether the BSF couple is sharing a residence is an important element of the status of their romantic relationship and is therefore an important measure for the BSF impact analysis. This question is from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing study.
FS33.2	Frequency of contact with BSF partner	Frequency of contact with the BSF partner is another important element of the couple's relationship status and therefore an important measure for the BSF impact analysis. This question is from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing study.

Question #	Constructs/Items	Justification
FS33.2.1- FS33.2.3	Reasons for romantic couples not seeing each other	These questions will clarify the status of the BSF couples relationship in two circumstances: (1) when they are married and living apart and (2) when they are romantically involved but not seeing each other regularly. To understand the couple's relationship status fully, it is important to determine whether these situations represent voluntary or involuntary separations (due to military service or incarceration, for example). These questions will determine whether these separations are involuntary and, if they are, the reasons for these involuntary separations.
FS37-FS40	Whether in a new romantic relationship and the status of that relationship	Understanding the nature of new romantic relationships is important to the BSF impact analysis because of its implications for child well-being. Research suggests that living with both biological parents is generally advantageous for children but that living with a parent and his or her new partner is not (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994). In fact, exposure to a parent's new romantic partner can put the child at risk for adverse outcomes (Radhakrishna et al. 2001). Asking about new romantic partners will allow us to examine whether BSF had an impact on the likelihood that participants entered into these new relationships. Similar questions were asked in the Fragile Families surveys and in Marriage in Oklahoma: 2001 Baseline Statewide Survey on Marriage and Divorce.
FS41	Happiness with relationship with current partner	By 36 months, some sample members will have formed new romantic relationships and it is possible that BSF may improve the quality of these new relationships. Overall happiness and satisfaction is one of the most frequently used measures of relationship quality. It is highly correlated with the likelihood of later breakup (Karney and Bradbury 1995). For these reasons, we plan to collect this one measure of the quality of new relationships on the 36-month survey.
FS42- FS43.1	Living arrangements of BSF focal child	BSF aims to increase the likelihood that children will live with both biological parents, since this family structure has been shown to have positive effects on child well-being (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994). Examining whether BSF has this effect on the family structure of participants requires us to ask questions about the BSF child's living arrangements. Similar questions were used in the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study.
FS45- FS46.1	Whether any contact with BSF child in past year/month	These questions are needed for skip logic for questions about recent interactions with the BSF child (CO2-CO5).
FS50-FS52	Number of children born or conceived after random assignment; whether BSF partner or current partner is the other parent	These questions will allow us to examine BSF potential impacts on subsequent childbearing and multiple partner fertility. Multiple partner fertility has been shown to have negative consequences for child well-being (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Radhakrishna et al. 2001; Carlson and Furstenburg 2006; Harknett and Knab 2005). It is hoped that BSF will reduce multiple partner fertility by promoting fidelity and the likelihood that participating couples stay together. These questions were drawn from Fragile Families follow-up surveys.

Question #	Constructs/Items	Justification
FS53- FS54.2	Other members of the household	<p>The questions on the number of children in the household will allow us to measure family size for determining poverty status. Poverty has been shown to have adverse effects on a wide array of child outcomes (Brooks-Gunn and Duncan 1997; Mayer 1997). Poverty is therefore an important aspect of child well-being and an important outcome to examine in the BSF impact analysis.</p> <p>The questions on adults in the household will indicate other financial supports available to the BSF child through co-resident relatives. Collecting this information will allow us to examine whether BSF has had any impact on the availability of this type of support.</p>
FS55-FS68	Marriage start and end dates	<p>These questions will allow us to examine the amount of time respondents have been married during the follow-up period. The questions will also allow us to examine whether subsequent births occurred within a marriage or not, making it possible to examine the program's effects on nonmarital childbearing. In addition, a complete marital history will allow us to construct baseline variables for subgroup analysis based on whether and how often respondents were married before random assignment. Questions of this type were asked in the Current Population Survey Fertility and Marital History Supplement.</p>
CO1	Quality of co-parenting relationship	<p>These questions will allow us to examine BSF's potential impacts on the BSF couple's co-parenting relationship. BSF may affect co-parenting by improving the couple's communication skills and emphasizing that parenting is a shared task. Questions "a" through "j" are from the Parenting Alliance Measure, a well-validated scale developed by Richard Abidin (Abidin and Brunner 1995). Other co-parenting measures ("m" through "s") were developed by Child Trends for ACF's Healthy Marriage Initiative studies.</p>
CO2-CO3	Time spent with BSF child in the past month	<p>An important aspect of child well-being is the quantity and quality of time children spend with their parents. These measures have been used in several large studies, including Fragile Families surveys, the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project, and the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (ECLS-B).</p>
CO3.1	Parental Warmth	<p>To further measure the quality of time children spend with their parents, questions on parental warmth are included. These questions have been used in several large scale studies including the New Chance evaluation and the Jobs Opportunity and Basic Skills programs evaluation of the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (JOBS-NEWSS) and have been shown to have good internal consistency.</p>
CO5	Discipline of BSF child	<p>These items measure the use of mild to harsh discipline practices. These also provide a measure of child maltreatment, a key aspect of child well-being. By improving conflict management skills and overall parental well-being, BSF may reduce use of harsh discipline among participants. These items are drawn from the Conflict Tactic Scale: Parent Child Version (CTSPC; Straus et al. 2003). The CTSPC is well validated and shown to have good internal consistency, and has been used in large-scale longitudinal surveys including the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW).</p>

Question #	Constructs/Items	Justification
CH1-CH2	General health status of BSF child	Child health has been shown relate to family structure and household resources (Case et al. 2001). Because the BSF intervention may have an impact on the financial resources available to the child, it is possible that the intervention may have positive effects on child health. General health questions about children are widely used in many surveys of low-income families, including the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project, ECLS-B, and Fragile Families.
CH3-CH4	Incidence of Asthma in BSF child	Evidence from Fragile Families suggests that the presence and severity of asthma before age three is an important indicator of child health and that it is related to family composition (Harknett, 2005; Liu and Heiland, 2007). Similar items about childhood asthma are used in other large scale surveys including the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project, ECLS-B, and Fragile Families.
CH5	Empathy of the BSF Child	The development of empathy in children is associated with (a) parents being empathetic, (b) parents allowing their children to express negative emotions, (c) low levels of hostility in the home, and (d) parenting practices that help children to focus on and understand the emotions of others (Eisenberg 2000). Since BSF may influence these factors, the intervention may in turn influence the level of empathy among BSF children. The Social Interaction subscale of the Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scales-Second Edition (PKBS-2; Merrell 2002) is being used to assess empathy. Items from the PKBS-2 Social Interaction subscale were adapted for use in large-scale surveys including the ECLS-B and Universal Preschool Child Outcome Study (UPCOS).
CH6	Behavior of the BSF child.	Conflict in the parent relationship or low-levels of intimacy and mutual supportiveness between parents may lead to sub-optimal parenting which is known to be associated with problem behaviors among children (Downey and Coyne 1990; Goodman and Gotlib 1999; Pettit and Bates 1989). The BSF curriculum addresses conflict, intimacy and supportiveness which in turn may affect parenting and child behavior. The Behavior Problems Index (BPI; Zill 1985) was developed to measure externalizing and internalizing behavior problems in children (Peterson and Zill 1986). The BPI has been used in many large surveys, including the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) and the Child Development Supplement (CDS) of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID). Select items have also been used in both the Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) and the ECLS-B.
CH7-CH11	Household Routines	Maintaining regular household routines (for example, a regular bedtime) has benefits for child outcomes (Fuller et al., 2002). BSF aims to increase the likelihood that children will live with both biological parents and this may affect a family's ability to maintain regular routines. Similar items about routines (meals and bedtime) appear in other large-scale surveys including the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project follow-up surveys and FACES.
CH12	BSF child's response to parental conflict	A child's exposure to poorly managed parental conflict may have a direct effect on the child by creating emotional insecurity (Davies, Forman, Rasi, and Stevens 2002). The BSF curriculum focuses largely on conflict management and may have an impact on the child's emotional security. These items are drawn from the Security in the Marital Subsystem-Parent Report Inventory (SIMS-PR, Davies, Forman et al. 2002) and are designed to measure the impact of parental conflict on a child's emotional security.

Question #	Constructs/Items	Justification
RR0	Attitudes toward marriage	Attitudes toward marriage have been shown to be highly predictive of whether low-income, unwed parents marry (Carlson et al. 2004). BSF may encourage participants to enter into healthy marriages by changing their attitudes toward marriage. These five items come from the Fragile Families surveys, the 2003 Baseline Survey of Family Experiences and Attitudes in Florida, and the Louisiana Fragile Families survey.
RR0.1	Whether friends are ready to settle down	This item measures an aspect of social support. See discussion of social support measures later in the table at WW56-WW62.
RR1	Happiness with relationship with BSF partner	Overall happiness and satisfaction is one of the most frequently used measures of relationship quality. It is highly correlated with the likelihood of later breakup (Karney and Bradbury 1995). In addition, interventions with married couples similar to the BSF program have been shown to improve relationship happiness and satisfaction in the short run (Carroll and Doherty 2003; Markman et al. 1988; Wampler 1990).
RR2	Conflict and conflict management	Poorly managed conflict is highly correlated with relationship dissolution (Stanley 2003). In addition, high conflict between parents has been shown to have adverse consequences for child well-being (Stanley 2003; Cummings and Davies 1994; Cummings et al. 1991). For these reasons, the BSF curriculum focuses largely on conflict management, making this a particularly important outcome to examine in the impact analysis. The conflict management items are drawn from three sources: (1) John Gottman's Sound Relationship House; (2) the Interpersonal Relationship Scale developed by Bernard Guerney (Guerney 1977); and (3) the Stanley-Markman Relationship Dynamics Scale (Stanley et al. 2002). The Stanley-Markman scale (items RR2aa through RR2dd) was used in the Oklahoma Marriage Survey.
RR1.1; RR4	Friendship, intimacy, and supportiveness	Positive aspects of relationships—such as friendship, intimacy, and supportiveness—have been shown to counteract some of the negative effects of high conflict on romantic relationships (Huston and Chorost 1994). These positive aspects of relationships are also highly predictive of whether couples remain together (Carlson et al. 2004). All BSF curricula focus on building intimacy, supportiveness, and friendship in relationships, making these aspects of relationship quality particular important to the BSF impact analysis. Item RR1.1 measures the amount of time the BSF couple spends together and is drawn from the National Survey of Families and Households. Two items measure friendship: (1) RR4b drawn from Gottman's Sound Relationship House and (2) RR4c developed by Child Trends for ACF's Healthy Marriage Initiative studies. Four items measure supportiveness and intimacy: items RR4q and RR4r, developed by Child Trends for ACF's Healthy Marriage Initiative studies, and items R4w and R4x, from Fragile Families follow-up surveys. Item RR4t, on respect, is from John Gottman's Sound Relationship House. Item RR4y, on sexual intimacy, was drawn from Marital Instability Over the Life Course. Similar questions concerning sexual intimacy were also included in both the Fragile Families surveys and the Florida marriage survey. Item RR4z is designed to measure the supportiveness of friends and family members for the relationship.

Question #	Constructs/Items	Justification
RR4	Commitment and trust	Commitment and trust are important aspects of a successful relationship. Higher levels of commitment have been shown to help couples weather bad times and avoid breakup (Amato 2003). In addition, a lack of trust has been shown to be a significant barrier to marriage for low-income couples (Edin and Kefalas 2005). Our three items related to commitment (RR4o, RR4p, and RR4v) make up the interpersonal commitment scale developed by Scott Stanley. These items were used in the Oklahoma Marriage Survey. Our three items on trust (RR4i, RRj, and RR4n) are drawn from the Dyadic Trust Scale developed by Larzelere and Huston (1980), which has been widely used in many surveys.
RR8-RR11	Infidelity and cheating	Infidelity has been found to be a major obstacle to marriage for unwed parents (Edin and Kefalas 2005; Smock and Manning 2003). The BSF curriculum aims to address this issue by discussing with participating couples the importance of fidelity and trust in building a healthy relationship. Several large surveys— such as the Study of Marital Instability Over the Life Course, the Louisiana Fragile Families Study, and the Florida marriage survey—have included similar questions on infidelity.
RR14-RR15.1	Domestic violence	The BSF intervention aims to improve relationship quality and increase the likelihood that couples enter into a healthy marriage. The absence of violence is a key characteristic of a healthy romantic relationship. Therefore, to fully assess BSF's success in achieving its goal of encouraging healthy relationships and marriage, it is necessary to collect information on intimate partner violence. These questions are drawn from the revised Conflict Tactic Scale (CTS2), the most widely used tool for measuring intimate partner violence in research studies (Straus and Douglas 2004). The CTS2 has been both well validated and shown to have good internal consistency (Straus et al. 1996). Versions of these CTS questions have been used in many surveys, including the National Family Violence Survey, the National Violence Against Women Survey, and surveys conducted in six states as part of the ASPE-funded TANF Caseload Project.
WB1.1	Religious service attendance	Marriage is associated with an increase in religious service attendance (Arnett and Jensen, 2002; Wilcox, 2006); hence participation in religious services may be affected by the BSF intervention. A similar question on religious attendance was asked as part of the Fragile Families Study.
WB1.2	Parental Aggravation Scale	High levels of parental stress and aggravation are associated with poor cognitive and socio-emotional development in young children (McGroder 2000). BSF may reduce parental stress and aggravation by encouraging parents to support each other in their parenting roles. These four items represent the Aggravation in Parenting Scale used as part of the National Survey of America's Families (NSAF), a large survey of low-income families. This scale has been shown to have good psychometric properties, such as internal reliability and construct validity (Ehrle and Moore 1999).



Question #	Constructs/Items	Justification
WB1.3-WB3	Symptoms of depression	Parental depression has been shown to adversely affect child outcomes (Gelfand and Teti 1990, Downey and Coyne 1990). Given BSF's ultimate goal of improving child well-being, the link between parental depression and child well-being makes this outcome particularly relevant. BSF may reduce symptoms of depression among participants by reducing stress and conflict in relationships. These questions represent the 20-item Centers for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D), a widely used measure with well-established psychometric properties (Radloff 1997). The CES-D has been used as part of many large surveys, including the survey in the Early Head Start Evaluation, the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, and the Project on Devolution and Urban Change.
WB4-WB6	Alcohol and drug use	Substance abuse and addiction can have major negative effects on the well-being of individuals and their families. If BSF improves relationship quality and stability, it may also reduce substance abuse among participants. Collecting information on alcohol and drug use will allow us to examine whether BSF has such an effect. The question we include on binge drinking was developed by Henry Wechsler and is recommended as a screening tool by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (Wechsler et al. 1995; Wechsler 1998). It has been used in several large national surveys, including the National Survey on Drug Use and Health and the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System. The two questions on functional impairment resulting from substance use come from Fragile Families surveys.
SE1-SE1.1	Receipt of relationship skills and marriage education services	Asking program and control group couples identical questions in the follow-up surveys about the receipt of relationship skills and marriage education services will be an important part of the BSF impact analysis. Their responses will allow us to understand the "counterfactual"—whether relationship skills services would have been received in the absence of BSF—. Understanding whether additional services were received by BSF participants will help us understand and interpret BSF's impacts on other key outcomes. For example, if impacts are modest, we will be able to understand whether this result is a function of the fact that services actually do have little effect on key outcomes or whether the intervention offered few services that are distinct from those already available in the community. Most large random assignment impact studies include questions of this type. For example, the Early Head Start and Rural Welfare-to-Work evaluations included similar questions on service receipt.
PA1-PA1.1	Paternity establishment	Establishing paternity is an important step in ensuring that unwed fathers provide financial support for their children. If BSF augments the extent to which participating fathers are committed to their children, it may increase the rate of paternity establishment. In addition, if BSF increases the likelihood that paternity is established through a voluntary process, this may improve relationships between parents and between fathers and their children. Similar questions on paternity establishment have been asked in several large national surveys, including the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study and the National Survey of America's Families. These questions are only asked if this information was not obtained from respondents during the 15-month follow-up interview.

Question #	Constructs/Items	Justification
PA2-PA11.11	Formal child support and other financial support provided by nonresidential parents	The level of financial support provided by parents is an important element of child well-being. Children born to unwed parents are at high risk of receiving little financial support from their parents, particularly their fathers (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Rangarajan and Gleason 1998). BSF may increase the financial support provided to the children of participating couples—primarily by increasing the likelihood that the couples remain together but also by increasing the likelihood that nonresidential parents provide financial support for their children. Similar questions on material support provided by nonresidential parents were asked as part of the Fragile Families Study and the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort (ECLS-B).
PA12	Level of material support for BSF child provided by father	We are including a measure of father’s material support provided to the child that can be asked of all parents—even if the parent lives with the BSF child. This measure has the advantage of being defined for all respondents, so we can compare all program-group couples to all control-group couples, preserving the advantages of random assignment. Measures of this sort also allow us to examine whether the income of resident fathers is indeed available to the BSF child and whether the intervention has any effect on this availability.
WW1-WW30	Family income in the past month	Family income and poverty are important determinants of child well-being (Brooks-Gunn and Duncan 1997; Mayer 1997). BSF aims to enhance child well-being by improving the parental relationship and the likelihood that the parents remain together as a couple. Since two-parent families generally have higher incomes than single-parent families, increases in family income may be an important avenue through which BSF improves child outcomes. Data on family income have been collected in many national surveys, including NSAF and Fragile Families. The particular questions we use are drawn from the Work First New Jersey study, a large longitudinal study of welfare recipients.
WW36-WW37.2	Sharing resources and expenses	These measures will help us understand the extent to which the income of resident parents (particularly fathers) is available to other family members and whether BSF has had any effect on this availability. Similar questions concerning resource and expense sharing were asked as part of the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study.
WW32, WW33, WW38-WW40	Bank accounts, car, and home ownership	These items are measures of asset accumulation. Research has shown that couples in more committed and stable relationships are more likely to save and plan for the future, suggesting that BSF may have an effect on these outcomes. Similar questions have been included in many surveys of low-income populations, including NSAF, Fragile Families, and Rural Welfare-to-Work.
WW53	Material hardship	Measures of material hardship are a useful addition to income and poverty measures because they reflect a broader concept of economic well-being that is not captured by income or poverty status and that takes into consideration other factors that affect economic well-being, such as wealth, debt, and access to credit (Ouellette et al. 2004). Analyzing BSF’s impacts on these measures will help to complete the picture of the program’s overall effect on economic well-being. The material hardship measures we are including in the BSF survey have been used in several other national studies of low-income families, including Rural Welfare-to-Work and Fragile Families.

Question #	Constructs/Items	Justification
WW54- WW55.2.1	Health insurance coverage of respondent and BSF child	Given BSF's possible effects on family structure and family income, it is possible that the program may have effects on the level and type of health insurance coverage BSF participants and their children have. Similar questions have been asked in ECLS-B, Fragile Families, and NSAF.
WW55.3	General health status	A large body of evidence points to a causal link between a happy marriage and health (Wilson and Oswald 2005). Given this link and the fact that BSF aims to improve relationship quality, it is possible that the intervention may have positive effects on health. This general health question has been widely used in many surveys of low-income families, including ECLS-B, Fragile Families, and NSAF.
WW56- WW62, RR0.1, RR4z	Social support	<p>Social support has consistently been shown to have a powerful impact on health and well-being (House et al. 1988; Turner and Turner 1999). Moreover, social isolation and a lack of support networks can be common among low-income families (Edin and Kafalas 2005). Attending BSF group sessions may increase participants' sense of social support, if bonds are formed with other members of the group.</p> <p>There are three main types of perceived social support that may be affected by BSF: (1) emotional support; (2) tangible support ; and (3) validation support. Emotional support, or having close, confiding relationships with others, is measured by items WW60 and WW62. Tangible support, or having access to practical help like emergency child care or a small loan, is measured by items WW56 to WW59. Validation support, or having a social network that makes one feel accepted or normal, is measured by items RR0.1 and RR4z. Similar questions on social support were included in Fragile Families surveys and in surveys conducted as part of the Work First New Jersey evaluation.</p>
WB9-WB33	Involvement with the criminal justice system	Recent research suggests that a history of incarceration and involvement in the criminal justice system may be fairly common among fathers in the BSF target population (Western 2004). Parental incarceration has major negative effects on child and family well-being, reducing the financial and other support otherwise provided by parents for their children and families. BSF may reduce criminal involvement through its potential effects on relationship stability and quality. Information about incarceration before random assignment will allow us to examine whether BSF has differential impacts depending on whether the parents have a criminal history. Similar questions have been included in other large national studies, such as Fragile Families and the National Job Corps Study.
CC1-CC2.2	Country of origin	Several BSF sites are likely to serve a substantial number of immigrants, who may face a set of cultural and legal barriers to marriage that is different from what other BSF participants face. Moreover, cultural differences may make the BSF intervention more or less effective for certain immigrant groups. Therefore, information on country of origin will be important both for describing the population served by BSF and in examining whether the program's effectiveness varies for certain groups. Similar questions were asked in NSAF and Fragile Families. These questions are only asked if this information was not obtained from respondents during the 15-month follow-up interview.

Question #	Constructs/Items	Justification
BP1-BP3	Structure of family of origin	Research suggests that whether individuals lived with both their biological parents while growing up is highly predictive of their likelihood of marriage (Carlson et al. 2004; Wood et al. September 2003). Therefore, these measures will be useful in the BSF impact analysis to create subgroups. Similar questions were included in the Fragile Families surveys. These questions are only asked if this information was not obtained from respondents during the 15-month follow-up interview.
BP7-BP8	History of physical or sexual abuse as a child	A history of physical and sexual abuse during childhood has been shown to reduce the likelihood of entering into and sustaining healthy relationships and marriages as an adult (Cherlin et al. 2004). This research also indicates that a history of childhood abuse is fairly common among low-income populations. For these reasons, those with a history of childhood abuse will be an important subgroup to examine as part of the BSF impact analysis. These questions were deemed too sensitive to ask at BSF sample intake, making it necessary to gather this information on follow-up surveys. These two questions are from surveys conducted as part of Welfare, Children, and Families: A Three-City Study. These questions are only asked if this information was not obtained from respondents during the 15-month follow-up interview.
BP9	Age of first intercourse	The BSF curriculum aims to build commitment and trust among unmarried couples with young children as a means of strengthening and preserving their romantic relationships. Individuals with a large number of sexual partners prior to entering the program may have difficulty establishing the necessary level of commitment and trust to build a healthy and lasting romantic relationship. Therefore, the number of sexual partners prior to random assignment is a variable of potential interest for subgroup analysis. Because of recall difficulties, however, asking about the number of sexual partners prior to random assignment on the 15-month follow-up survey is not practical. Therefore, we will ask instead about the age of first intercourse, which has been shown to be a good proxy for the number of sexual partners (USDHHS 1997). This question is drawn from the National Survey of Family Growth. This question is only asked if this information was not obtained from respondents during the 15-month follow-up interview.
BP10	Number of sexual partners since random assignment	Children who are exposed to the new romantic partners of their parents are placed at increased risk of abuse and other adverse outcomes (Radhakrishna et al. 2001). It is hoped that by increasing the likelihood that participating couples remain together, BSF will reduce the exposure that their children have to the new romantic partners of their parents. Therefore, the number of sexual partners since random assignment is an important variable to examine as part of the impact analysis. This question is drawn from the National Survey of Family Growth.
LO1-LO18	Locating information	This information will be crucial to high response rates in the 36-month survey.

**APPENDIX B**

**CERTIFICATE OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

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National Institute  
of Child Health and  
Human Development

## important facsimile

<b>To:</b> Alan Hershey	<b>From:</b> Dr. Steven Hirschfeld
<b>Fax:</b> 609-799-0005	<b>Pages:</b> 4 including cover
<b>Phone:</b> 609-275-2384	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Re:</b> Confidentiality Certificate	<b>cc:</b>

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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

Public Health Service

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National Institute of Child Health  
and Human Development  
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

October 29, 2007

Alan Hershey  
Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.  
P.O. Box 2393  
Princeton, NJ 08543

Dear Mr. Hershey:

Enclosed is the Confidentiality Certificate protecting the identity of research subjects in your project entitled, "The Building Strong Families Project". Please note that the Certificate expires on 12/31/11.

Please be sure that the consent form given to research participants accurately states the intended uses of personally identifiable information (including matters subject to reporting) and the confidentiality protections, including the protection provided by the Certificate of Confidentiality with its limits and exceptions.

If you determine that the research project will not be completed by the expiration date, 12/31/11, you must submit a written request for an extension of the Certificate three months prior to the expiration date. If you make any changes to the protocol for this study, you should contact me regarding modification of this Certificate. Any requests for modifications of this Certificate must include the reason for the request, documentation of the most recent IRB approval, and the expected date for completion of the research project.

Please advise me of any situation in which the Certificate is employed to resist disclosure of information in legal proceedings. Should attorneys for the project wish to discuss the use of the Certificate, they may contact the Office of the NIH Legal Advisor, National Institutes of Health, at (301) 496-6043.

Correspondence should be sent to:

Steven Hirschfeld, MD PhD  
Associate Director for Clinical Research  
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31 Center Drive, Room 2A03, MSC 2425  
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Hirschfeld", written over a horizontal line.

Steven Hirschfeld, MD PhD

**CONFIDENTIALITY CERTIFICATE****CC-HD-07-80****issued to****Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.****conducting research known as****The Building Strong Families Project**

In accordance with the provisions of section 301(d) of the Public Health Service Act 42 U.S.C. 241(d), this Certificate is issued in response to the request of the Principal Investigator, Alan Hershey to protect the privacy of research subjects by withholding their identities from all persons not connected with this research. Mr. Hershey is primarily responsible for the conduct of this research, which is supported by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Contract 233-02-0056.

Under the authority vested in the Secretary of Health and Human Services by section 301(d), all persons who:

1. are enrolled in, employed by, or associated with the Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. and their contractors or cooperating agencies and
2. have in the course of their employment or association access to information that would identify individuals who are the subjects of the research pertaining to the project known as, "The Building Strong Families Project,"

are hereby authorized to protect the privacy of the individuals who are the subjects of that research by withholding their names and other identifying characteristics from all persons not connected with the conduct of that research.

**Summary of project**

The Building Strong Families (BSF) study will test interventions to help low-income unwed couples who are expecting or just had a child to increase their ability to enter into and sustain healthy marriages or otherwise improve their relationships, and as a result improve child development and family well-being. BSF programs have three components. The core is a series of weekly group sessions to help couples develop and strengthen communications and other relationship skills. This component is delivered to small groups of 6-15 couples, for a total of 30-42 hours. The second component is family support services, to address issues known to affect couple relationships and marriage, such as problems with employment, physical and mental health, or substance abuse. Finally, the program model includes family coordinators—program staff who assess couples' circumstances and needs, make referrals to other services when appropriate, reinforce relationship and marriage skills over time, provide ongoing emotional support, and promote sustained participation in the group sessions.

The total sample enrolled will be an estimated 4,700 couples, or 9,400 individuals. The sample is expected to be approximately 60% African American, 25% Hispanic, and 15% white (with some other groups in very small numbers).



**APPENDIX C**

**ADVANCE LETTERS**

## FOLLOW-UP SURVEY ADVANCE LETTER

Date

«FirstName» «MiddleInitial» «LastName»  
«Address1» «Address2»  
«City», «State» «postalcode»

Dear «FirstName» «LastName»:

Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. an independent research company in Princeton, New Jersey, is conducting an important study, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, to learn more about what helps couples build better relationships and healthy marriages. As you may remember, about three years ago you filled out a consent form agreeing to be a part of this study. At that time, we told you we would be contacting you in 15 months, and then again three years after your child was born to find out how things are going for you and your child. Your experiences over the past three years are unique and we would like you to take part in the study.

We will be conducting a telephone interview with participants that includes questions on relationships and families. We want to know about your experiences and how they have affected your life. We will also ask about your living arrangements, employment and how you are generally feeling about yourself. The survey takes about 45 minutes to complete. **You will receive \$25 for completing the interview.**

Your participation is important, but voluntary. Your answers will be kept completely private, and you will never be identified in any report based on the survey. Participating in this survey will not affect any benefits you get now or will receive in the future. No one will attempt to sell you anything or ask for a donation because you participated in this study.

To participate in the survey, please call us as soon as you can (toll-free) at **1-888-633-8350** and ask for **Casey Jordan**. There is no charge for the call. If your telephone is unlisted or has changed in the past 6 months, please call the toll-free number mentioned above to tell us where you may now be reached.

This is your chance to make a difference. Your answers could help in providing services in the future to other parents like you, who want to learn more about relationships, marriage, and being parents.

We look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,



Shawn Marsh  
Survey Director

### Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

A federal 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. The OMB control number for this information collection is XXXX-XXXX, expiration date: XX/XX/20XX.

**In-home Advance Letter**

Date

«FirstName» «MiddleInitial» «LastName»  
«Address1» «Address2»  
«City», «State» «postalcode»

Dear «FirstName» «LastName»:

As part of an ongoing study to learn more about what helps couples build better relationships and healthy marriages, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. an independent research company in Princeton, New Jersey, is contacting select couples to learn more about their child's development and how each parent relates to their child. As you may remember, about three years ago you filled out a consent form agreeing to be a part of this study. At that time, we told you that we might be contacting you about doing some activities with you and your child, in your home, to see how your child is growing up. We'd like to set up a time that's convenient for you, so a member of our research team can come to your house and see how things are going with you and your child. Your experiences over the past three years are unique and we would like you to take part in the study.

We will be conducting these sessions with participants in person, and the activities will involve a variety of activities, including you reading to your child and helping them with a project. In addition, we will also have some activities that your child will complete by themselves, that will measure their physical and verbal skills.. The whole session will take about 60 minutes to complete. **You will receive \$25 for completing the session and your child will receive a small toy as a token of our appreciation.**

Your participation is important, but voluntary. Your information will be kept completely private, and you will never be identified in any report based on the session. Participating in these activities will not affect any benefits you get now or will receive in the future.

To participate in the study, please call us as soon as you can (toll-free) at **1-888-633-8350** and ask for **Casey Jordan**. There is no charge for the call. If your telephone is unlisted or has changed in the past 6 months, please call the toll-free number mentioned above to tell us where you may now be reached.

This is your chance to make a difference. Your information could help in providing services in the future to other parents like you, who want to learn more about relationships, marriage, and being parents.

We look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,



Shawn Marsh  
Survey Director

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