

**To:** Jordan Cohen  
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA)  
Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

**From:** Christine Fortunato  
Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE)  
Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

**Date:** September 2, 2021

**Subject:** Non-Substantive Change Request – National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being Third Cohort (NSCAW III): Data Collection (Phase 11) (OMB #0970-0202)

---

This memo requests approval of nonsubstantive changes to the approved information collection, National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being Third Cohort: Phase II (OMB #0970-0202).

### ***Background***

In July 2017, OMB approved the new information collection request for Phase II of the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being Third Cohort (NSCAW III). NSCAW is the only source of nationally representative, firsthand information about the functioning and well-being, service needs, and service utilization of children and families who come to the attention of the U.S. child welfare system. Phase II of the study involves in-person baseline and follow-up interviews and assessments with 4,565 children (aged birth to 17 ½ years), their adult caregivers (e.g., biological/adoptive parents, foster parents, kin caregivers, group home caregivers), and their assigned caseworkers. The study will also involve linking survey data to administrative data, including Medicaid claims data, NCANDS, and AFCARS).

In March 2020, NSCAW III data collection was paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 3,083 caregiver, 2,188 child, and 2,003 caseworker baseline interviews and 181 caregiver, 143 child, and 20 caseworker follow-up interviews were completed prior to the data collection pause. In June 2021, in-person data collection resumed with a focus on completing the baseline cohort in the same survey administration mode.

In contrast with the baseline wave, the follow-up wave began shortly before the pandemic, in September 2019. Fewer than 200 follow-up interviews have been completed. To capture developmental changes and align with previous NSCAW cohorts, the window of opportunity to collect follow-up data is time sensitive. During the pandemic, the time between baseline and follow-up grew beyond the original 18-month interval planned. This delay combined with a limited project timeline for completing two waves of NSCAW III data collection and the possibility of further pandemic pauses has led to the development of a remote interviewing option for the 18-month follow-up.

The purpose of the current request is to obtain approval for a remote administration of the follow-up interviews.

## **Overview of Requested Changes**

This memo requests the following nonsubstantive changes:

- Modifications to survey instruments to allow for remote administration and to collect relevant information on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on children and families; and
- Modifications to data collection materials to allow for a remote administration, to reflect a delayed interval between the baseline and follow-up interview due to the pandemic, and to reflect a reduced administration time.

### Modifications to Survey Instruments

We propose the following revisions to the approved survey instruments (*Appendices B-D: NSCAW III Child, Caregiver, and Caseworker Interviews*) for compatibility with remote administration. The proposed revisions were made in collaboration with the project team and expert consultants. A detailed summary of the instrument changes by module is provided in **Appendix A-1: NSCAW III Summary of Remote Interviews**.

**1) Appendix B-1: NSCAW III Child Remote Interview** is an alternate version of the child instrument that reflects the following changes to the approved in-person instrument (*Appendix B: NSCAW III Child Interview*):

- Revisions to the upfront routing of the instrument to interview only children ages 11 and older, to collect verbal consent from the child’s parent/caregiver, and to collect verbal assent or consent from the child or young adult. Items previously administered by an interviewer in-person will be administered by an interviewer over the telephone.
- Deleting the direct child assessments that can only be administered in-person.
- Deleting highly sensitive items not appropriate for remote administration such as those in the child exposure to violence (EV) module.
- Deleting lower-priority items and modules to reduce the overall burden/administration time.
- Maintaining stem questions but deleting detailed follow-up questions to reduce the overall burden/administration time.
- Adding a “not available due to COVID-19 pandemic” response category to services items in the Health and Services (YH) module for young adults and emancipated youth.
- Adding two COVID-19-related items to the Income (YI) module for young adults and emancipated youth, as follows:

Did you or anyone in your household received a “stimulus payment,” that is a coronavirus or COVID-19 related Economic Impact Payment from the Federal Government?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

Since the coronavirus or COVID-19 outbreak, has covering your expenses and paying all your bills become more difficult, less difficult or stayed about the same?

- 1 More difficult
- 2 Less difficult
- 3 Stayed about the same

- Moving items previously administered via Audio Computer-Assisted Self-Interview (ACASI) to web administration.

**2) Appendix C-1: NSCAW III Caregiver Remote Interview** is an alternate version of the caregiver instrument that reflects the following changes to the approved in-person instrument (*Appendix C: NSCAW III Caregiver Interview*):

- Revisions to the upfront routing of the instrument to collect verbal consent from the parent/caregiver. Items previously administered by an interviewer in-person will be administered by an interviewer over the telephone.
- Deleting lower-priority items and modules to reduce the overall burden/administration time.
- Deleting highly sensitive items not appropriate for remote administration such as those in the behavioral monitoring and discipline (DS) module.
- Maintaining stem questions but deleting detailed follow-up questions to reduce the overall burden/administration time.
- To compensate for the deletion of the Woodcock-Johnson III academic achievement (WJ) module in the child instrument, added academic achievement items to the caregiver household (HH) module as follows:

What type of grades does ^CHILD typically get in school?

- 1 Mostly A's & B's
- 2 Mostly B's & C's
- 3 Mostly C's...& D's
- 4 Mostly D's & lower
- 5 CHILD'S SCHOOL USES A DIFFERENT GRADING SCALE

In general, would you say that ^CHILD does better, worse, or about the same in school as other children?

- 1 Better
- 2 Worse
- 3 About the same

Has child ever received a failing grade in any school course or subject?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

Has child ever had a behavior or discipline problems at school which resulted in suspension or expulsion?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

Did ^CHILD's school close to in-person learning because of COVID-19 outbreak?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

If YES: Did ^CHILD's school offer online learning while closed to in-person learning?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

IF YES: Has ^CHILD's school provided any of the following services to support their online learning? [CODE ALL THAT APPLY]

- 1 Free home internet access
- 2 Free computer or tablet
- 3 Free Meals
- 4 Tutoring
- 5 Learning pods or childcare

- Adding two items to the caregiver HH module to capture child loss of a caregiver(s) due to COVID-19 as follows:

Has ^CHILD lost a family member or caregiver due to COVID-19?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

If YES

How many family members or caregivers has ^CHILD lost?

NUMBER:

- Adding a “not available due to COVID-19 pandemic” response category to services items in the caregiver Health and Services (HS) module.
- Adding two COVID-19-related items to the caregiver Income (IN) module as follows:

Did you or anyone in your household received a “stimulus payment,” that is a coronavirus or COVID-19 related Economic Impact Payment from the Federal Government?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

Since the coronavirus or COVID-19 outbreak, has covering your expenses and paying all your bills become more difficult, less difficult or stayed about the same?

- 1 More difficult
- 2 Less difficult
- 3 Stayed about the same

- Adding two items in the caregiver services received (SR) module asking about virtual/telehealth visits during the pandemic, as follows:

Was the visit to a clinic or doctor about your physical health done virtually?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

Was the visit to a clinic or doctor about an alcohol or drug problem done virtually?

- 1 YES

- Moving items previously administered via Audio Computer-Assisted Self-Interview (ACASI) to web administration.

**3) Appendix D-1: NSCAW III Caseworker Remote Interview** reflects the following changes to the approved in-person/remote interview (*Appendix D: NSCAW III Caseworker Interview*):

- Revisions to the upfront routing of the instrument to collect verbal consent and administer the follow-up caseworker interview by telephone.

Modifications to Data Collection Materials

- 1) Appendix F-2: Remote Lead Letters and Fact Sheets and Appendix F-2a: Remote Adolescent Fact Sheet** include new lead letters and fact sheets that will be provided to respondents to inform them of the remote follow-up survey and to provide additional information about the study. The remote lead letters and fact sheets mirror those in the approved *Appendix F: Lead Letters and Fact Sheets and Appendix F-1: Adolescent Fact Sheet* with revisions to reflect: 1) that interviews will be conducted by telephone (caseworker) and by telephone/web (caregiver/child), 2) the approximate number of months since their baseline interview, 3) a reduced interview administration time, 4) that tokens of appreciation will be provided in the form of gift cards, and 5) privacy risks associated with online data collection.
- 2) Appendix G-2: Remote Consent and Assent Forms** includes new consent and assent forms that will be administered to respondents remotely to provide them the information necessary to make an informed decision about remote survey participation. The remote consent and assent forms mirror those in the approved *Appendix G: Consent and Assent Forms* with revisions to reflect: 1) that the interviews will be conducted by telephone (caseworker) and by telephone and web (caregiver/child), 2) the types of questions that will be asked in the remote interviews, and 3) that tokens of appreciation will be provided in the form of gift cards, and 4) privacy risks associated with online data collection.
- 3) Appendix H-1: Remote Data Linkage Forms** includes new data linkage forms that will be administered to respondents remotely to provide them the information necessary to decide whether to allow their/their child's survey data to be combined with other data. The remote data linkage forms mirror those in the approved *Appendix H: Data Linkage Forms* with revisions to reflect the collection of electronic consent within the web survey.
- 4) Appendix I-1: Remote HIPAA Authorization Forms** include new HIPAA authorization forms that will be administered to respondents remotely to provide them the information necessary to decide whether to allow their child's survey data to be combined with their child's Medicaid services data. The remote HIPAA authorization forms mirror those in the approved *Appendix I: HIPAA Authorization Forms* with revisions to reflect the collection of electronic consent within the web survey.

***Time Sensitivities***

The project team is prepared to launch remote NSCAW III follow-up interviews in August 2021, as soon as OMB approval is received. Given delays in the follow-up interviews due to the pandemic, we would like to initiate the remote interviewing option as soon as is practicable.