



National Household
Education Surveys Program

NHES:2012
Full-scale Data Collection
Request for OMB Review
OMB# 1850-0768 v.9
Part A

September 15, 2011

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PART A. JUSTIFICATION

Request for Clearance

The National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES) has been a system of landline random-digit-dial (RDD) surveys sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The NHES surveys have been conducted approximately every other year from 1991 through 2007. Like virtually all RDD surveys, NHES has experienced declining response rates. In addition, the increased percentage of households without landline telephones (mostly due to conversion to cellular-only coverage) raised issues about population coverage. While studies examining possible biases in the NHES survey estimates have not identified nonresponse bias, some indications of possible coverage bias were detected in a special bias study conducted in 2007.

The combination of the continuing declines in RDD survey response and population coverage issues prompted NCES to undertake a redesign of the NHES program in 2008. The goals of the redesign effort were to develop and assess approaches to collecting important information on education topics from households while improving response rates and coverage from the previous design. A feasibility test of the new design was conducted in 2009 and a field test was conducted in 2011. The results of the field test provided guidance on the design for full scale NHES. This package updates the 2011 field test submission with the final proposed design and materials for the 2012 full scale data collection, and is subject to a 60 day comment period waiver approved as part of the 2011 Field Test OMB clearance (OMB# 1850-0768 v.7 and v.8).

The NHES:2012 will screen approximately 160,000 households, of which, it is expected, approximately 30,187 will be parents or guardians of target age children, who will be asked to respond to one of two topical surveys: the Early Childhood Program Participation survey (ECPP) or the Parent and Family Involvement in Education survey (PFI).

NHES Background

The NHES was developed by NCES to complement its institutional surveys. It is the principal mechanism for addressing topics that cannot be addressed in institutional data collections. By collecting data directly from households, the NHES allows NCES to gather data on a wide range of issues, such as early childhood care and education, children's readiness for school, parent perceptions of school safety and discipline, before- and after-school activities of school-age children, participation in adult and continuing education, parent involvement in education, school choice, homeschooling, and civic involvement. These topics are addressed through a series of rotating survey modules. First, households are screened for the presence of eligible members, and then topical interviews are conducted.

NHES surveys have been conducted in the winter and spring of approximately every other year from 1991 through 2007 using random digit dial (RDD) sampling and telephone data collection from landline

telephones. Each survey collection included the administration of household screening questions (screener) and two or three topical surveys. Like virtually all RDD surveys, NHES Screener response rates have declined (from above 80% in early 1990s to 53% in 2007) and the decline in the percentage of households without landline telephones (from ~93% in early 2004 to about 75% in 2009 mostly due to conversion to cellular-only coverage) raises issues about population coverage. To address these issues, the NHES is transitioning from a Random Digit Dial (RDD) interviewer administered study to an Address Based Sample, self-administered study.

The 2007 data collection included the Parent and Family Involvement in Education survey (PFI) and the School Readiness survey (SR). Following the standard schedule, the next NHES would have been conducted in 2009. However, due to the redesign, this collection was canceled, leaving a gap in the data time series.

Data from the NHES are used to provide national cross-sectional estimates on populations of special interest to education researchers and policymakers. For surveys about children, the population of interest is defined by age or grade in school, or both, depending on the particular survey topic and research questions. For surveys of adults, the population of interest is persons ages 16 and older who are not enrolled in grade 12 or below, excluding those on active duty military service and those who are institutionalized. The NHES targets these populations using specific screening and sampling procedures.

The NHES design also yields estimates for subgroups of interest for each survey, as defined by age or grade for children, education participation status for adults, Hispanic origin, and Black or African American racial background for all populations of interest. In addition to providing cross-sectional estimates, the NHES is also designed to provide estimates of change over time in key statistics.

Survey data from the NHES have been used for a large number of descriptive and analytic reports and articles, including NCES publications, publications of other Federal agencies, policy analyses, theses and dissertations, conference papers, and journal articles. A list of NHES publications issued by NCES can be found on the NHES website, <http://nces.ed.gov/nhes>.

The field test conducted in 2011 achieved an overall response rate of approximately 58%, as compared to the 2007 overall response rate of 39-41% (depending on the module). The results suggest that the new methodology has the ability to address the response rate and coverage issues identified in the 2007 data collection.

NHES: 2012 Surveys

As shown in exhibit 1, each administration of the NHES has included more than one topical survey. The NHES:2012 will include two topical surveys: the Parent and Family Involvement in Education survey (PFI) and the Early Childhood Program Participation survey (ECPP). These two surveys are repeated administrations of

topics shown in the exhibit below, but have been adapted for administration under a new methodological design. The instruments are described in detail in Part C of this document and appear in Appendix B.

Exhibit 1. Surveys conducted under the National Household Education Surveys Program, by years administered: 1991 through 2007

Survey topics	NHES survey administration								
	1991	1993	1995	1996	1999 ¹	2001	2003	2005	2007
Early childhood education/participation	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	
Adult education	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
School readiness		✓			✓				✓
School safety and discipline		✓							
Parent and family involvement in education				✓	✓		✓		✓
Civic involvement				✓	✓				
After-school programs and activities			✓ ²		✓	✓ ³		✓	
Household and library use				✓					

¹ NHES:1999 was a special end-of-decade administration that measured key indicators from the surveys fielded during the 1990s.

² These items were only asked about children in first through third grades.

³ The NHES:2001 survey about after-school programs and activities (ASPA) also included before-school programs.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, and 2007.

- **The Early Childhood Program Participation Survey (ECPP)**, previously conducted in 1991, 1995, 2001, and 2005, surveys families of children ages 6 or younger who are not yet enrolled in kindergarten and provides estimates of children’s participation in care by relatives and non-relatives in private homes and in center-based daycare or preschool programs (including Head Start and Early Head Start). Additional topics addressed in ECPP interviews have included family learning activities; out-of-pocket expenses for nonparental care; continuity of care; factors related to parental selection of care; parents’ perceptions of care quality; child health and disability; and child, parent, and household characteristics.
- **The Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey (PFI)**, previously conducted in 1996, 2003, and 2007, surveys families of children and youth enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade or homeschooled for these grades, with an age limit of 20 years, and addresses specific ways that families are involved in their children’s school; school practices to involve and support families; involvement with children’s homework; and involvement in education activities outside of school. Parents of homeschoolers are asked about their reasons for choosing homeschooling and resources they used in homeschooling. Information about child, parent, and household characteristics is also collected. To minimize response burden and potential respondent confusion, an enrolled and homeschool version of the PFI questionnaire was created for self administration.

A.1 Circumstances Necessitating Collection of Information

The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002: 20 U.S. Code § 9543) defines the legislative mission of NCES to collect, report, analyze, and disseminate statistical data related to education in the United States and in other nations.

The NHES is specifically designed to support this mission by providing a means to investigate education issues that cannot be adequately studied through the Center’s institution-based data collection efforts. For

example, young children are cared for in many types of informal or formal settings and some children are cared for only in their own homes. There is no available sample frame that includes all of these types of care arrangements. The ECLS-K collects data on past care arrangements among students enrolled in a kindergarten program, which does not include homeschooled students and is only retrospective. It is efficient and economical to interview parents about their involvement in children's education through a household-based approach rather than incurring the cost and nonresponse involved in enlisting schools, obtaining lists of parents, and sampling parents from those lists. Additionally, NHES is the only source of estimates on key childhood care and schooling dimensions that are nationally representative of children or students. The NHES surveys conducted from 1991 through 2007 afford the opportunity to track change over time in several important education domains that are of interest to policymakers and researchers, such as early childhood experiences and parent involvement in education.

Many issues that are central to assessing the condition of education in the United States can be measured adequately only by a household-based survey conducted at regular intervals. Other studies dealing with similar topics differ in crucial ways from the NHES (see section A.4.1 for summary information about other studies). In particular, none of them measure the topics of interest at specific, planned intervals; as a result, changes over time cannot be studied effectively with other existing data sources.

The NHES:2012 will fill a vital gap in household education statistics. For example, data collected in the NHES:2012 will allow updates to estimates of the number of children homeschooled in the U.S., the different care arrangements available to parents, school readiness indicators, and participation in school choice.

A.2 Purposes and Uses of the Data

The NHES:2012 data collection will provide policymakers and researchers with data on early childhood education, parent and family involvement in education, and homeschooling that are not available elsewhere. The data contribute directly to NCES education indicators, reports, and statistical abstracts, and researchers nationwide rely on NHES data for important policy analyses.

A.3 Use of Improved Information Technology

The NHES:2012 production survey will be conducted for NCES by the United States Bureau of Census using three complementary survey systems - (1) Amgraf One Form Plus, (2) Docuprint, and (3) integrated Computer Assisted Data Entry (iCADE) - that will improve the efficiency and accuracy of the data collection process.

- **Forms Design.** Questionnaires will be created using Amgraf One Form Plus. Completed hardcopy forms can be processed by iCADE to capture responses through optical mark recognition (OMR) and keying from image (KFI). Questionnaires will be printed, trimmed and stitched through an in-house print on-

demand process using a Docuprint system which allows personalization, and the ability to tailor items to each specific respondent. The data from the questionnaires will be captured by the iCADE technology/software, which automatically extracts all check box entries (OMR) and captures and displays an image of all other entries to an operator for KFI.

- **Image Preprocessing.** iCADE applies image preprocessing to the forms in their image format in order to correct any skewing at the time of scanning, and the iCADE software performs registration to align the individual questionnaire page template with the appropriate scanned image. The scanner despeckles the image to remove unwanted pixels.
- **Data Capture.** iCADE reads the form image files, checks the presence of data, processes all check box fields through OMR and presents an image of the handwritten fields to an operator for KFI.
- **Verification.** Extracted KFI data are subject to 100% field validation according to project specifications. If a data value violates validation rules, the data is flagged for review by verifiers who interactively review the images and the corresponding extracted data, and resolve validation errors.
- **Archiving.** Images will be scanned and archived to magnetic storage located on a secured server in case they are needed later. This eliminates the need to save paper copies of the completed questionnaires.

A.4 Efforts to Identify Duplication

In the course of developing the new design, we drew upon recent literature in survey methodology and knowledge drawn from methodological research presented in venues such as professional meetings and seminars of the American Association for Public Opinion Research. In addition, a Technical Review Panel of experts in survey methodology was convened to provide input to the approach, and these experts were queried about other similar efforts. At that time, no other national surveys examining a similar alternative to an RDD design were identified.

Appendix C contains a review of other surveys that cover topics similar to those in the NHES. The review shows that there is little overlap between the NHES and these other surveys.

A.4.1 Topical Surveys

As noted in the introduction, the ECPP and PFI forms will be fielded in the NHES:2012. The NHES:2012 data collection will produce national estimates, reports, public-use datasets, and restricted datasets.

Past and current efforts have been made to avoid duplication in the NHES topical surveys. No other surveys have been identified that duplicate the ECPP and PFI Surveys. The limitations of other existing surveys in relation to the data collected by NHES fall into three general categories:

Population: Most other surveys do not address the topics covered in NHES for the populations of interest. For example, the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) focuses on children in Head Start, whereas all children who have not yet started kindergarten are of interest in the ECPP Survey. Likewise, the National Survey of Early Childhood Education (NSECE) focuses primarily on low income children and their program participation. The National Survey of Parents of Public School Students and Survey of Family and School Partnerships in Public Schools focus on parents of children in public schools; those whose children attend private schools or are homeschooled are not represented. Some studies, such as the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (ECLS-B) and the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 1998-1999 (ECLS-K), focus on single-year cohorts that are followed over time and therefore do not provide nationally representative data on different age groups. The NHES surveys are designed to complement these longitudinal collections with more frequent and more inclusive cross-sectional data.

Survey Content: Extant studies are limited in the content that they include relative to the goals of the NHES surveys. Studies such as the National Survey of America's Families and the National Study of the Changing Workforce collect some information on child care or program participation, but their primary emphasis is on other topics, and the depth of information on early care and education experiences is limited. The Head Start FACES project collects information on Head Start program participation and some family measures, but does not account for all nonparental care and programs. The Current Population Survey October Education Supplement is limited to a relatively small number of items on education participation and does not address the roles that parents play in their children's school, schoolwork, and home activities. Also, no nationally representative study other than the NHES collects detailed data on homeschooling.

Current Estimates and Measuring Change Over Time. Many of the extant surveys follow one cohort or periodic cohorts (e.g., the Early Childhood Longitudinal Studies, Head Start FACES, NSECE) or are no longer conducted (e.g., the National Survey of America's Families, Family Involvement in Education: A National Portrait). As a result, they cannot meet the NHES goal of providing up-to-date cross-sectional estimates and measures of change over time for all children who have not started kindergarten or for children in kindergarten through 12th grade, as is provided by the NHES.

Due to these limitations in extant studies and the importance of data collected by the NHES, NCES plans to continue to conduct the ECPP and PFI surveys under the NHES program.

A.5 Collection of Data from Small Businesses

Not applicable.

A.6 Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection

This request is for clearance of the NHES:2012. Topics covered in this NHES collection have been addressed in previous NHES administrations; repeating the surveys allows for analysis of trends over time. Less frequent collection would result in incomplete tracking of these trends. The last full NHES study was conducted in 2007. In order to focus on redesigning the methodology and instruments, NCES did not conduct the 2009 data collection. This has left a gap in our trend data.

A.7 Special Circumstances

None of the special circumstances listed in the instructions for completing the supporting statement apply to the NHES:2012.

A.8 Public Comment and Consultations Outside the Agency

The corresponding 60-day Federal Register notice was published on July 8, 2010 (75 FR, No. 130, p. 39215). No public comments were received in response to this notice.

Methodological Experts

A Technical Review Panel (TRP) comprising leading experts in survey methodology was established to provide input to the redesign of the NHES system. Most members of the panel met in February 2010 to discuss the proposed design for the field test, and their comments and suggestions led to changes reflected in this submission.

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Content Area Experts

The content of the NHES:2012 topical surveys repeats, to a great extent, the content developed for previous NHES administrations. As a result, the PFI and ECPP surveys reflect the cumulative input of many experts in the field and past NHES Technical Review Panels. In order to ensure that the ECPP and PFI Surveys address important issues in the topical areas of interest and incorporate important emerging issues, the design phase of the study included consultations with experts in the substantive areas addressed in the surveys. These experts included persons in government agencies, academe, and research organizations.

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A.9 Payments to Respondents

The NHES:2003 included an extensive experiment in the use of small cash incentives to improve unit response. The experiment demonstrated that gains in respondent cooperation could be realized with relatively modest cash incentives (Brick et al. 2006). Such incentives were used in NHES:2005 and NHES:2007. The NHES:2009 feasibility test showed that an increase in the modest respondent incentives could significantly boost response rates. The NHES:2011 Field Test continued this line of experimentation on incentives and provided evidence of optimal levels at the screener and topical stage.

Based on the 2011 findings, we will conduct an incentive experiment at the topical level to further refine an optimal strategy for the use of incentive in the NHES. An advance cash incentive of \$5 will be included in the first screener mailing. For those households in which a child is selected as the subject of an ECPP or PFI questionnaire, cases that responded to the first or second mailing of the screener will receive a \$5 cash incentive with the topical surveys. Evidence from the 2011 Field Test indicated that topical response rates can benefit significantly by providing later screener respondents with a larger topical incentive. To confirm this finding, we will subsample late screener respondents (those responding to the 3rd or 4th questionnaire mailing) to receive either a \$5 or \$15 cash incentive with their first topical survey mailing.

A.10 Assurance of Confidentiality

Respondents will be informed of the voluntary nature of the survey and of the confidentiality provision in the initial cover letter and on the questionnaires, stating that their responses may be used for statistical purposes only and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002), 20 U.S. Code § 9573]. Additionally, all staff members and subcontractors working on the NHES and having access to the data are required to sign the NCES Affidavit of Nondisclosure. Notarized affidavits are kept on file by the contractor and submitted to NCES quarterly. In addition, all contractor staff members who have access to confidential data and work on the project more than 30 days are required to have a federal background check.

A.11 Sensitive Questions

The NHES is a voluntary survey, and no persons are required to respond to it. In addition, respondents may decline to answer any question in the survey. Respondents are informed of the voluntary nature of the survey in the cover letter that accompanies the questionnaire, as well as on the actual questionnaire. At the same time, some items in the surveys may be considered sensitive by some respondents:

ECPP and PFI Surveys: Child development and education experts consider economic disadvantage and children's disabilities to be important factors in children's preschool and school experiences and in family involvement in their education. As a result, the ECPP and PFI surveys contain measures of these characteristics, including:

- Household income;
- Receipt of public assistance in the form of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), food stamps, and the Women, Infants, and Children program (WIC); and
- Children's disability conditions.

Measures of household income and government assistance are important because access to early childhood programs by children at-risk and the education involvement of families of different socioeconomic backgrounds are of interest to policymakers, child development specialists, and educators. These items are important to identifying children at risk and have been administered successfully in previous NHES studies. Respondents are also asked the age at which they first became a parent to a child. This may be sensitive for parents in some situations.

The 2007 response rates for these items were very high. For total household income, the 2007 PFI survey had an item response rate of 90.45 percent. Item response rates for receipt of public assistance were also high: for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, 98.86 percent; for the Women, Infants, and Children Program, 99.05 percent; and for Food Stamps, 99.03 percent. The 2007 item response rates for questions about children's disabilities were all over 99 percent. In the 2009 pilot, the item response rate for age at which mother first became a parent to any child was 98.4 percent among mothers completing the survey.

ECPP Survey: In addition to the items above, the ECPP survey also includes questions about assistance to pay for child care. This measure is important to understand families' and children's access to early childhood programs.

PFI Survey: The PFI survey includes items concerning children's school performance and difficulties in school. Among these are:

- Children's school performance and difficulties, including school grades, suspensions, and expulsions; and
- Identification of children's schools.

Items concerning school performance and difficulty are important to the PFI Survey as indicators of school readiness for young children, and as correlates of parent and family involvement for children of all ages and grades. Item response rates for these PFI items in 2007 were also high: 98.22 percent for children's grades, 99.57 percent for out-of-school suspension, and 99.64 percent for expulsion.

Another element of the surveys that may be sensitive to some parents is the identification of children's schools. This feature allows analysts to link the NHES data to other NCES datasets containing additional data about schools, greatly enhancing the ability to examine the relationships between students' and families' experiences and the characteristics of schools. This was done for the first time in the PFI survey of NHES:2007; the item response rate for the identification of the child's school was 97.1 percent.

A.12 Estimated Response Burden

The response burden per instrument and the total response burden are shown in table 1. The administration times for the screener, ECPP, and PFI questionnaires are based on practice administrations. The expected number of respondents and number of responses are based on the expected numbers of completed surveys of each type, discussed in section B.1.4. The hourly rate of \$22.77 is based on the average for all civilian workers from the January 2011 National Compensation Survey (<http://www.bls.gov/ncs/ocs/sp/nctb1477.pdf>). There are no other costs to respondents. There are also no recordkeeping requirements associated with NHES. For the NHES:2012, a total of 15,460 burden hours are anticipated, resulting in a cost to respondents of approximately \$352,024.

Table 1. Estimated response burden for NHES:2012

Interview forms	Estimated time (minutes)	Number sampled	Anticipated Response Rate	Estimated Number of respondents	Estimated Number of responses	Total time (hours)
Study Total		160,000		97,376	119,411	15,460
Screener (average)	5	160,000*	68%	97,376	97,376	8,115
ECPP questionnaire	20	6,339	73%	4,628	4,628	1,543
PFI questionnaire	20	23,847	73%	17,407	17,407	5,802

* Approximately 10.5% of addresses will be returned by USPS as invalid, reducing the final sample size to 143,200 addresses.

A.13 Annualized Cost to Respondents

There are no costs beyond those presented in section A.12.

A.14 Annualized Cost to the Federal Government

The total cost of NHES: 2012 to the government is approximately 5.1 million dollars over a period of 20 months. This includes all direct and indirect costs of the design, data collection, analysis, and reporting phases of the study, as well as the delivery of data sets to NCES.

A.15 Reasons for Program Changes

The apparent increase in the respondent burden is due to the fact that the last OMB clearance was for a smaller field test, and this request is for NHES: 2012, which will be the first full scale data collection of the NHES since 2007.

A.16 Publication Plans and Project Schedule

The NHES: 2012 will produce datasets, statistics, and reports. The following are the planned outcomes of the NHES: 2012:

- A fully documented public use data set that will be available for download from the NCES website as well as on CD
- A codebook with weighted and unweighted frequencies of all variables
- First Look Reports that highlight key findings from the study and will be released shortly after the data sets
- Detailed reports on topics including: school choice, homeschooling, early child care, and education are anticipated

Exhibit 2 presents the schedule of project activities for NHES:2012.

Exhibit 2. NHES: 2012 schedule of major activities

Task	Date of Scheduled Conduct/Completion
Survey Instruments Formatting and Printing	November-December, 2011
Data Collection Begins (advance letter mailing)	January 5, 2012
Data Collection Ends	August 31, 2012
Public use data files released	May 1, 2013
Restricted use data files released	June 30,2013

A.17 Approval for Not Displaying the Expiration Date for OMB Approval

The OMB authorization number and expiration date will be displayed on the hard copy questionnaire.

A.18 Exceptions to the Certification Statement

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

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