

Memorandum

United States Department of Education
Institute of Education Sciences
National Center for Education Statistics

DATE: November 14, 2024

TO: Bev Pratt, OMB

THROUGH: Carrie Clarady, OMB Liaison, NCES

FROM: Jill McCarroll, Study Director, Early Childhood Longitudinal Studies Program, NCES

SUBJECT: Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2023-24 (ECLS-K:2024)
November 2024 Data Release Dates and Pilot Testing Change Request (OMB#1850-0750 v.32)

The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS) program, conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U.S. Department of Education (ED), draws together information from multiple sources to provide rich, descriptive data on child development, early learning, and school progress. The ECLS program studies deliver national data on children's status at birth and at various points thereafter; children's transitions to nonparental care, early care and education programs, and school; and children's experiences and growth through the elementary grades. The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2023-24 (ECLS-K:2024) is the fourth cohort in the series of early childhood longitudinal studies. The study will advance research in child development and early learning by providing a detailed and comprehensive source of current information on children's early learning and development, transitions into kindergarten and beyond, and progress through school. The ECLS-K:2024 will provide data about the population of children in kindergarten during the 2023-24 school year. The ECLS-K:2024 focuses on children's early school experiences continuing through the third grade,¹ and includes collection of data from children, parents, teachers, and school administrators.

The request to conduct the first three national data collection rounds for the ECLS-K:2024 was approved on April 7, 2023 (OMB# 1850-0750 v.26).² Revisions to procedures and materials for the first two rounds of data collection were submitted and approved in four subsequent revision requests (OMB# 1850-0750 v.27 was approved on July 2, 2023; OMB# 1850-0750 v.28 was approved on September 18, 2023; OMB# 1850-0750 v.29 was approved on February 2, 2024; OMB#1850-0750 v.30 was approved on July 19, 2024; and OMB#1850-0750 v.31 was approved on November 8, 2024). The ECLS-K:2024 fall kindergarten data collection was conducted from August until January 2024 and the spring kindergarten round was conducted from March through July 2024. These two kindergarten data collections will be followed by a spring (March-July 2025) first-grade round. Each of these rounds of data collection involves advance school contacts, for example to conduct student sampling activities, collect teacher and school information, and locate families whose children may have moved schools. A future OMB package is expected for the future currently-planned round, that is, the national spring (March-July 2027) third-grade round. A future OMB packages will also be required for any third-grade testing (to be conducted in March-July 2026).

¹ The ECLS-K:2024 was originally designed to culminate with a spring 2029 fifth-grade collection; during recruitment, potential participants were told that the currently planned rounds of data collection would be fall kindergarten, spring kindergarten, spring first-grade, spring third-grade, and spring fifth-grade. In 2024 NCES decided to end the study with the spring third-grade collection. In addition to noting this change here in the revision request, this design change will be discussed in the next full OMB package (planned for the third-grade pilot test).

² Note that the expiration date associated with this clearance (April 30, 2026) has not been updated on the materials being submitted in conjunction with this revision request. The revision request expiration date, received once the request is cleared, will be updated on these materials prior to printing or otherwise distributing. Materials that are not part of this revision request will be updated with the April 30, 2026 date prior to printing/distributing.

This current change request is to update the study's data release timing. Initially the study team expected that each school year of data could be released in the December of the next year after the data collection (e.g., for the 2023-24 base year data with collection ending in July 2024, release in December 2025). However as work on the base year data has progressed, it has become clear that additional time needs to be built into the data release schedule. As such, the first releases are now expected in the winter of the next year (e.g., for the 2023-24 base year data with collection ending in July 2024, release in winter 2026).

Additionally, this November 2024 change request revises text discussing testing work prior to the national spring third-grade (spring 2027) round. When the study was original designed, NCES expected that a pilot test and cognitive lab work would be required before the spring third-grade round to design all study instruments. However, in 2024 an analysis of the available item pool for the third-grade direct child assessments showed that sufficient information was already collected to produce that round's assessment without testing, at a cost savings. Second, NCES has begun discussions to consider whether the cognitive laboratory work to develop the third-grade adult instruments is required, as these instruments will pull items from existing fielded and/or tested item sources. If NCES determines that the cognitive laboratory work is needed, a future OMB request will be submitted. It is currently expected that recruitment for cognitive laboratory work, if held, would begin in February (rather than March) 2026, so this timing as well information about the work's OMB package (a fall 2025 generic clearance package rather than a spring 2025 full package) has also been updated in Part A.

The following edits were made in Part A:

Note, all changes made in Part A can be seen in the tracked version delivered with this submission.

References to a planned third-grade pilot test have been removed given that this work is no longer planned, and text was edited to indicate that the third-grade cognitive laboratory work is conditional upon NCES's decision to proceed with this testing. The timeframe for submission of the generic OMB package requesting clearance for this work, if determined that it is needed by NCES, was also updated.

Dates were revised to update the planned first data releases for each study year's collection(s) from the subsequent December to the following winter.

Finally, references in Part A that the "current request" is the August 2024 submission was changed to discuss this as a past request, text was added summarizing the current November 2024's change request, and other small changes were made to Part A for accuracy.