

Attachment 3

Parent/Guardian Consent Materials

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DATE

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The U.S. Department of Justice is doing a special study called the National Survey of Youth in Custody (NSYC) to learn more about what it is like for young people living in correctional facilities. This study was done the first time in 2008, when over 10,000 young people took part.

Beginning in 2011, the NSYC will be done for the second time, and more than 23,000 youth will be asked to take part in the study. FACILITY NAME is participating in NSYC, and we would like your permission to ask your child to be in the study.

I have enclosed a consent form that describes the study. Here are a few of the important pieces of information explained on the consent form:

- We are asking your permission to ask your child if he/she would like to do the interview. Your child does not have to take part in the study, even if you give permission for us to ask him/her.
- If you and your child agree, a researcher will show him/her how to answer questions using a laptop computer.
- Youth will be asked questions about what it is like living at the facility, including questions about staff, other youth who live in the facility, and the health services he/she might have used. Some youth will also be asked questions about alcohol and drug use, and some will be asked about sexual experiences that might have happened, including those in this facility.
- The computer will randomly decide which questions your child is asked; it has nothing to do with your child's background or history.
- Your child's name will not be put in the computer. No one will be able to connect your child's name to his/her answers in the computer. But it's different if your child directly tells the researcher about abuse or harm to him/her or another child. If that happens, we have to report it to the government agency that investigates these problems.

We ask that you read the enclosed brochure and consent form. Please indicate on the form whether or not you agree to let your child participate in the study, sign the form, and date it. Then return it to FACILITY CONTACT in the enclosed pre-addressed stamped envelope.

If you have any questions about the objectives and goals of the study, please contact the facility or the National Survey of Youth in Custody Information Line (1-888-XXX-XXXX). If you have questions about what your child's rights would be as a participant, please contact Ms. Sharon Zack (1-800-937-8281, extension 8828).

Thank you for helping us with this important study.

Sincerely,

FACILITY CONTACT NAME
FACILITY CONTACT TITLE

Enclosures

RE: _____
Name of Youth

OMB NO.:
 EXPIRATION DATE:

The U.S. Department of Justice is doing a special study called the National Survey of Youth in Custody to learn more about what it is like for young people living in correctional facilities. The government will use the study to see if changes need to be made at facilities. We will combine the answers that youth from each facility give into a report on the facility. We will also tell the state agency responsible for protecting youth about answers related to the safety of youth at the facility. No names will appear in the report.

Young people in every state in the country will be asked to be part of this study, and we would like your permission to ask your child to be in the study. If you (and your child) agree, he/she will spend about 30 minutes answering questions using a computer. Youth will be asked questions about what it is like living at the facility, including questions about the staff, other youth who live in the facility, and the health services he/she might have used. Some youth will also be asked questions about alcohol and drug use, and some will be asked about sexual experiences that might have happened, including those in this facility.

The computer will randomly decide which questions your child is asked; it has nothing to do with your child's background or history. If your child agrees to be in the study, a researcher will show him/her how to use the computer. He/she will see the questions on the screen and hear the questions through headphones. Your child will touch the screen to answer the questions. No one will know which questions your child is asked or what he/she answers.

Your child does not have to do the survey. It is entirely up to you whether we can ask your child, and then it is up to your child. Your choice will not affect your child's case or the services that he/she gets in any way. If your child agrees to do the survey, he/she can stop answering questions at any point. If there is a question that your child does not want to answer, he/she can skip it.

We will do everything we can to protect your child's privacy. To help keep everything private:

- The researcher who meets with your child will not ask for your child's name, and your child will not be asked to put his/her name in the computer.
- All the answers that he/she puts in the computer will be confidential – that is, no one will know your child's answers.
- All of the researchers working on this study have signed documents saying that they will protect your child's privacy and not to tell anyone anything that he/she has said. Anyone who intentionally breaks this promise would lose their job and might face criminal charges.
- But there is one important exception to the privacy rule. If your child tells the researcher about any abuse or harm to him/her or another child, it will be reported to the government agency that investigates these kinds of problems.

Some of the questions on the computer might ask about private and sensitive things and may bother your child. If thinking about the questions upsets or makes your child sad, he/she will be able to talk to a counselor at the facility. If he/she does not want to talk to a counselor who works there, arrangements can be made to talk with a counselor who does not work at the facility or for him/her to call the ChildHelp National Hotline (1-800-4-A-Child or 1-800-422-4453).

If you have any questions about the study, you can call (FACILITY CONTACT NAME) at (FACILITY NAME) at (FACILITY PHONE NUMBER) or you can call the National Survey of Youth in Custody Information Line (1-888-611-9273). If you have questions about (NAME OF YOUTH) rights as a study participant, you can call Sharon Zack at 1-800-937-8281, ext. 8828.

Please indicate your choice by checking one of the boxes below and signing and dating the form. Then return it in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

- Yes**, I give my permission for you to ask my child to take part in this study.
- No**, I do not give you permission to ask my child to take part in this study.

 Your signature

 Date

Parent's Guide to the National Survey of Youth in Custody (NSYC)



Sponsored by

**Bureau of Justice Statistics
U.S. Department of Justice**



The **National Survey of Youth in Custody (NSYC)** is a study that will help describe what it is like for young people living in correctional facilities. The U.S. Department of Justice did the first NSYC study in 2008, and over 10,000 young people from almost 200 facilities across America took part. The second NSYC study will begin in 2011, and over 23,000 young people will be asked to take part in the study.

The study will ask young people to answer questions about themselves, their feelings, and their experiences. Their answers will be combined to show what it is like to live in juvenile facilities in America.

Your child may or may not be picked for the study. Your child has a chance to be a part of the study because he or she is now staying in a facility that has agreed to participate. It is important for the NSYC to give a true picture of the experiences and needs of all young



people—male and female, all different races and ethnic groups, all ages, from all parts of the country, and living in all types

of facilities. The study will give the best information if every selected child



completes the survey.

The NSYC interview is done on a computer. If your child is selected and you give your permission, he or she will be invited to spend about 30 minutes completing the survey on a laptop computer. Youth who agree to take part will be seated in front of the computer and will put on a pair of headphones. The computer will start by explaining how to listen to the survey questions and how to choose answers. Youth will also be told how to skip a question if they don't want to answer it.

The survey questions and possible answer choices will appear on the computer screen. At the same time, your child can listen through the headphones to a recorded voice reading what's on the screen. Your child will touch the computer screen to select an answer for each question, moving along at his or her own pace.

The questions will ask about what it is like living at the facility. This includes questions about the staff, the health services he or she might have used, and other youth who live in the facility. Some youth will also be asked questions about alcohol and drug use, and some will be asked about any sexual experiences that might have happened in the facility.

Your child's answers will be private and anonymous. Your child's answers will not be shared with anyone—not the facility staff, not even you. The room will be set up so that no one can see the answers your child selects. The survey team will not know any child's name, and we will combine the responses from all the youth who take part. The study reports will give only totals and percentages, never any individual child's answers.

Your child's answers will be safeguarded by a Federal law that protects the information from any use other than for research. Federal law will protect the answers that your child gives, and no one, not even a court of law, can force the survey team to release information about your child's identity to anyone. But there is one important exception to the privacy rule. If your child tells the researcher about any abuse or harm occurring in the facility, it will be reported to the state or local government agency that investigates these kinds of problems.



The NSYC interview is voluntary. Even if you allow your child to participate, he or she will still have a choice. Before the interview starts, a member of the survey team will explain the survey. Youth who don't want to take part can quit before the interview starts or at any time during the interview. They can also skip any questions that they don't want to answer. No matter what you or your child decides about taking part in the survey, there will be no consequences. Your child will not get into any trouble if he or she chooses to not participate or quits early. Also, your child will not receive anything for participating or get any special services as a result.

Facilities are selected randomly for the survey. There are more than 2,900 juvenile facilities in the country. About 500 of them will be randomly selected to be in the survey. This means that the facilities were selected by chance, similar to conducting a lottery. Your child lives in a facility that was selected. All youth living in the smaller facilities are automatically selected to be in the survey. If your child's facility is larger, then the survey team will randomly select youth for the study from the code-name list of everyone living there.

The NSYC is sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, an agency within the U.S. Department of Justice.



The survey is being conducted by Westat, an independent research organization that is not affiliated with any of the facilities in this study.



**For further information call
1•888•XXX•XXXX or contact:**

Susan Cross
NSYC Team Leader
Westat
1600 Research Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20850-3195
240-453-2664
susancross@westat.com

**Common Script With ChildHelp Reference and Youth Name
Consent Request**

OMB No:

Expiration Date:

(PARENT NAME)

RE: (YOUTH NAME)

Hello, may I speak with (PARENT/GURADIAN)?

My name is (NAME). I am working for a company called Westat and we are calling on behalf of (FACILITY) for a special study that is being conducted for the U.S. Department of Justice.

We sent a packet of information to you about the National Survey of Youth in Custody, a special study being done by the U.S. Department of Justice to learn more about what it is like for young people living in correctional facilities.

Did you receive the packet?

For quality control reasons, I'm recording this phone call.

I'm calling today to discuss the study with you and ask if you plan to return the consent form to (LOCATION).

So let me tell you a bit more about the study. The government will use the study to see if changes need to be made at facilities. We will combine the answers that youth from each facility give into a report on the facility. We will also tell the state agency responsible for protecting youth about answers related to the safety of youth at the facility. No names will appear in the report.

Young people in every state in the country will be asked to be part of this study and we would like your permission to ask your child, (NAME OF YOUTH), to be in the study. If you and (YOUTH FIRST NAME) agree, (he/she) will spend about 30 minutes answering questions using a computer. Youth will be asked questions about what it is like living at the facility, including questions about the staff, other youth who live in the facility, and the health services (he/she) might have used. Some youth will also be asked questions about alcohol and drug use, and some will be asked about sexual experiences that might have happened, including those in the facility.

The computer will randomly decide which questions (YOUTH FIRST NAME) is asked; it has nothing to do with (his/her) background or history. If (he/she) agrees to be in the study, a researcher will show (him/her) how to use the computer. (He/she) will see the questions on the screen and hear the questions through headphones. (He/She) will touch the screen to answer the questions. No one will know which questions (he/she) is asked or what (he/she) answers.

Do you have any questions so far?

(YOUTH FIRST NAME) does not have to do the survey. It is entirely up to you whether we can ask (him/her), and then it is up to (him/her). Your choice will not affect (his/her) case or the services that (he/she) gets in any way. If (he/she) agrees to do the survey, (he/she) can stop answering questions at any point. If there is a question (he/she) does not want to answer, (he/she) can skip it.

We will do everything we can to protect your child's privacy. To keep everything private:

- The researcher who meets with (YOUTH FIRST NAME) will not know or ask for (his/her) name and (he/she) will not be asked to put (his/her) name in the computer.
- All the answers that (he/she) puts in the computer will be confidential – that is, no one will know (his/her) answers.
- All of the researchers working on this study have signed documents saying that they will protect your child's privacy and promising not to tell anyone anything that (he/she) has said. Anyone who intentionally breaks this promise would lose their job and might face criminal charges.

But there is one important exception to the privacy rule.

- If (YOUTH FIRST NAME) directly tells the researcher about any abuse or harm to (him/her) or another child, it will be reported to the government agency that investigates these kinds of problems.

Is it clear to you when something will be reported to the government agency that investigates these kinds of problems? (If needed: Is it clear to you that the answers your child puts into the computer won't be reported to the government agency that investigates these kinds of problems?)

Some of the questions on the computer might ask about private and sensitive things and may bother your child. If thinking about the questions upsets or makes (YOUTH FIRST NAME) sad, (he/she) may want to talk with a counselor at the facility. If (he/she) does not want to talk to a counselor who works there, arrangements can be made to talk with a counselor who does not work at the facility or with someone from the ChildHelp National Hotline (1-800-4-A-Child or 1-800-422-4453).

If you have any questions about the study, you can call (FACILITY CONTACT NAME) at (FACILITY NAME) at (FACILITY PHONE NUMBER) or you can call the National Survey of Youth in Custody Information Line (1-888-XXX-XXXX). If you have questions about (NAME OF YOUTH) rights as a study participant, you can call Sharon Zack at 1-800-937-8281, ext. 8828. (Do you want me to repeat the telephone number?)

Ok, that summarizes the study. Do you have any questions?

Do you give your permission for us to ask (NAME OF YOUTH) to be part of this important study?

- YES, GIVES PERMISSION.
- NO, DOES NOT GIVE PERMISSION.

NOTE: INTERVIEWER NAME WILL BE RETAINED IN THE DATABASE IN WHICH CONSENT RECORDS ARE MAINTAINED.