

APPENDIX E

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR 15-MONTH FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

QUESTION-BY-QUESTION JUSTIFICATION OF 15-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.
FS5-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. In addition, the timing of the second BSF follow-up survey will be determined by the age of the BSF child (conducted when the child is 36 months old), making the child's date of birth an essential piece of information.
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.
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.
FS17.3- FS17.6	BSF child's birth weight	This measure is a good 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.
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.
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 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.
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>

Question #	Constructs/Items	Justification
FS55-FS68	Marriage start and end dates	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.
CO1	Quality of co-parenting relationship	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.
CO2-CO3	Time spent with BSF child in the past month	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).
CO4	Spanking of BSF child	This item is a measure of harsh discipline. It is also 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 child maltreatment and the use of harsh discipline. This measure was used on Early Head Start follow-up surveys.
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).

Question #	Constructs/Items	Justification
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.
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.

Question #	Constructs/Items	Justification
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 (Strauss and Douglas 2004). The CTS2 has been both well validated and shown to have good internal consistency (Strauss 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.
WB0	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).
WB1-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.

Question #	Constructs/Items	Justification
SE1-SE20	Receipt of services since random assignment	Asking program and control group couples identical questions in the follow-up surveys about service receipt will be an important part of the BSF impact analysis. Their responses will allow us to understand the “counterfactual”—what services would have been received in the absence of BSF—and how the kind and amount of services actually received by BSF participants differed from what they would have received in the absence of the intervention. Understanding the additional services 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 that 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.
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.

Question #	Constructs/Items	Justification
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 (Ouelette 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.
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.

Question #	Constructs/Items	Justification
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-WB30	Involvement with the criminal justice system	<p>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.</p>
CC1-CC2.2	Country of origin	<p>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.</p>
BP1-BP3	Structure of family of origin	<p>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. 2003). Therefore, these measures will be useful in the BSF impact analysis to create subgroups. Similar questions were included in the Fragile Families surveys.</p>
BP7-BP8	History of physical or sexual abuse as a child	<p>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.</p>

Question #	Constructs/Items	Justification
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.
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.