

New Outreach Materials

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chats+

Children's Health after
the Storms (CHATS)

Children's Health after the Storms Study: INFORMATION FOR AREA SCHOOLS



The Gulf Coast is still feeling the effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Gulf Coast children may have faced a number of issues after the Storms, from mold in homes, to renovations, to chemicals in the air in FEMA-supplied trailers. Communities in the Gulf Coast continue to share concerns about the ways these issues may affect the health of our children.

With support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the involvement of local partners, RTI International, a nonprofit research organization, created the Children's Health after the Storms (CHATS) study to begin the process of finding answers. CHATS will help us better understand the effects of living conditions—such as storm-damaged housing, FEMA-supplied trailers, or housing not impacted by the Storms—on children living in the area. During the first part of CHATS, the feasibility phase, we will try to enroll about 500 eligible children from the affected areas in Louisiana and Mississippi.

Because many families left the area in the years after the Storms, this part of the study will help us know if we can find enough eligible families. If this first part of the study succeeds, we can then do a full study, which will involve many more counties and parishes, as well as many more affected families from throughout the region. By taking part, families can help Gulf Coast communities better understand and address the impact of the Storms on children's health.

In the coming weeks, CHATS will begin contacting parents and guardians of randomly selected households to learn if they are interested in seeing if their child is eligible to participate in the study. Children selected to participate in the study are now between the ages of 3 and 15, and some may be students attending your school if it is located within the counties and parishes identified for the first phase of the study. **In Louisiana, these areas are:** Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard, East Baton Rouge, Livingston, and St. Helena parishes. **In Mississippi, they are:** George (Lucedale), Harrison (Long Beach, Gulf Port, Biloxi, and Pass Christian), Jackson (Ocean Springs, Gauter, Pascagoula, and Moss Point) counties.

turn for additional information

Participants will help us understand and address the impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on children's health.

What happens during the study? Households participating in the study will be interviewed about their child's health, and the child will be asked to provide blood and urine samples, and to perform breathing tests. In addition, the air quality in the home will be tested and some children will have personal air quality monitors to wear for 1 week. The purpose of the personal air quality monitors is to relate the everyday exposures the children now have to pollutants with their health. Parents will receive their child's test results. If there are any areas of concern, the study will direct families to local healthcare partners that can help.

What does this mean for the schools? During the course of the study, a small number of children ages 7 and older will arrive to school wearing a small air quality monitor, called a Personal Exposure Measuring (PEM) device. Each child will wear the device for about 1 week. The PEM is used as part of the study to test the air quality in the child's normal daily environment (i.e., home, school, parks, playground, etc.) over several days. The device will not interfere with the child's school activities.

Are schools being asked to do anything for the CHATS study? No. We simply want to let school officials and teachers know about the study, and that some children attending their schools may wear the PEM devices as part of the study.

How will we know which children have the approval of their parents/guardians to take part in the study and wear the PEM?

At the time each child aged 7 and older is enrolled in the study, we will identify the child's school and school district. Each child enrolled in the study will have a permission slip signed by their parent or guardian, giving approval for their participation in the study. Because the study asks the children to wear the PEM beginning on the first day they enroll in the study, we will not be able to notify schools in advance. However, RTI will work with local school officials to ensure that schools are kept informed about the study.

Who are the sponsors of CHATS? CHATS is led by RTI International, a nonprofit research organization and respected leader in children's health research, along with local Louisiana and Mississippi partners, including the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, Coastal Family Health Center, and the Louisiana Public Health Institute. CHATS is supported by CDC as part of its continuing public health commitment to the people affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

How will CHATS help participating children and families? Participating families will get their children's blood, urine, and breathing test results, and results of air quality tests conducted in their homes within 5 months of each completed assessment. If CHATS finds areas of concern about a child's health, we will provide a resource list of clinics and doctors to contact for help.

How is RTI working with participating communities? RTI is working with local community leaders and family service organizations serving families in the community who have joined us to help spread the word about CHATS. These organizations are also helping us make sure the community's voice is heard, and will share with us any concerns or questions about the study.

For more information on the study:

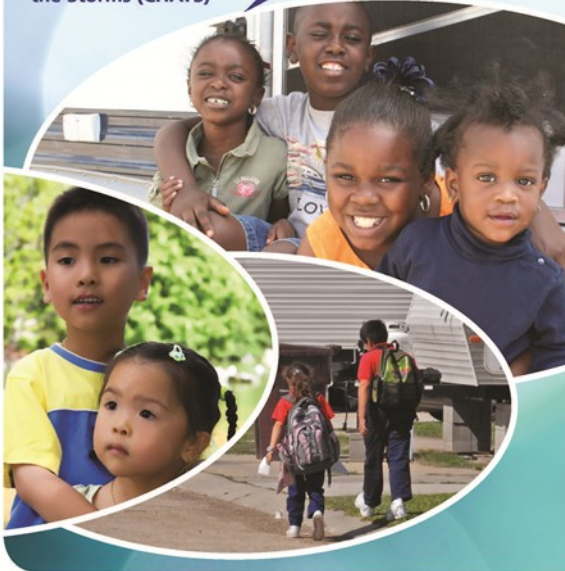
**Please visit the CHATS website at
<http://chats.rti.org>
or call 877-834-7088**

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Community Information Card



What is the Children's Health after the Storms (CHATS) Study?



The Gulf Coast is still feeling the effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Gulf Coast children may have faced a number of issues after the Storms, from mold in homes that were flooded, to renovations, to chemicals in the air in FEMA-supplied trailers. Communities in the Gulf Coast continue to share concerns about the ways these issues may affect the health of our children.

With support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), RTI International a nonprofit research organization and leader in children's health research, together with local partners, including the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, Coastal Family Health Center, and the Louisiana Public Health Institute, created Children's Health after the Storms (CHATS) study to begin the process of finding answers. CHATS will help us better understand the effects of living conditions—such as storm-damaged housing, FEMA-supplied trailers, or housing not impacted by the Storms—on children living in the area. During the first part of CHATS, we will try to enroll a small number of eligible children from Louisiana and Mississippi only. Because many families left the area in the years after the Storms, this part of the study will help us know if we can find enough eligible families. If this first part of the study succeeds, we can then do a full study for which we will need many more families.

In the coming weeks, CHATS will enroll children who are now ages 3 to 15 who lived in the areas affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. By taking part, area families can help us understand and address the impact of the Storms on children's health.

By encouraging eligible families to take part in the study, everyone can play an important part in helping us understand and address the impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on children's health.

How will CHATS help children and families that take part in the study?

Participating families will get their child's blood, urine, and breathing test results, and results of air quality tests done in their homes within 5 months of each completed assessment. If CHATS finds areas of concern about a child's health, we will provide a resource list of clinics and doctors that parents can contact for help.

Who can take part in CHATS?

Households have been randomly chosen, that is by chance, to take part in CHATS. If your household has been chosen to participate in CHATS, you will receive a letter and brochure in the mail inviting you to participate in the study. Because the feasibility phase is small, not every family affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita will be invited to participate. For the feasibility phase, we will look for children only in certain communities. However, if this phase is successful, many more families will be invited to participate in a possible, full study to follow.

How is RTI working with participating communities?

RTI is working with local community leaders and community-based organizations serving families in the community who have joined us to help spread the word about CHATS. These organizations are also helping us make sure the community's voice is heard, and will share with us any feedback from the community about the study.

Where can we learn more about the study?

- ✓ **Speak with a CHATS team member—call our toll-free telephone number at 877-834-7088.**
- ✓ **Look for local community organizations, private businesses, churches, and other religious institutions that display the CHATS logo.**
- ✓ **Visit our website at <http://chats.rti.org>.**



Community Poster



Are you the parent or guardian of a child between the ages of 3 and 15 who lived in the area after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita?

Does your child still live in Louisiana or Mississippi today?

If so, your child may be eligible to participate in Children's Health after the Storms (CHATS), a new research study.

CHATS will look at the effects of the living conditions—such as storm-damaged housing, FEMA-supplied trailers, and housing unaffected by the Storms—on children in this area. CHATS interviewers will soon begin contacting area families that have been randomly selected to determine if their children are eligible to participate in the first phase of the study. Parents whose children take part in CHATS will receive a token of thanks and a copy of their child's test results. If a CHATS interviewer contacts you and you agree to participate, your family can help Gulf Coast communities better understand and address the impact of the Storms on children's health.



To learn more about CHATS, please visit our website at:

<http://chats.rti.org>

or call us toll-free, at

877-834-7088

News Print Ad

Children's Health after the Storms/CHATS

Are you the parent or guardian of a child between the ages of 3 and 15 who lived in Louisiana or Mississippi after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita? If so, your child may be eligible to participate in Children's Health after the Storms or CHATS, a new research study. In its first phase, CHATS will look at the effects of living conditions—such as storm damaged housing, FEMA-supplied trailers, and housing unaffected by the storms—on children in this area.

Soon, CHATS interviewers will begin contacting area families that have been randomly selected to determine if their children are eligible to participate in the study. If you are among those contacted and agree to participate, your family can help Gulf Coast communities better understand and address the impact of the storms on children's health. For more information about CHATS, please visit our website at: <http://chats.rti.org>.

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