

**Report on Cognitive Interview Results  
for the  
1999 Survey of Program Dynamics**

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## Report on Cognitive Interview Results - SPD99

### I. BACKGROUND

Early in the development of the Survey of Program Dynamics (SPD), the SPD Steering Committee envisioned the survey as composed of two parts: a 60 minute “core” interview administered annually starting in 1998, and a 30 minute child well-being module to be added in 1999. In summer 1997, scarcity of resources (staff and monetary) and the need to focus efforts on ensuring the success of the core SPD in order to meet legislative goals, prevented moving forward with the original plans for a child well-being module. The SPD Steering Committee reexamined resources and determined that a 5-10 minute child focused module was a realistic alternative.

In Fall 1997, the Bureau of the Census solicited input from the SPD Interagency Committee for a 5-10 minute child focused module. A development plan (Attachment A) was circulated, soliciting content and identifying dates for subject matter to be proposed, tested, and evaluated. Solicitation for content was eventually expanded to cover not just the child well being module, but the core SPD instrument as well. In addition to government agencies, input was solicited from data users including those from academia and the private sector. Proposed content was received from the Family and Child Well Being Network of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), Child Trends, Inc. (CTI), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Department of Agriculture, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Manpower Demonstration Research Project (MDRC), the Department of Health Care Policy at Harvard University, and the Population Division (POP), and the Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division (HHES) of the Bureau of the Census. The SPD Steering Committee decided that all proposed topics be considered for the module and, in accordance with the Census Bureau’s pretesting policy, required testing be conducted for appropriate question series.

Proposed content includes the following:

#### Child Well Being

- Positive interaction
- Cognitive stimulation
- Enrichment activities
- Positive behaviors/social competence
- Grades/achievement
- Household resources
- Family conflict
- Conflict between biological parents who co-reside
- Conflict between biological parents who do not co-reside
- Attitudes towards welfare/work
- Knowledge about welfare regulations
- Children’s residential history
- Family routines

School engagement  
 Behavior problem index  
 Aggravation in parenting  
 Children's routines  
 Substance abuse

In addition to the child well-being module, proposed expanded content for the SPD core instrument includes the following:

SPD Core expansion

Knowledge of child care subsidies  
 Child care problems  
 Quality of child care  
 Employee fringe benefits  
 Health care utilization while uninsured  
 Consumer expenditures (food, transportation, school, health insurance)  
 Months receiving rental assistance  
 Coping mechanisms when losing welfare benefits

We requested that persons proposing content for SPD99 provide specific question wording and the universe for whom the questions applied, along with the objective of the question or question series, background on results of prior use (e.g. item nonresponse), and, if available, the results of prior testing. This information was needed to determine whether results of prior testing or prior use demonstrate that proposed question series "work" and don't require further testing. Additionally, information on the objectives of the questions aid in development of appropriate probes for the test protocol to indicate whether respondents understand the question as intended and ensure that the objective of the question is being met. Objectives provided for some of the proposed content are contained in Attachment B.

Based on review of limited documentation and discussions with subject matter experts and survey methodologists, CSMR determined that the following proposed SPD99 content did not require testing because there was enough evidence from prior use and/or testing that the items "worked:"

Proposed content areas NOT cognitively tested by CSMR  
 (Questions for these series are contained in Attachment C.)

Aggravation in parenting  
 School engagement  
 Family routines  
 Children's routines  
 Mental Health Indicator (Behavior problems index)  
 Food Bank

## Coping mechanisms when losing welfare benefits Substance abuse

The SPD Interagency Committee agreed that, once testing was completed and evaluated, content areas would be prioritized and selected for inclusion in the SPD99 instrument based on discussions and decisions reached within the SPD Interagency Group. This report documents the results of the cognitive laboratory testing conducted with the proposed SPD99 content.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

We conducted thirty-four concurrent cognitive think-aloud laboratory interviews to test respondent comprehension, task difficulty, and item sensitivity of proposed questions. Three researchers from the Center for Survey Methods Research (CSMR) conducted the cognitive interviews and summarized results. We tried to keep cognitive interviews to no more than one hour to avoid respondent fatigue. Respondents received \$30 for their participation. Interviews were conducted in CSMR's Response Research Laboratory, as well as at off-site locations more convenient for respondents. All interviews were audio taped (with written consent from respondents). Due to the magnitude of material proposed for testing and late delivery of required information for some proposed topics (e.g. question wording, objectives, prior use, prior testing), we conducted two rounds of interviews, referred to as Rounds 1 and 2 below.

Due to the quantity of content tested, we minimized the use of direct probes and maximized use of general probes. General probes used included: "How did you arrive at your answer?" "Tell me more about that." "In your own words, what is this question asking?" During most interviews there was only time to administer the child-focused questions for one child within the household. Efforts were made to balance the ages of the children for whom information was collected.

In Round 1, we included twelve content areas (enrichment, cognitive stimulation, positive interaction, family conflict, parental conflict (co-reside), parental conflict (don't co-reside), household resources, quality of child care, attitudes towards welfare/work, knowledge about welfare regulations, consumer expenditures, and children's residential history). Respondents were recruited primarily from job training programs, GED programs, and other social service programs. Typically, the CSMR recruiter contacted a program director, who then identified potential respondents and scheduled interviews. Round 1 respondents were primarily low-income single mothers, many of whom were current or former welfare program recipients. (None of the respondents was male.) Eighteen Round 1 interviews were conducted March 9 - March 13 with adults with children under 18 living in their households. Children in Round 1 were in the following age groups: 3 children 0-2 years old; 5 children 3-5 years old, 5 children 6-11 years old; and 5 children 12-17 years old. Most of the Round 1 interviews were conducted off-site.

In Round 2, we included seven new content areas (positive behaviors/social competence, grades/achievement, knowledge of child care subsidies, child care problems, employee fringe

benefits, utilization of health care while uninsured, rental assistance) as well as revised versions (or subsets) of eight content areas previously included in Round 1 (family conflict, parental conflict (don't co-reside), positive interaction, cognitive stimulation, enrichment activities, attitudes toward welfare/work, food expenditures, children's residential history.) Respondents were recruited through newspaper ads and from CSMR's respondent pool. Sixteen Round 2 interviews were conducted between April 7 and May 5 with adults with children under 18 in their household. Children in Round 2 were in the following age groups: 1 child 0-2 years old; 3 children 3-5 years old, 5 children 6-11 years old; and 7 children 12-17 years old. Most of the respondents were lower-middle income and married. In Round 2, five respondents were males. All of the Round 2 interviews were conducted on-site in CSMR's laboratory. Population Division (POP) staff observed (through a one-way mirror in the observation room) some of these interviews.

### **III. COGNITIVE TESTING RESULTS - CHILD WELL-BEING MODULE**

Provided below are the results of cognitive testing, grouped by content area. In general, for each content area, the tested question wording is provided followed by a description of problems identified through testing, and recommendations for revised question wording or response options. The majority of the time, problems identified are immediately below the tested wording for each specific question, followed by the recommended revisions, as applicable. In some cases, problems identified pertain to a whole series of questions rather than a specific question. In such instances, the question series is provided and “problems (series)” are located at the end of the series. If content was tested in Round 1 and Round 2, then the tested wording and problems identified are labeled specific to the round of testing to which they apply. If there is no recommendation provided after the “problems” section, then it should be assumed that no question wording revision is recommended. We provide the universe for each content area at the beginning of each section. If the universe changes, we note that in the specific item. If a flashcard is intended to be used we also note that at the beginning of the section.

In some series there are not any recommended revisions from Round 2 testing. This is especially true for the enrichment questions and the cognitive stimulation series. Midway through testing the sponsoring division (POP) decided that, in order to retain time series (back to SIPP 92/93 Child well-being module), revisions to these series in 1999 are unacceptable. For these sections, we document whatever problems we detected, but do not provide recommended revisions. This is also true for the residential history section. In late May the Census Bureau decided that the residential history module will not be ready in time for the SPD99, and will be administered instead in the SPD 2000. This allows more time for thorough development. Census and external experts are currently negotiating objectives and design issues for this series. Therefore, we defer recommendations for revisions to that group. We do identify various issues that we think should be considered during development of the module.

## A. Positive Interaction

(Universe : 0-11; Flashcard)

### Round 1:

**Tested wording:** **How often do you praise (child) by saying something like “Good for you!” or “What a nice thing you did!” or “Good going!”?** (Same response options for all items during Round 1.)

- <1> Never
- <2> About once a week or less
- <3> A few times a week
- <4> One or two times a day
- <5> Many times each day

**Problems:** Nearly all respondents selected the response option “many times each day.” We expressed concern to CTI about the utility of this item if there is no variance in response. We recommended deleting this item (and series). CTI recommended using NLSY HOME wording and retesting.

**Recommendation:** Revise question wording: How often do you praise (child) for doing something worthwhile?

### Round 2:

**Tested wording:** **How often do you praise (child) for doing something worthwhile?** (Same response options used for all items during Round 2.)

- <1> Never
- <2> One to two times a month
- <3> About once a week
- <4> A few times a week
- <5> One or two times a day
- <6> Many times a day

**Problems:** Even though the phrase “doing something worthwhile” has a broad definition, the wording does seem to be an improvement over Round 1 wording since it does focus the intent a little more. A few respondents did mention that the child had to do something “right”, “good”, or “well” for praise, not just praise for the sake of praising. One respondent thought that anything the child did was worthwhile. One respondent said that normal things are worthwhile. One respondent was more restrictive in what was worthwhile, giving examples of chores and educational

accomplishments. It seems parents of young children praise them for good behavior, doing things that a parent asks them to do, and for encouragement.

In Round 2, only 5 of the 10 respondents chose “many times a day”. The rest chose response options <4> and <5>. It is unknown whether the question revisions, response revisions, or differences in respondents led to result differences between Round 1 and Round 2.

Recommendation: Retain Round 2 question wording and response options.

### Round 1

#### Tested wording:

**How often do you and he/she talk or play with each other, focusing attention on each other for five minutes or more, just for fun?**

#### Problems:

This question did NOT work. Specifically, respondents did not include only one-on-one time, nor did they use the five minute time frame. Respondents seemed to think the question was asking about “activities and interactions, in general” between the child and parent and most gave high frequency reports. We recommended deleting this item (and series). Child Trends recommended rewording the question.

#### Recommendation:

How often do you and (child) talk or play with each other, one on one, for five minutes or more, just for fun? Use revised response options, as identified in first item in the series.

### Round 2

#### Tested wording:

**How often do you and (child) talk or play with each other, one-on-one, for five minutes or more, just for fun?**

- <1> Never
- <2> One to two times a month
- <3> About once a week
- <4> A few times a week
- <5> One or two times a day
- <6> Many times a day

#### Problems:

This is a slight improvement over the Round 1 wording. The addition of the phrase “one-on-one” helped define that we are asking just about time between the parent and child. Evidence is

provided in the paraphrases of “How much time do you spend, just spend with the child, interacting directly with the child, not with everyone else, but just you and the child.” “How much time do we have alone to play or talk with each other. Just the two of us.”

As with Round 1, respondents did not mention five or more minutes in their responses when asked why they picked a particular category. And when probed, many said they had not considered the timeframe. We think that this timeframe should be retained because it may provide a subtle clue that shorter durations are important. Many of the respondents might have used five minutes or more as a benchmark, even though they didn’t articulate that is what they did. A number of respondents gave off the cuff answers of “everyday,” which was not part of the response set. Field Representatives (FRs) need to be trained to probe further if this response occurs. Only two respondents chose “a few times a week.” The other respondents chose response options 5 or 6.

Recommendation: Retain Round 2 question wording and response options.

### **Round 1**

#### **Tested wording:**

**How often do you and he/she laugh together?**

Problems: Nearly all respondents selected “many times each day.” This item was not tested in Round 2.

Recommendation: While the question was well understood, we recommended deleting the item (and series) since it seemed that there would be no variance to responses received and we question the utility of the data.

### **Round 1**

#### **Tested wording:**

**How often do you do something special with him/her that he/she enjoys?**

Problems: This item did NOT work. There was wide variation in the interpretation of the question. Many respondents included everyday, routine-type activities such as “holding and rocking the child,” “remembering little things or making a dessert, or washing her bellbottoms” “taking him to the store to get a treat” “playing a game.” Other respondents thought the question was asking about less frequent, outside the home activities such as “going to get a haircut, just him and me,” “going to Jeepers,” ”going to Chuckie

Cheese,” “going to the movies, etc.” When probed about the phrase “that he/she enjoys” some respondents mentioned that not everything that is special is something the child enjoys. When probed about the phrase “special”, respondents seem to think that it meant something out of the ordinary, not routine, something the child likes to do/enjoys, something that means a lot to the child, that would be fun for the child.

We also think the response scale is inappropriate and possibly misleading. The frequencies in the response options seemed to imply that “something special” is an everyday event, given that the low frequency was “about once a week or less,” and the high frequency was “many times a day.” CTI recommended rewording the question.

**Recommendation:** Delete this item (and series). CTI recommended revising the question. A revised question was developed. Revised response options were developed that implied expectations for lower frequency reports. Revised question and response options are displayed below.

How often do you do something special with (child)?

- <1> Never
- <2> One to two times a month
- <3> About once a week
- <4> A few times a week

## Round 2

**Tested wording:**

**How often do you do something special with (child)?**

- <1> Never
- <2> One to two times a month
- <3> About once a week
- <4> A few times a week

**Problems:** This is an improvement over Round 1 wording. Over half of the respondents said that something special was not an everyday event. “Something special” was out of the normal routine. Only one respondent said that an everyday event could be special. “Something special” did have different interpretations however. One respondent said that buying treats was something special; other respondents associated doing something special with weekend times or payday. Two respondents didn’t think playing in

the backyard or reading a book was something special. Those respondents thought that something special required effort from the parent or something planned ahead of time.

Two respondents were probed about previous wording, "... that she enjoys." These respondents both thought that the former wording would require more thought, since children don't enjoy everything. One respondent said the former wording left it more open to interpretation since "special" for children might be candy, and that is not necessarily what this parent would consider special.

There were much more varied responses to this question in Round 2, evenly spread among response options 2, 3 and 4. It is unknown whether the question wording revision, response option revisions or differences in characteristics of respondents led to results so different than in Round 1.

Recommendation: Retain Round 2 question and response categories.

#### Round 1:

##### Tested wording

**How often do you play games with him/her?**

(Universe: Ages <2 years old)

##### Tested wording

**How often do you play sports, hobbies, or games with him/her?**

(Universe: Ages 2-11)

##### Problems:

These two items are redundant with items in the cognitive stimulation section. They were not tested in Round 2.

##### Recommendation:

We recommend deleting them (and the series.) CTI agreed with recommendation to delete these two items.

##### Series Comment:

Given the problems with this series, we think it should be a low priority for inclusion in SPD99.

**B. Cognitive Stimulation**  
(Flashcard)

**Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **Now I'd like to talk to you about (child's) activities with family members. In a typical WEEK, how often do you (or any other family member): (Read/Show pictures) books to (child)?**  
(Universe: read, ages 1-11; show pictures, ages <1)

- <1> Never
- <2> Once or twice a week
- <3> Three to six times a week
- <4> Every day

**Problems:** The first question asks about family members reading books to their child. Some respondents reported the amount of time the child read to the parent. Additionally, nearly all respondents chose the "everyday" response option. We question whether there will be any variance in responses obtained. We requested additional information from CTI about the question. CTI responded that the question is asking only about reading to the child, not by the child. They recommend rewording the question so the wording will be identical to the SIPP Child Well Being Module Wording used in the SIPP 92 and 93 panels.

Regarding the distribution of responses, CTI informed us that the experience with the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies Child Outcomes Study, which obtained similar information, showed that there was variation in the survey responses obtained.

**Recommendation:** How many times in the past week did you or any family member read stories to (child)?  
\_\_\_\_\_number

**Round 2, Version 1:**

**Tested wording:** **The next few questions are about activities you or other family members may do with (child). How many times in the past week did you or any family member read stories to (child)?**  
(Universe: Ages 0-11)  
\_\_\_\_\_ number

Problems: Of the four respondents asked this question, two of them provided qualified answers using the word “about” and one respondent provided a range.

### Round 2, Version 2:

#### Tested wording:

**How often in the past week have you or any family member read stories to (child’s name) – never, once this week, several times this week, everyday or almost everyday, or more than once a day?**

( Universe: Ages 0-11)

- <1> Never
- <2> Once this week
- <3> Several times this week
- <4> Everyday or almost everyday
- <5> More than once a day

Problems: When asked about the reference period of the “past week,” two respondents reported that they thought about the past week and that their answers would have differed if they were asked about a typical week. One of these families had a guest and one was on vacation, thus both of the families read less than usual. The answer categories seemed reasonable to respondents. No one picked “more than once a day,” although one respondent did say, “at least once a day.” Also, two of the respondents did include times when the child read back to them.

Recommendation: Use Round 2, version 2 wording, but change the reference period to “typical week.”

### Round 1

#### Tested wording:

**How often do you (tell stories/sing songs) to child?**

(Universe tell, ages 1-11; sing, ages <1)

- <1> Never
- <2> Once or twice a week
- <3> Three to six times a week
- <4> Every day

Problems: This item tends to provide information redundant with that obtained from the previous item. Many respondents were including reading books to their child as telling stories. We requested additional information from CTI about the intent of the

question and whether or not telling stories provides a different cognitive stimulus than reading books. (We thought perhaps the question could be deleted.) CTI informed us that the purpose of this question is to ask parents about a cognitively stimulating activity that they do with their children that does not require material resources (i.e., books). CTI requested that the question not be deleted. They provided revised question wording to be tested.

Recommendation: In a typical week, how often do you or any family member make up stories or fairy tales or tell stories about family members or about when you were growing up, to (child)?  
\_\_\_\_\_ number

## Round 2

### Tested wording:

**In a typical week, how often do you or any family member make up stories or fairy tales or tell stories about family members or about when you were growing up, to (child)?**  
(Universe: Ages 0-11)

\_\_\_\_\_ number

Problems: It was clear to most respondents that this question did not include opening up a book and reading stories. Also, there is inconsistency between the reference period and response format for this question. We ask “how often”, but the answer format is for “number of times”. The question and response format need to be consistent. The question needs to be revised to be less wordy.

Recommendation: In a typical week, how often do you or any family member make up stories, fairy tales, or tell stories about when you were growing up to (child)?

- <1> Never
- <2> Once or twice a week
- <3> Three to six times a week
- <4> Everyday

**Round 1****Tested wording:****How often do you help (child) to do arts and crafts?**

(Universe: Ages 3-11)

&lt;1&gt; Never

&lt;2&gt; Once or twice a week

&lt;3&gt; Three to six times a week

&lt;4&gt; Every day

**Problems:**

Many respondents included helping child with homework in response to this question. In some cases, the homework involved arts and craft activities such as drawing, coloring, cutting and pasting, but in other cases it did not. We requested additional information from CTI regarding the intent of the question. CTI responded that the item can include arts and crafts homework, but should not include other types of homework that does not involve arts and crafts.

**Recommendation:**

Reword the question to read: How often do you help (child) do arts or crafts?

Item was not retested in Round 2.

**Round 1****Tested wording:****How often do you involve (child) in household chores, like cooking, cleaning, setting the table, or caring for pets?**

(Universe: Ages 3-11)

&lt;1&gt; Never

&lt;2&gt; Once or twice a week

&lt;3&gt; Three to six times a week

&lt;4&gt; Every day

**Problems:**

This question worked fine. Common example given by respondents was “cleaning room.” Item was not retested in Round 2.

**Round 1****Tested wording:****How often do you play games or do puzzles with (child)?**

(Universe: Ages 3-11)

&lt;1&gt; Never

&lt;2&gt; Once or twice a week

&lt;3&gt; Three to six times a week

&lt;4&gt; Every day

**Problems:**

Many respondents thought only in terms of board games. Some respondents also considered tickling, wrestling with child, and chasing child through the house to be “games.” We requested additional information from CTI regarding the objective of the question. CTI responded that the objective of the item is to learn whether parents are involving their children in an activity that is cognitively stimulating. They informed us that activities such as tickling, wrestling, or chasing through the house should not be counted as a “game” in response to this item. CTI provided suggested question rewording. Item was not retested in Round 2.

**Recommendation:**

How often do you play card or board games or do puzzles with (child)?

**Round 1****Tested wording:****How often do you talk about nature or do science with (child)?**

&lt;1&gt; Never

&lt;2&gt; Once or twice a week

&lt;3&gt; Three to six times a week

&lt;4&gt; Every day

**Problems:**

The overwhelming majority of respondents had a very broad definition of “talk about nature.” Most considered anything such as walking outside and having the child ask about leaves, snow, trees, etc. as “talking about nature.” With this broad of a definition, we questioned the utility of the item. We requested additional information from CTI regarding the types of activities that are to be counted in this item. CTI responded that these examples are valid and the question is purposely broad. Item was not retested in Round 2.

**Round 1****Tested wording:**

**In the last year, how often did you or someone in your family visit a library with (child)?**

(Universe: Ages 3-11)

<1> Never

<2> A few times during the past year

<3> About once a month

<4> About once a week

**Problems:**

This question was well understood. A couple of respondents gave responses (twice a month; twice a week.) that they did not know how to fit into the response categories provided on the flashcard. Item was not retested in Round 2.

**Recommendation:**

Revise response options so <3> is “about one or twice a month” and <4> is “once a week or more.”

**Round 1****Tested wording:**

**About how many children’s book does (child) have in your home now, including library books?**

(Universe: Ages 3-11)

\_\_\_ number of books

**Problems:**

This question did not work well. Most respondents reported large numbers of books: 25, 30, 50, 60, 100, etc.. It was clear that reports such as these were wild guesses (15 of the 18 respondents included in Round 1 were low income and even they, for the most part, were providing reports of large numbers of books.) We asked CTI if there were specific ranges of numbers of books that are important analytically. For example, are outcomes of children that have 25 books different from those that have 60 or 100 books? Or is it important only to know if the child has less than 5, 6-10... or 30+. CTI concurred that ranges can be used, instead of obtaining an exact number of books. The item was not retested in Round 2.

Recommendation: Revise response format so ranges are used instead of recording a specific number of books. Based upon CTI's suggestion, we recommend the ranges used be those from the NLSY HOME scale, as shown below:

None  
 1 or 2 books  
 3 to 9 books  
 10 to 19  
 20 or more books.

### Round 1

#### Tested wording:

**How often do you or any family member go with (child) somewhere--like out to the movies, to the park, to a sports event, or to a shopping mall?**

(Universe: Ages 9-17; Flashcard)

<1> never  
 <2> several times a year  
 <3> about once a month  
 <4> about once a week  
 <5> everyday or almost everyday

#### Problems:

The question seemed well understood. A variety of activities were captured in response to this question. Item was not retested in Round 2.

### Round 1

#### Tested wording:

**How often does (child) visit a museum, such as a scientific, art, historical, or children's museum?**

(Universe: Ages 9-17; Flashcard)

<1> never  
 <2> several times a year  
 <3> about once a month  
 <4> about once a week  
 <5> everyday or almost everyday

#### Problems:

Question seems well understood. Many respondents mentioned school field trips in response to this item. Item was not retested in Round 2.

**Round 1****Tested wording:****About how often does (child) read?**

(Universe: Ages 9-17; Flashcard)

- <1> never
- <2> several times a year
- <3> about once a month
- <4> about once a week
- <5> everyday or almost everyday

**Problems:** Most respondents included reading for pleasure and for school. A couple of respondents said they would have had a very different answer if the question was only asking about reading for pleasure. We requested additional information from CTI regarding the intent of the question. CTI informed us that the question is **ONLY** suppose to capture reading for pleasure and suggested question wording used in the NLSY HOME which is “About how often does (child) read for enjoyment?” Item was not tested in Round 2.

**Recommendation:** About how often does (child) read for enjoyment?

**Round 1****Tested wording:****How often does (child) go to a religious service, a religious social event, or to religious education such as Sunday school?**

(Universe: Ages 9-17; Flashcard)

- <1> never
- <2> several times a year
- <3> about once a month
- <4> about once a week
- <5> everyday or almost everyday

**Problems:** The question worked fine. However, response options caused some difficulty for a few respondents. In those cases, respondents reported “twice a week”, but could not find an appropriate response option. Item was not retested in Round 2.

**Recommendation:** Revise response options so <3> reads “about once or twice a month and <4> reads “once or twice a week.”

**Round 1****Tested wording:**

**About how often does (child) go to the library to read or check out books?** (Universe 12-17; Flashcard)

- <1> never
- <2> several times a year
- <3> about once a month
- <4> about once a week
- <5> everyday or almost everyday

**Problems:**

The question worked fine. Appropriately, respondents were not including visits to the school library. Item was not retested in Round 2.

**Round 1****Tested wording:**

**How often has (child) gone on trip an hour or more from home?** (Universe : Ages 12-17; Flashcard)

- <1> never
- <2> several times a year
- <3> about once a month
- <4> about once a week
- <5> everyday or almost everyday

**During the past year, did (child) attend an overnight or day camp for a week or more?** (Universe : Ages 9-17)

- <1> Yes
- <2> No

**During the past year, did (child) attend an overnight trip or retreat sponsored by a school, religious, or community group?** (Universe : Ages 9-17)

- <1> Yes
- <2> No

**During the past year, did (child) go on an overnight trip with family or friends?** (Universe : Ages 9-17)

- <1> Yes
- <2> No

**Problems:**

This series of questions (asked of 5 respondents) seemed overly burdensome. Many respondents did not seem to hear the phrase “an hour or more” in the first question. Some defined “a trip” as going to the grocery store, going to a friend’s house, going to the

movies etc. For the last question, in response to probing, many respondents said they would count as an overnight trip, times when the child sleeps at a friends house, even if it's only around the corner. We requested additional information from CTI regarding the definition of trip and the objectives of the question series. To reduce respondent burden, we asked CTI for the two most important concepts regarding trips and requested that only two questions regarding trips be asked.

Recommendation: Replace series with the following two items and retest.

During the past year, how often has (child) gone on a trip at least an hour or more away from home?

During the past year, did (child) go on an overnight trip or retreat with family or friends, or attend an overnight camp?

CTI recommended that FRs be trained that this could include a trip or camp sponsored by a school, religious, or community group.

## Round 2

### Tested wording:

**During the past year, how often has (child) gone on a trip at least an hour or more away from home?** (Universe: Child is 9-11; Flashcard)

<1> Never

<2> Several times a year

<3> About once a month

<4> About once a week

<5> Everyday or almost everyday

### Problems:

At least three respondents answered the question as to how often the child has gone on a trip without a parent. They associated “away from home” with “away from a parent.” Two respondents attempted to clarify whether or not the parent was on the trip with the child. They both came to the conclusion that the parent could be on the trip. Lesser problems included whether or not school trips, or visits to relative homes were included. One respondent did include school trips that were probably not 1 hour or more away from home (e.g., bowling). Some respondents only included overnight trips; other respondents included day trips as well. Sleep overs were not included in the counts provided. “Trips” were typically defined as out of the neighborhood or out of the

metropolitan area. The addition of a reference period of “past year” to the first question was helpful since in Round 1, we did not include a reference period and that led to some confusion for respondents.

Recommendation: Revise wording of first question to read: During the past year, how often has (CHILD) gone on a trip at least an hour or more from home?

## Round 2

### Tested wording:

**During the past year, did (child) go on an overnight trip or retreat with family or friends, or attend an overnight camp?**  
(Universe : Child is 9-11)

Problem: Again, it is not apparent to respondents that the question is asking about overnight trips including the parent. (This may be a carryover effect from interpretation of the previous question.) Three respondents included only overnight trips away from the parent. One respondent answered based on a day trip; not an overnight trip.

Recommendation: A suggested revision: During the past year, did (child) go on an overnight trip or retreat with you, with family or friends, or attend an overnight camp?

Series Comment: If this series is adopted for SPD99, keep in mind that only a subset of the series was retested in Round 2. Be sure to include the other items from Round 1 that were not revised.

## C. Enrichment Activities

(Universe: Ages 6-17)

We tested the enrichment questions during both rounds of testing. We reordered the series in Round 2 and made a few minor wording changes. Part way through the Round 2 testing, we received word from CTI and Population Division that the wording for these items was under discussion. CTI preferred we use wording from the 1992 SIPP Wave 9 Child Well-being module, instead of SPD 98 wording or revised wording. Based upon instructions from the Population Division, the Round 2 wording was modified and is labeled as Round 2, Version 2 below. The following discussion is organized by the question topic. We will discuss the results from both rounds of testing for each topic included in the enrichment series (e.g. participation in sports teams, lessons, clubs or organizations, etc.). This is followed by the results of the questions on frequency of participation in these activities during the previous year.

### 1. Sports teams

#### Round 1

**Tested wording:** Since March 1997, was [child] on any kind of organized sports team?

Problems: No problems identified.

#### Round 2 Version 1

**Tested wording:** The next few questions are about activities (child) may have participated in outside of the regular school day.

**Since March 1997, was [child] on any kind of organized sports team?**

Problems: No problems identified. Three respondents understood this question to be league teams, either through the school, municipality, or neighborhood.

#### Round 2 Version 2

**Tested wording:** Since April 1997, was [child] on any kind of a sports team?

Problems: No major problems identified. One respondent included participation in physical education classes as an affirmative answer to this question. One respondent included karate as a sport and answered this question affirmatively as well as the subsequent question on “lessons” because that question specifically mentioned “karate” in the list of examples (double counting of activity). Another respondent mentioned dance lessons in middle school, but determined that the activity happened prior to the reference date.

## 2. Lessons

### Round 1

#### Tested wording:

**Did [child] take lessons after school or on weekends in activities such as music, dance, language, or karate at any time since March 1997?**

#### Problems:

All but three respondents reported “no” to this question. Respondents understood the term “lessons,” but may have been thrown off by the term “activities” in the question. Some respondents thought the question was asking about additional activities, not lessons. Some respondents thought the question was asking specifically about “music, dance, language, or karate,” rather than interpreting these as examples.

#### Recommendation:

We recommend revising the wording so that the activities listed will be interpreted as examples rather than as an exhaustive list and changing the word “activities” to “subjects” as shown below: “Since March 1997, did (child’s name) take lessons after school or on weekends in music, dance, language, karate, or any other subject?”

### Round 2, Version 1

#### Tested wording:

**Since March 1997, did (child) take lessons after school or on weekends in music, dance, language, karate, or any other subject?**

#### Problems:

The addition of “or any other subject” is confusing since karate is considered a sport to some people. One respondent started to include lessons received while on organized sports teams. One respondent reported several individual activities including swimming and karate. When probed about whether they interpreted the list to be an exhaustive list of what was to be included or if it was just a list of examples, most respondents said it was an exhaustive list.

### Round 2, Version 2

#### Tested wording:

**Did (child) take lessons after school or on weekends in activities such as music, dance, language or karate, at any time since April 1997?**

#### Problems:

Question seemed to be well understood. Karate is considered to be a team sport for some respondents; thus, it was double counted

under team sports and under lessons. This is the same question that was tested during Round 1. Differences in results may be due to the respondent pool.

### **3. Clubs/Organizations**

We tested several different versions of questions on participation in clubs and organizations. During all of Round 1 and during Version 1 of Round 2, we asked separate questions on participation in 1) religiously-affiliated groups, 2) school-based clubs, and 3) civic or charitable clubs. Based on discussions between the Census Bureau's Population Division and CTI regarding time series concerns, we used the same question wording used in the 1998 SPD core questionnaire during Version 2 of Round 2. This is a single question asking about participation in any club or organization after school or on weekends. To capture detailed information on the specific type of club or organization, we asked three follow-up questions for persons responding positively to the 1998 SPD item, in order to determine if the activity was religiously-affiliated, school-based, or civic/charitable in nature.

In order to understand the differences among the three versions tested, we present the questions on clubs/organizations for the three questionnaire versions tested below. For ease of presentation, the frequency questions that would follow each specific club/organization question have been omitted as are the other enrichment questions that were interspersed between the "club/organization" questions in the questionnaires tested.

#### **Round 1**

2. The next few questions are about activities (child) may have participated in outside of the regular school day.

Since March 1997, did [child] participate in any religiously-affiliated youth groups or organizations, not including attendance at regular religious services?

3. Did (child) participate in any school-based clubs or organizations after school or on weekends, such as band, chorus, drama club, or student government since March 1997?
4. Did (child) participate in any other civic or charitable organizations such as Scouts, Big Brothers or Sisters, 4H, or any similar organizations since March 1997?

**Round 2, Version 1**

1. Since March 1997, did (child) participate in any civic or charitable organization, such as Scouts, Big Brothers or Sisters, 4H, or any similar organization?
2. Since March 1997, did (child) participate in any school-based clubs or organizations such as band, chorus, drama club, or student government?
3. Since March 1997, did (child) participate in any religiously-affiliated activities, youth groups, or organizations, including attendance at religious services?

**Round 2, Version 2**

1. Did (child) participate in any clubs or organizations after school or on weekends, such as Scouts, school newspaper, Boys/Girls club, or a religious group at any time since April 1997? (This is a “screener” item. If “yes,” then we ask items 2 through 4 below.)
2. Were any of them school-based clubs or organizations such as band, chorus, drama club, or student government?
3. Of these clubs or organizations that (child) participated in, were any of them civic or charitable organizations such as Scouts, Big Brothers or Sisters, 4H, or any similar organization?
4. Of the clubs and organizations that (child) participated in, were any of them religiously-affiliated activities, youth groups or organizations, including attendance at religious services?

Below are the item-by-item results for each round of testing. Shown first are the results for the “screener” item from Version 2 of Round 2. Following that are the results for each round of testing by the type of club/organization.

**Round 2, Version 2**

**Tested wording:** **Did (child) participate in any clubs or organizations after school or on weekends, such as Scouts, school newspaper, (Boys/Girls) club, or a religious group at any time since April 1997?** (If “yes,” ask the follow-up questions)

**Problems:** Although we have no quantitative data, this collapsed question might underestimate the amount of activities as compared to the earlier versions tested in which this question was decomposed into three separate items. Cognitive testing indicates that many respondents think the lists provided in questions are exhaustive rather than exemplary. The decomposed questions list additional activities that might not come to mind when answering this question.

There also needs to be a clearer definition of religious clubs or organizations. Two respondents mentioned religious education classes. One of these respondents included religious education classes by answering affirmatively to this question; the other respondent did not. That respondent did not include it because s/he did not consider it to be a group. She said the child didn't sign up for "Sunday school like you would sign up for Boy Scouts; we just participate."

a. Religiously-affiliated groups

**Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **The next few questions are about activities (child) may have participated in outside of the regular school day.**

**Since March 1997, did [child] participate in any religiously-affiliated youth groups or organizations, not including attendance at regular religious services?**

**Problems:** This question was not well understood. Some respondents who responded positively to the question, reported activities that were not associated with the church, such as sports teams. Perhaps the adjective "religiously-affiliated" didn't carry over to the nouns "groups" and "organizations," since some respondents reported groups/organizations that their children belonged to even though they were not associated with a religious group. Other respondents answered positively because their children are on sports teams sponsored by the church or in a Boy Scout organization that is affiliated with the church. Other respondents were unclear whether to report church-related activities, such as being an usher boy, since the duty was done during regular church service. One respondent didn't think her child's participation in Bible class should be included even though the activity occurred during the summer. Another respondent reported "no" and then changed her answer to ask if her daughter's attendance at confirmation class would count.

Based on cognitive testing, we think that the order of the Round 1 enrichment questions is awkward and that it would be better not to start the series with a religiously-oriented question. In addition, there is a separate question on attendance at religious services, social events and classes in the cognitive stimulation section, and we wondered whether the two questions could be combined into one item on religious activity. In Round 2, we reordered the series and combined the two items.

**Round 2, Version 1**

**Tested wording:** **Since March 1997, did [child] participate in any religiously-affiliated activities, youth groups, or organizations, including attendance at religious services?**

**Problems:** The inclusion of attending religious services with the other religious-affiliated activities is problematic. Respondents do mention attendance at religious services. When children participated in both religious youth groups and religious services, respondents did not always report the frequency of participation accurately in subsequent frequency questions. When asked frequency, they often answered once a week or four times a month, even though there were other activities mentioned besides attendance at services once a week. Respondents would have an easier time reporting attendance at religious services separately from other religious activities. Also, it is not clear if the question is asking only about other religious youth groups (i.e., not classes) or if it is asking, as one respondent paraphrased, “Is he actively participating in a church group?” which could be a religious class.

**Round 2, Version 2**

**Tested wording:** **Of the clubs and organizations that (child) participated in, were any of them religiously-affiliated activities, youth groups, or organizations, including attendance at religious services?**

**Problems:** Including attendance at religious service is a problem in this question. Attendance should be captured in another question. Also, the types of religiously-affiliated activities that are to be included need to be clarified. Problems similar to those discussed in the Version 1 wording were encountered when this question was asked. It confirmed the need for two separate questions to determine participation in religiously-affiliated activities such as youth groups and organizations and to determine participation in religious services.

b. School-based clubs/organizations

**Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **Did [child] participate in any school-based clubs or organizations after school or on weekends, such as band, chorus, drama club, or student government, since March 1997?**

**Problems:** Respondents understood that the question is asking about “school-based clubs or organizations.” However, some respondents did not focus on the “after school or on weekends” part of the question and reported clubs that children participate in during the school day. When asked to paraphrase, some respondents thought that the question included activities “sponsored by the school,... during school or after school.” One respondent reported that she would include band, because “it’s like after school....where you have to practice.” Other respondents clearly heard the “after school or on weekends” and reported that their children participate in, for example, band or student government, but that it meets during school hours. Some respondents thought that we were asking only about the specific activities included in the list of examples.

**Round 2, Version 1**

**Tested wording:** **Since March 1997, did [child] participate in any school-based clubs or organizations such as band, chorus, drama club, or student government?**

**Problems:** Many of the respondents said they thought the question was asking only about the activities listed. We did not receive enough information about whether the activities mentioned were during or after school and are unclear whether it is important analytically that the activities occur after school or on weekends, since in some schools students participate in these activities during the regular school day.

**Round 2, Version 2**

**Tested wording:** **Were any of them school-based clubs or organizations such as band, chorus, drama club, or student government?**

**Problems:** This question does not specify that these activities are after school. Many of the activities listed could occur during school hours. Only two respondents were asked this question. Both of them answered no. Since one of the groups, a teen group was associated with the Catholic school, we were surprised that this respondent didn’t answer affirmatively.

c. Civic or charitable clubs/organizations

**Round 1**

**Tested wording:** Did [child] participate in any other civic or charitable organization, such as Scouts, Big Brothers or Sisters, 4H, or any similar organizations since March 1997?

Problems: No problems identified, but few respondents reported that their children participated in such activities.

**Round 2, Version 1**

**Tested wording:** Since March 1997, did [child] participate in any civic or charitable organization, such as Scouts, Big Brothers or Sisters, 4H, or any similar organizations?

Problems: No major problems identified.

**Round 2, Version 2**

**Tested wording:** Of these clubs or organization that (child) participated in, were any of them civic or charitable organizations, such as Scouts, Big Brothers or Sisters, 4H, or any similar organization?

Problems: No problems identified.

## d. Months Active: Round 1

These questions were asked if the respondent answered affirmatively to an enrichment question.

**Tested wording:**     **In the last year, how many months did (child) participate in these activities?**

<1> 1-2 months

<2> 3-6 months

<3> 7-10 months

<4> 11-12 months

Problems:             One respondent asked if the reference period was the calendar year.

Recommendation: Reword the question: “How many months did (child) participate in these activities since (date)?”

**Tested wording:**     **In the months when [child] was participating in these activities, was this once or twice a month, about once a week, or several times a week?**

<1> Once or twice a month

<2> About once a week

<3> Several times a week

Problems:             No problems identified other than team practice time is not always included. Also, theoretically it could be confusing if frequencies differ for multiple activities being reported in the same question. Also, some respondents were looking for a response option of “twice a week.”

Recommendation: Revise response option <2> to read “about once or twice a week.”

## e. Months Active: Round 2, Version 1

These questions were asked if the respondent answered affirmatively to an enrichment question.

**Tested wording:**     **How many months did (child) participate in these activities since March 1997? (Universe: )**

<1> 1-2 months

<2> 3-6 months

<3> 7-10 months

<4> 11-12 months

Problems: No problems identified. Only one respondent received this version.

**Tested wording:** **In what months did (child) participate in these activities since April 1997?**

<input type="checkbox"/> April 1997	<input type="checkbox"/> October 1997
<input type="checkbox"/> May 1997	<input type="checkbox"/> November 1997
<input type="checkbox"/> June 1997	<input type="checkbox"/> December 1997
<input type="checkbox"/> July 1997	<input type="checkbox"/> January 1998
<input type="checkbox"/> August 1997	<input type="checkbox"/> February 1998
<input type="checkbox"/> September 1997	<input type="checkbox"/> March 1998

Problems: No problems identified. Most respondents could answer this question, Respondents typically used the reference periods of the start and stop times of the different sports seasons to help benchmark their answers. Typically respondents did not have difficulty in reporting the actual month although at least one respondent reported all months and then qualified that answer with an except statement. When there was more than one activity, one respondent reported separately for each activity, e.g., “She’s been in ice skating for a year since Feb 97, she’s been in swimming during the Fall and the Winter.” Months included September 97 through March 98. Karate she started in Jan 98 ...”

f. Frequency Questions: Rounds 1 and 2

**Tested wording:** **In the months when [child] was participating in these activities, was this once or twice a month, about once or twice a week, or several times a week?**

<1> Once or twice a month  
<2> About once or twice a week  
<3< Several times a week

Problems: No problems identified.

4. Gang-related activity

**Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **Is (child) a member of a gang that gets into trouble with the law?**

Problems: Question was well understood.

**Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **Has (child) ever gotten into trouble with the law because of this gang?**

Problems: No children reported as gang member, so the question was never asked.

**Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **How many times has [child] gotten into trouble with the law because of this gang?**

Problem: No children reported as gang member, so the question was never asked.

**Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **How old was [child] when [he/she] [first] got into trouble with the law because of this gang?**

Problems: No children reported as gang member, so the question was never asked.

**Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **Has [child] ever been arrested?**

Problems: Question was well understood.

**Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **Did that happen once or more than once?**

Problems: No children were reported as previously arrested so the question was never asked.

## D. Positive Behaviors/Social Competence

(Universe : Ages 3-11)

### Round 2

**Tested wording:** Here are some statements which may or may not describe your child. As I read each statement, decide whether it is often true, sometimes true, or not true at all of your child over the last three months. (Fill name of child):

- a. **Is warm and loving. Is that often true, sometimes true, or not true at all of (fill name)? (Same response options used for all items)**  
 <1> Often true  
 <2> Sometimes true  
 <3> Not true at all
- b. **Gets along well with other children. Is that often true, sometimes true, or not true at all of (fill name)?**
- c. Is admired and well liked by other children. Is that often true, sometimes true, or not true at all of (fill name)?
- d. Shows concern for other people's feelings. Is that often true, sometimes true, or not true at all of (fill name)?
- e. Is helpful and cooperative. Is that often true, sometimes true, or not true at all of (fill name)?
- f. Is considerate and thoughtful of other children. Is that often true, sometimes true, or not true at all of (fill name)?
- g. Tends to give, lend, and share. Is that often true, sometimes true, or not true at all of (fill name)?

Problems Series: The series of questions seem to be well understood .

During our initial review of this series, prior to testing, we modified the last response option (within the question) to read "not true at all" instead of "not true." This was done so the response options would be consistent with the wording of the introduction. During cognitive testing, none of the respondents chose the "not true at all" response option. We wonder if that may be due, in part, to the modified wording which, in retrospect, sounds so definitive that it is unlikely any parent would select that option.

Also, during the first three interviews, the question wording did not specify the name of the reference child. For interviews 4-16, we used a slightly revised wording that included the child's name so the parent could stay focused on which child they were providing information.

Recommendation: We recommend the following question wording/response options:

Here are some statements which may or may not describe your child. As I read each statement, decide whether it is often true, sometimes true, or not true of your child over the last three months. (Fill name of child):

Is warm and loving. Is that often true, sometimes true, or not true of (fill name)?

<1> Often true

<2> Sometimes true

<3> Not true

(Universe : Ages 12-17)

**Tested wording:** **Here are some statements which may or may not describe your child. As I read each statement, decide whether it is often true, sometimes true, or not true at all of your child over the last three months. (Fill name):**

- a. Plans ahead. Is that often true, sometimes true, or not true at all of (fill name)?
- b. **Is admired and well liked by kids the same age. Is that often true, sometimes true, or not true at all of (fill name)?**
- c. **Looks for ways to help other people. Is that often true, sometimes true, or not true of at all of (fill name)?**
- d. **Is considerate and thoughtful of other people. Is that often true, sometimes true, or not true at all of (fill name)?**
- e. **Goes out of his or her way to make the family feel proud. Is that often true, sometimes true, or not true at all of (fill name)?**
- f. Is able to express his/her thoughts and feelings to other people. Is that often true, sometimes true, or not true at all of (fill name)?
- g. Is warm and affectionate toward members of our family. Is that often true, sometimes true, or not true at all of (fill name)?
- h. **Spends his or her own time helping other people. Is that often true, sometimes true, or not true at all of (fill name)?**

Problems (Series): No significant problems were detected with this series of questions. However, it should be noted that items c and h are very similar concepts and consideration should be given to deleting one or the other, in an effort to reduce respondent burden (if it can be done without compromising the integrity of the scale). Additionally, the recommendations for the response options in the prior series apply here as well.

**E. Grades/Achievement**

(Universe : ages 6-17)

**Tested Wording:**    **Based on your knowledge of (child's) schoolwork, including (his/her) report cards, how has (he/she) been doing in school overall? Would you say very well, well, average, below average or not well at all?**

<1> Very well

<2> Well

<3> Average

<4> Below average

<5> Not well at all

<6> Child not attending school

**Problems:**            Question was well understood. Most respondents indicated they thought about multiple sources of information regarding child's schoolwork, not just report cards.

## **F. Household Resources (aka Cognitive Stimulation)**

(Universe: Ages 0-17 )

### **Round 1**

**Tested wording:**     **Does your home have a computer?**

Problems:             This question was well understood, although one respondent questioned whether children’s computers like “Vtech,” which contains learning activities, should be included. This should be addressed in the FR manual. This was not tested in Round 2.

### **Round 1**

**Tested wording:**     **Does your home have a quiet place to study?**

Problems:             Respondents interpreted the question as asking about a quiet place to study somewhere inside the house, but not necessarily at a desk or other designated spot that is exclusively used for studying. All respondents reported having a quiet place to study in their households, even large families living in relatively small living spaces. This is another item for which the utility of the data may be questioned. If everyone reports “yes”, how valuable is the data? Do we know from other sources if there is any variance in responses to this item? This item was not tested in Round 2.

### **Round 1**

**Tested wording:**     **Does your home have a dictionary?**

Problems:             This question is clearly understood . All respondents reported having a dictionary. Do we know from other sources if there is any variance in responses to this item? This item was not tested in Round 2.

### **Round 1**

**Tested wording:**     **About how many children’s records, audio tapes, CD’s, or music videos do you have at home for (fill names of children under age 12), including any from the library?**

Problems:             This question does not work. We estimate that, at most, only 5 of the 17 respondents answered this question with a count of music-related records, audio tapes, CDs or videos. More typically this question captured a count of VCR videos such as Disney or other movies, in addition to cassette tapes. Also, four respondents mentioned that their audiotape cassettes included stories (religious and otherwise) or learning activities rather than just music. We requested

additional information from CTI regarding the objective of the question. CTI informed us that it is to learn about cognitively stimulating materials resources that parents provide for their children. And, CTI stated that children's movie videos can be included in responses to this item. CTI recommended rewording this question.

**Recommendation:** We recommend deleting this item. CTI recommends rewording the question to read: "About how many children's records, audiotapes, CDs, or children's videos do you have at home, including any from the library? They also recommend moving this item to immediately after the "number of books" item in the Cognitive Stimulation section. If the question is retained, then we recommend using response options of "ranges" (as recommended for the "number of books" item), instead of asking for an exact number.

**Series Comment:** Given the problem with the last item, as well as the lack of variance in responses to the second two items, this series should probably be a low priority for inclusion in the SPD99.

## G. Conflict Between "Parents" Who Co-reside

(Universe is two-parent households, which includes biological, step, adoptive, and foster parents, and households in which one parent is living with an unmarried partner, ages 0-17, flashcard)

### Round 1

**Tested wording:**     **The following is a list of subjects on which couples often have disagreements. How often, if at all, in the past year have you had open disagreements about each of the following:**

a.     Household tasks (same response options used in all items)

- <1> Never
- <2> A few times a year
- <3> Once a month
- <4> Several times a month
- <5> About once a week
- <6> Several times a week
- <7> Almost every day

- b.     Money**
- c.     Spending time together**
- d.     Sex**
- e.     In-laws**
- f.     The children**

Problems:     The term “open disagreements” was understood differently by different respondents. (Some respondents even asked the researchers what was meant by the term.) In some cases, it meant that the argument is heard by people other than the two having the disagreement (“open for others to hear”). In other cases, it meant that the argument was being discussed “openly,” (as opposed to being held inside and not discussed) but didn’t necessarily have to be heard by others. We requested additional information from CTI regarding how “open disagreements” are defined. CTI recommended dropping the term “open” to eliminate confusion. This series was not tested in Round 2.

Recommendation: The following is a list of subjects on which couples often have disagreements. How often, if at all, in the past year have you had disagreements about each of the following:

a. Household tasks (same response options used in all items)

- <1> Never
- <2> A few times a year
- <3> Once a month
- <4> Several times a month
- <5> About once a week
- <6> Several times a week
- <7> Almost every day

- b. Money
- c. Spending time together
- d. Sex
- e. In-laws
- f. The children

### Round 1

Tested wording:

**Sometimes arguments between partners become physical. During the last year, has this happened in arguments between you and your spouse (partner)?**

Problems:

This question was well understood. It was not tested in Round 2

## H. Conflict Between Biological Parents Who Do Not Co-reside

(Universe : Households where there is an absent biological or adoptive parent of one of the resident children, ages 0-17, flashcard)

### Round 1

**Tested Wording:** I am going to read you a list of issues that you and (child's) (mother/father) may have conflict over. For each one, please tell me if you have no conflict, a little, some, pretty much, or a great deal of conflict. How much conflict do you have about...

**a. where child lives?** (Same response options used for other items)

<1> No conflict

<2> A little conflict

<3> Some conflict

<4> Pretty much conflict

<5> Great deal of conflict

<6> I have no contact with my child's biological (mother/father)

**b. how (he/she) is raised?**

**c. how you spend money on (child)?**

**d. how (he/she) spends money on (child)?**

**e. the time (she/he) spends with (child)?**

**f. (her/his) financial contribution to (child's) support?**

**Problems:** Some custodial parents never have contact with the non-custodial parent. Some of the respondents reported "no conflict" instead of using the "I have no contact with my child's biological (mother/father)" response option. Perhaps a screening item is needed. Additionally, there is no reference period in the question, which presents some confusion (although you could assume it is "current" due to verb tense within the questions). We asked CTI what timeframe was relevant for this set of questions and we also asked them how conflict is defined for this series. CTI informed us that conflict is defined as "disagreements, arguing, or fighting." CTI suggested a timeframe of "the past year." They agreed with our suggestion to screen on last contact.

**Recommendation:** We included a reference period of "the past year" to increase the likelihood that respondents will use the same reference period when answering the questions. We included a question on "date of last contact" to determine whether the series should be asked. Only persons who had contact in the

last year were asked this series during Round 2. We also included the definition of conflict within the question and included the phrase “you and child’s (father/mother)” so it would be clear whose conflict we were asking about.

Revised wording follows:

In what month and year did (designated parent) last have contact of any kind, including phone calls, letters, or face-to-face contact with (child’s) (mother/father)?

\_\_\_\_Month \_\_\_\_\_Year (If prior to March 1997, skip to next series.)

I am going to read you a list of issues that you and (child’s) (mother/father) may have conflict over. By conflict we mean, arguments, disagreements, or fighting. For each one, please tell me if you have no conflict, a little, some, pretty much, or a great deal of conflict.

This series was tested in Round 2.

### Round 1

#### Tested wording:

**Sometimes arguments between former partners become physical. During the last year, has this happened in arguments between you and (child's) (father/mother)?** (Universe: Ages )

#### Problems:

Question was well understood . Question was not tested in Round 2.

**Round 2****Tested wording:**

**In what month and year did (designated parent) last have contact of any kind, including phone calls, letters, or face-to-face contact with (child's) (mother/father)?**

\_\_\_\_Month \_\_\_\_\_Year (If prior to March 1997, skip to next series.)

**I am going to read you a list of issues that you and (child's) (mother/father) may have conflict over. By conflict we mean, arguments, disagreements, or fighting. For each one, please tell me if you have no conflict, a little, some, pretty much, or a great deal of conflict.**

**During the past year, how much conflict did you and (child's father/mother) have about....**

- a. where child lives?**
  - <1> No conflict
  - <2> A little conflict
  - <3> Some conflict
  - <4> Pretty much conflict
  - <5> Great deal of conflict
  - <6> I have no contact with my child's biological (mother/father)
- b. how (he/she) is raised?**
- c. how you spend money on (child)?**
- d. how (he/she) spends money on (child)?**
- e. the time (she/he) spends with (child)?**
- f. (her/his) financial contribution to (child's) support?**

**Problems (Series):** (Only 4 respondents went through this series of questions.) For the most part, this series worked fine and there were no problems with the individual items.

In this series, there are two items (d and f) related to financial spending on/for the child by the absent parent. In some cases, respondents interpreted item d as asking about child support payments, which we don't think is the intent of the question. It seems unnecessary to include two such closely related items.

Recommendation (Series): To ease respondent burden, we recommend deleting item d (how he/she spends money on child) if the integrity of the scale will not be affected.

Series Comment: If this series is adopted for SPD99, keep in mind that the physical abuse question tested in Round 1 also goes with this series of questions.

## I. FAMILY CONFLICT

(Universe: Ages 0-17)

### Round 1

**Tested wording:** Next are some statements about how families get along and settle arguments. For each one please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree that this statement is like your family.

**Problems:** For this series of questions, the term “family” had multiple definitions. Several respondents considered their “family” to include extended family members not currently living with the respondents. Other respondents considered their “family” to include only those relatives with whom they were currently living at the time of the interview. Similarly, respondents had a variety of timeframes for which they answered the questions. It appeared to be divided among the current time period, a few years back, an entire lifetime and particular time period.

We requested additional information from CTI on the issues identified above. CTI informed us that for this set of questions “family” is defined as the family that lives in the household with the respondent. CTI preferred that we not modify the lead-in to define what was meant by “family.”

**Recommendation:** Modify the lead-in to define “family.” The recommended wording follows:

Next are some statements about how families get along and settle arguments. For each one please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree that the statement is like the family you currently live with.

### Round 2

**Tested wording:** Next are some statements about how families get along and settle arguments. For each one please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree that the statement is like the family you currently live with.

**Problems:** The addition of the phrase “the family you currently live with” to the lead-in helps distinguish what family we are referencing. One respondent paraphrased “the family that we currently live with.” One respondent paraphrased, “immediate family.” One respondent listed all people in her immediate family that she lives with.

**Recommendation:** Retain Round 2 wording for lead-in that defines “family.”

**Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **We fight a lot in our family. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?**

- <1> Strongly agree
- <2> Somewhat agree
- <3> Somewhat disagree
- <4> Strongly disagree

**Problems:** Respondents included both verbal and physical fighting. We requested more information from CTI regarding the types of fighting that should be included. CTI responded that fighting can include verbal and physical fighting. CTI did not think that “discussions about different points of view” should be included as fighting unless these discussions escalated into what a respondent would call a “fight.”

Recommendation: Retain question wording and retest in Round 2.

**Round 2**

**Tested wording** **We fight a lot in our family. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?**

**Problems:** No problem identified. Respondents included both verbal and physical fighting. Only a few respondents included one and not the other.

**Round 1**

**Tested wording** **Family members hardly ever lose their tempers. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?**

**Problem:** Some respondents seem to interpret this question as a double negative and were confused. Perhaps using a term other than “hardly ever” would be better. Consideration should be given to “Family members rarely lose their tempers.”

Recommendation: We recommend retesting this item in Round 2.

**Round 2**

**Tested wording** **Family members hardly ever lose their tempers. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?**

Problems: It appears that many of the respondents (at least 5) were confused by this question. In combination with the response categories, it is a double negative. Two respondents actually indicated that it was a double negative. Two of the four respondents, who clearly understood this question, asked if the word “seldom” was used in the question. In addition, at least two respondents had difficulty with the term “family members” and starting talking about their extended family that did not live in their household. When probed, one respondent said that the first question that uses “our family” sounded more narrowly defined than the later questions that used the term “family members. (Keep in mind however, that, in general, most respondents had a clear definition of “family members” that was consistent with the intended definition.) It could also be that our probing on the definition of “family members” led these two respondents to this misinterpretation since the lead-in (which defines family members) is then distanced from the detailed questions.

Recommendation: If this series of questions is used in SPD99, we recommend that this item be reworded and offer a few alternative wordings, in the order of our preference:

1. “Family members lose their tempers.” This eliminates the modifier of “hardly ever.” (Eliminating the modifier on all the questions might prove to provide more consistent answers across the series. This recommendation is based more on an expert review, than on results of cognitive interviewing.)
2. “Family members often lose their tempers.” This replaces “hardly ever” with “often.” This changes the direction of the statement from a negative direction to a positive direction. Since the other statements are this direction, this maintains consistency among the questions.
3. “Family members seldom lose their tempers. This replaces “hardly ever” with “seldom.” This maintains a similar direction to the question and response in the original version. “Seldom” was used by two respondents when paraphrasing the original question wording.

**Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **Family members sometimes get so angry they throw things. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?**

Problems: No problems were identified. Item not tested in Round 2.

**Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **Family members always calmly discuss problems. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?**

Problems: No problems were identified. Item not tested in Round 2.

**Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **Family members often criticize each other. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?**

Problems: No problems were identified. Item not tested in Round 2.

**Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **Family members sometimes hit each other. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?**

Problems: Some respondents included horsing around and playful hitting when answering this question. We requested additional information from CTI about what was suppose to be included/excluded when responding to this question. CTI responded that they would not include playful hitting in this item. This could include children hitting children, but it would be hitting in an angry or aggressive manner, not playful hitting. We suggested clarifying what should be included by adding the term “in anger” to the question.

Recommendation: Family members sometimes hit each other in anger.

**Round 2:**

**Tested wording:** **Family members sometimes hit each other in anger. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?**

Problems: No problems identified. The addition of the term “in anger” helped define what level of hitting we are interested in. The word “violence” was used by three respondents when expounding on their answers. Also, respondents used the term “in anger” within the explanation. For example, “Because we never hit each other in anger.” Most

respondents did not include playful hitting or horsing around in their answer. A few respondents did include children hitting each other, as in “the kids hit each other.” This seemed to be when the children were mad and not when they were playful.

Recommendation: Retain Round 2 question wording.

Problems (Series): From the cognitive interviews there were no apparent problems with the response options. We feel however that this entire series could be posed as a series of questions asking for frequencies, instead of agree/disagree statements. The response categories could then be more of a frequency scale. We felt that there wasn't always a large distinction between the meaning of sometimes agree and sometimes disagree.

Series Comment: If this series is adopted for SPD99, keep in mind that only a subset of the series was retested in Round 2. Be sure to include the other items from Round 1 that were not revised.

## J. Attitudes Towards Welfare/work

(Universe : All respondents)

### Round 1:

**Tested wording:** Here are some opinions that people have expressed about welfare. We are interested in knowing how much you agree or disagree with each opinion.

**Welfare makes people work less than they would if there wasn't a welfare system. Do you strongly agree, agree, you're in the middle, disagree or strongly disagree?**

<1> strongly agree

<2> agree

<3> in the middle

<4> disagree

<5> strongly disagree

<d> don't know

**Problems:** The statement "makes people work less" is confusing to respondents. It seems some respondents thought this question was asking if people on welfare were lazy. Others mistook "welfare" as a person, per chance a case worker and based their answer on the fact that previously, welfare didn't allow you to work, lest you lose your benefits.

**Recommendation:** Revise question wording and retest in Round 2. (We were unable to develop question wording with which we were satisfied so we retested the original wording again in Round 2.)

### Round 2:

**Tested wording:** Welfare makes people work less than they would if there wasn't a welfare system. Do you strongly agree, agree, you're in the middle, disagree or strongly disagree?

**Problems:** During the second round of testing, this statement was understood more clearly, which may be due to differences in the respondent pool. Typically, respondents added the word "system" to the word "welfare" and talked about the "welfare system" as evidenced in the following quotes: "If there wasn't a welfare system, then they would work more." or "If there wasn't a welfare system, they would be more actively seeking work, out there trying to find jobs and stuff." or "Because there is welfare, some people...if there weren't welfare, people would be more motivated to work because there would not be that monthly income. Due to the nature of

survival, if welfare weren't available, then a person would work." Three respondents interpreted the statement to imply that people on welfare are lazy.

Recommendation: Retain statement wording.

**Round 1:**

**Tested wording:** **Welfare helps people get on their feet when facing difficult situations such as unemployment, a divorce, or a death in the family. Do you strongly agree, agree, you're in the middle, disagree or strongly disagree?**

**Problems:** The statement about welfare helping people get on their feet was confusing to some respondents as they seemed to focus on the examples and think of specific cases they knew about (e.g., they don't give you enough for a funeral or death). In addition, the word "help" was interpreted as the level of help; that welfare didn't help enough. Persons answering "in the middle" seemed to be thinking of welfare as not helping them get on their feet.

**Recommendation:** Revise question wording and retest in Round 2. (We were unable to develop question wording with which we were satisfied so we retested the original wording again in Round 2.)

**Round 2:**

**Tested wording:** **Welfare helps people get on their feet when facing difficult situations such as unemployment, a divorce, or a death in the family. Do you strongly agree, agree, you're in the middle, disagree or strongly disagree?**

**Problems:** Most of the respondents referred to the list only as examples of hardships cases where a person might rely on welfare for a temporary time. Many respondents added that welfare is a short term solution. It seems for the people "in the middle" that the opposite of "getting on their feet" is when people are using/abusing the system as a way of life. Differences in results between Round 1 and Round 2 may be due to differences in the respondent pool.

Recommendation: Retain statement wording.

**Round 1:**

**Tested wording:** **Welfare encourages young women to have babies before marriage. Do you strongly agree, agree, you're in the middle, disagree or strongly disagree?**

Problems: A few respondents mistook the statement about “Welfare encouraging young women to have babies before marriage.” They thought the statement was saying that welfare was telling young women to have babies.

Recommendation: Revise question wording and retest in Round 2. (We were unable to develop question wording with which we were satisfied so we retested the original wording again in Round 2.)

**Round 2:**

**Tested wording: Welfare encourages young women to have babies before marriage. Do you strongly agree, agree, you’re in the middle, disagree or strongly disagree?**

Problems: Unlike the first round, only two respondents in the second round interpreted the word “encourage” to mean “tell” or “advise.” Many of the other respondents interpreted welfare to mean “welfare money.” One respondent bluntly paraphrased it as “Women have babies before marriage to get welfare checks.” Other respondents were slightly more subtle, “Since there is a welfare system out there, people will have babies so they get more money.” When respondents didn’t agree with the statement, they seemed to have the interpretation that the opposite of welfare encouraging young women to have babies was that the environment or the society promotes unwed motherhood more so than welfare.

Recommendation: Retain statement wording.

**Round 1:**

**Tested wording: People on welfare just don’t want to work. Do you strongly agree, agree, you’re in the middle, disagree or strongly disagree?**

Problems: No problems identified. Item not retested in Round 2.

**Round 1:**

**Tested wording: Because of welfare, an unmarried couple expecting a baby is less likely to get married. Do you strongly agree, agree, you’re in the middle, disagree or strongly disagree?**

Problems; A slight misunderstanding occurred with the marriage question. Respondents gave answers unrelated to references to welfare, about why a person wouldn’t want to get married.

Recommendation: Revise question wording and retest in Round 2. (We were unable to develop question wording with which we were satisfied so we retested the original wording again in Round 2.)

**Round 2:**

**Tested wording:** **Because of welfare, an unmarried couple expecting a baby is less likely to get married. Do you strongly agree, agree, you're in the middle, disagree or strongly disagree?**

**Problems:** This statement's intent was understood by most of the respondents in the second round of testing. Only one respondent retorted that, "I don't think welfare has anything to do with wanting [to get married...] they are separate entities." The remaining respondents all talked about decreased responsibility, eligibility, non-qualification status, the welfare system, or the welfare laws. One example of the paraphrased statement was, "Due to the welfare system, a couple expecting a baby is more likely not to marry because they know that the baby qualifies for financial assistance." Again, the respondents in Round 2 seem to read into the statement a lot more than the literal interpretation of the statement. The differences in results between Round 1 and 2 may be due to differences in the respondent pool.

**Recommendation:** Retain statement wording.

**Round 1:**

**Tested wording:** **Welfare provides more for a family than many jobs do. Do you strongly agree, agree, you're in the middle, disagree or strongly disagree?**

**Problems:** No problems identified. Item not retested in Round 2.

**Round 1:**

**Tested wording:** **Because of welfare, father are less likely to support their children. Do you strongly agree, agree, you're in the middle, disagree or strongly disagree?**

**Problems:** No problems identified. Item not retested in Round 2.

**Series Comment:** If this series is adopted for SPD99, keep in mind that only a subset of the series was retested in Round 2. Be sure to include the other items from Round 1 that were not revised.

**Series comments:**

CTI recommended that we delete the "in the middle" response option so the response scales

between the SPD and the National Survey of American Families (NSAF) will be consistent. The NSAF does not have the “in the middle” response option. We recommend keeping this category. Many respondents used that response option since they didn’t want to categorize people one way or the other. Other respondents reasoned that for some people the statement was true and for some people the statement wasn’t true. Without the inclusion of this response option, respondents may be forced into selecting an response option which may not represent their true attitude. The other response categories worked well. No one used the “don’t know” response option.

We observed differences in interpretation of the statements based on the two rounds of testing. Round 1 respondents, who were more likely to have been current welfare or former welfare recipients were more likely to interpret the statements more literally. Round 2 respondents, who were, in general, not welfare recipients, understood the implied meaning of the statements. Thus, in our opinion, the statements seemed to be more accurately interpreted during Round 2. We feel this is primarily due to the education level and life experiences of the two groups. If the statements are included in the SPD99, analysts should keep in mind that information collected from the cognitive interviews suggest that the interpretation of the statements may be quite different among various subgroups of the population.

## K. Knowledge about welfare regulations

### Round 1

**Tested wording:** **As far as you know, how much can a woman with one child get from welfare in your state? Please tell me either the weekly, monthly, or yearly amount.**

Problems: About half of the respondents said “don’t know” and the other half provided amounts, many of which seemed like guesses. The question seems well understood; it’s just many of the respondents don’t know the information requested.

### Round 1

**Tested wording:** **In your state, can a married woman qualify for welfare if her husband is living with her?**

Problems: The question was well understood, but it’s unclear whether the respondents know the answer or are just guessing.

### Round 1

**Tested wording:** **In your state, if a mother on welfare has another baby does her welfare check increase, decrease, or stay the same?**

Problems: The question was well understood . Of those providing a response, about half of the respondents said “stays the same” and half said “increase.”

### Round 1

**Tested wording:** **In your State, how many months or years in all can a parent receive welfare?**

Problems (Series) The question was understood. Several respondents reported 5 years. A few reported 2 years and several said they didn’t know.

### Round 1

**Tested wording:** **The next two question are about welfare rules in your State for teenagers who are age 17 or younger.**

- a. Where must a teenage who has a baby live in order to receive welfare benefits? (*Read categories*)
- <1> She can get her own apartment
  - <2> She must live with her parents
  - <3> She must live with her parents unless the State makes an exception that she can live with another

- adults
- <D> Don't know
- b. In order to receive welfare in your State, what is the rule for school attendance for a teenage who has a baby? (*Read categories*)
- <1> She can stay at home with her baby until the time limit for welfare runs out
- <2> She is required to return to school when the baby is three months old
- <D> Don't know

Problems: The questions about the rules for teenagers on welfare seem quite complicated given the response categories. Almost none of the respondents knew the regulations for teenagers under 17. By offering the specifics of the regulations as the answer categories we provide them with a means by which to give an answer without having to say "don't know," yet it is clear that the answers are guesses, and not true knowledge of the regulations. We suggest asking a yes/no question instead of asking for detailed knowledge of the regulations.

We posed questions to CTI regarding the intent of the question. CTI informed us that they do not have a strong preference to retain these items in the parent interview, but if they are retained, CTI prefers the wording to be identical to that in the adolescent self-administered questionnaire.

Recommendation: Instead of asking about the detailed rules, perhaps just ask a yes/no question letting the respondent know it's okay to say no. With the tested design it seemed like it was unacceptable for respondents to say no and that led them to make guesses.

Recommended question wordings (from the SPD98 adolescent self-administered questionnaire) are provided below.

The next two question are about welfare rules in your State for teenagers who are age 17 or younger.

Can a teenager who has had a baby get her own apartment without any adult supervision and still receive welfare benefits?

In order to receive welfare, is there a rule requiring a teenager who has had a baby to attend school?

#### IV. COGNITIVE TEST RESULTS - EXPANDED CONTENT FOR THE SPD CORE INTERVIEW

##### A. Knowledge of Child Care Subsidies

(Universe: Households with a regular child care arrangement, ages 0-14.)

##### Round 2

**Tested Wording:** Are you aware of a state program that helps pay for child care costs?

**Problems:** There was no problem with respondents' comprehension of the question. Of the six respondents administered the question, four responded 'yes' and two responded 'no.' Upon probing, two of the four indicated they knew the name of the program and two did not.

**Recommendation:** This item is a household-level question, which is in the middle of the child-level child care section. This item should be asked after the child care series has been completed for the last child for the designated parent. This series of questions on subsidized care should not be asked of persons who have already indicated that their children receive subsidized day care through the government (based on questions in the core instrument).

**Tested Wording:** Why didn't you receive financial assistance from a state program to help cover your child care costs between January and December 1997?

**Problems:** There were no significant problems with respondent's understanding of the question. Of the six respondents for whom this question was asked, three gave income-related reasons; one said it was the grandparents time to spend with child, one was a daycare provider herself, and one said she doesn't use any daycare.

The universe of persons for whom this question is asked should be carefully thought through. It seems inappropriate to ask of middle and upper income households. If a nonworking parent has a regular arrangement for child care a few times a week, so they can go to the gym, or do volunteer work, etc., it seems like this question would not be applicable. Consideration should be given to including an income screener prior to this item.

**Recommendation:** Include an income screener so that middle and upper income households

are not asked this question. Placement of this item in the core should be carefully thought through since this is a household level question within a child-level child care section.

## B. Child Care Problems

(Universe: Ages 0-14 with regular child care arrangement)

### Tested wording: (Int #1-3)

- a. At any time between January and December 1997, did (you/designated parent) have to quit a job, school, a job search, or a training activity, because (you/designated parent) had problems arranging child care or keeping a child care arrangement?
- b. At any time between January and December 1997, were (you/designated parent) unable to take a job, or start school, a job search, or a training activity because (you/designated parent) had problems arranging child care or keeping a child care arrangement?

### Tested Wording: (Int #4 - 16)

- a. **At any time between January and December 1997, did (you/designated parent) have to quit a job, a job search, a training activity, or school, because (you/designated parent) had problems arranging child care or keeping a child care arrangement?**
- b. At any time between January and December 1997, were (you/designated parent) unable to take a job, start a job search, start a training activity or school, because (you/designated parent) had problems arranging child care or keeping a child care arrangement?

Problems: Several responses to question “a” indicated that some respondents thought this was asking if the parent had ANY child care problems during the year; something that may have been necessary for the parent to leave work early or take a day off. Examples of such responses are: “I can’t remember a time when I couldn’t attend work or training because of child care.” “There were times that we had to leave our jobs due to child care.... the child had to be picked up because of a fever.... we missed time at work because of child care.” “Not actually quit, but I had problem when I wanted to go to graduation and my husband wasn’t home from work.” One respondent said “sitter bailed out” so he had to take son to class with him. Other respondent thought the question was asking if “she had to take off time from doing professional activities for her child care responsibilities.”

Upon the initial reading of the two questions, many respondents thought

that two questions were asking the same thing. It was only AFTER both questions were reread slowly and emphasis was put on the words “quit” and “unable,” that most respondents told us there was a difference between the two questions..

Note: This item is also a household-level question, not a child specific question and therefore should appear only after the last child has cycled through the series.

Recommendation: Both of the questions are quite long and include too many concepts to be addressed in a single question, however if an approach similar to the one tested is desired, we recommend modifications as provided below. An alternative recommendation using a different format/strategy is also provided.

- a. At any time between January and December 1997, were (you/designated parent) unable to TAKE a job, START a job search, START a training activity or START school, because of child care problems.
- b. At any time between January and December 1997, did (you/designated parent) QUIT a job, QUIT a job search, QUIT a training activity, or QUIT school, because of child care problems.

Alternative recommendation:

- a. At any time between January and December 1998, did you have to do any of the following because of child care problems:
 

Quit a job	Yes	No
Quit a job search	Yes	No
Quit a training activity or quit school	Yes	No
- b. At any time between January and December 1998, were you unable to do any of the following because of child care problems:
 

Unable to take or start a job?	Yes	No
Unable to start a job search?	Yes	No
Unable to start a training activity or start school?	Yes	No

### C. Quality of Child Care

(Universe: Ages 0-14 that are in a regular day care arrangement of family day care, nursery school/preschool, Head Start programs, childcare/daycare programs or before or after school care)

### **Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **Is there more than one group or room of children in that arrangement?**

**Problems:** A few respondents did not understand what this question was asking. From information they provided it is difficult to isolate the reasons for the confusion. This question is also confusing in situations where more than one type of child care is used. Is this series of questions suppose to be asked for each arrangement utilized? If not, when multiple arrangements eligible for this series are used, how is it determine which one to ask about?

### **Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **How many children are usually cared for in (child)'s group, including (child)?**

**Problems:** Most respondents did not know the exact number and provided estimates. Some indicated that the number changes from day to day.

### **Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **How many children are usually cared for in that arrangement, including (child)?**

**Problems:** Only one respondent was asked this question.

### **Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **What is the usual number of people caring for (child) and the other children in (child)'s group?**

**Problems:** This question was well understood.

### **Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **As far as you know, is this child care provider licensed or regulated by the state?**

**Problems:** This question was well understood.

## **D. Employee Fringe Benefits**

(Universe: Persons 15+ who worked during the past calendar year)

## Round 2

**Tested wording:**     **The next few questions are about fringe benefits.**

- a.     During 1997, did (employer name) give you paid vacation?
- b.     How many days per year did this employer provide?
- c.     During 1997, did (employer name) provide paid sick leave?
- d.     How many days of paid sick leave per year did this employer provide?

**Problems:**           Several respondents were uncertain what information was being requested in these questions, especially item b. There was confusion whether we were asking how many days the employer allows/provides/gives vs how many days the employee actually took. Additionally, some respondents thought we were asking about paid holidays. Some respondents also seemed confused by the work “give;” they thought of it more in terms of the employee “earning” or “accruing” the vacation time. Also, there was some confusion for one respondent who received 2 weeks “vacation pay” on her work anniversary, but then when she takes off for a vacation she doesn’t get paid.

Another issue pertains to part-year employment where an employer might provide x number of days per year, but the employee wasn’t there long enough to be eligible for the full amount. Some respondents tended to report the full amount even though the employee would not have been able to take that amount. In another instance, the respondent had started a new job in October, was accruing leave from the beginning, but could not access any of her leave until after she had been there 90 days, which would have been in January 1998. Do we want the amount of time a person would be eligible to take? If so, we should word the question to reflect that. (Note: the first question in this series uses the word “give,” whereas the similar question in the sick leave series uses the word “provide.” The word “give” may have contributed to some of the confusion.)

There did not seem to be as many problems with items c and d (sick leave series) as with the vacation series. (That is most likely due to the probing of the responses to the vacation series.) The issue of whether we are asking for sick leave provided versus sick leave taken exists. One respondent reported that there is not a set amount of sick leave. The first day a person is sick they do not get paid, but they get paid for the second, third, etc. days that they are out sick.

We might also want to consider allowing the FR to record the amount of leave in whatever periodicity the respondent provides. Several respondents reported their leave as X number of hours every pay day, or every two weeks.

- Recommendation:
- a. During 1998, did (employer name) provide paid vacation days?
  - b. During 1998, how many paid vacation days was (name) eligible to take?
  - c. During 1998, did (employer name) provide paid sick leave?
  - d. During 1998, how many paid sick leave days was (name) eligible to take?

The sponsoring divisions may also want to consider using ranges as response options for items “b” and “d” above (e.g. 0 days, 1-5 days, 6-10 days, 11-15 days, 16 or more days). Some respondents who don’t know the exact number of days may be able to provide a range.

## Round 2

**Tested wording:** **During 1997, did (employer name ) provide tuition assistance if you wanted it?**

- Problems:
- The majority of respondents had no problem understanding this question. One respondent commented that she had received money for a conference, but had not taken advantage of tuition assistance. She commented that training assistance and tuition assistance may fall into two different categories. What is intended to be captured here? Is it only tuition assistance for a class at a college, university, etc., What about “fees” for non-College training? This item doesn’t necessarily need any revisions.

## **E. Health Care Utilization While Uninsured**

(Universe: Persons who were uninsured for part or all of the previous calendar year.)

There is very limited information for this series of questions. Only 4 of the 16 Round 2 respondents had no health insurance at some time during 1997. Of those 4, only 1 had sought medical care during 1997. One other respondent had sought medical care early in 1998 and the questions were administered for this person as well. Both respondents had used emergency rooms, and both respondents had to pay full price for the services. Neither had been asked their income by the emergency room staff.

### **Round 2**

**Tested wording:**     **Did (fill all names of uninsured) go to a doctor, nurse, or other health care provider at all while not insured in 1997?**

**Did (fill all names of uninsured) receive treatment for an illness or injury while uninsured in 1997?**

**Did (fill all names of uninsured) receive any routine or preventive care, such as a checkup, prenatal care, immunizations, or family planning while uninsured in 1997?**

**Did (fill all names of uninsured) receive treatment for a drug or alcohol problem while uninsured in 1997?**

**Where did (fill all names of uninsured) go to get those health care services?**

**MARK ALL THAT APPLY**

**<1> Clinic or Public Health Department**

**<2> Emergency room**

**<3> Doctor's office or an office at the hospital**

**<4> Someplace else**

**Were these services (fill all names of uninsured) received while uninsured, free, or did (you/name) have to pay something for them?**

- <1> Free
- <2> Paid something
- <3> Both

Problems: Based on expert review, not cognitive interviews, it's suggested that the question wording be revised so it's less wordy and less awkward. It should be clear from everything else in this series of questions that we are referring to services received while uninsured, so we think the reference to "while uninsured" can be deleted.

Recommendation: Were these services free or did (you/name) have to pay something for them?

## Round 2

**Tested wording: Do you think you paid the full price for these services or do you think (you) paid a reduced price?**

- <1> Full price
- <2> Reduced price
- <3> Both

**Did the (clinic/hospital/doctor) ask what your income was before they set a price for the services?**

- <1> Yes
- <2> No
- <3> Sometimes

## F. Consumer Expenditures

(Universe: All households.)

### 1. Food Expenditures

#### Round 1

##### Tested wording:

**The next set of questions are about common expenditures families often have.**

**Thinking about all the places you shop for food— for example, the supermarket, warehouse clubs, convenience stores, bakeries, produce stands— about how much does your household usually spend per week or per month on groceries? (Please include any purchases made with food stamps.)**

##### Problems:

One respondent didn't know what the term "expenditures" meant. Other respondents had difficulty estimating a weekly amount because they don't shop weekly. In Round 2, we modified the lead- in statement and allowed respondents to report either a weekly, biweekly, or monthly amount.

#### Round 2

##### Tested wording:

**The next set of questions are about your food-related expenses. Thinking about all the places you shop for food—for example, the supermarket, warehouse clubs, convenience stores, bakeries, produce stands—about how much does your household usually spend per week on groceries? (Please include any purchases made with food stamps.)**

**READ IF NECESSARY:**

**Is that per week, every two weeks or every month?**

<1> week

<2> every two weeks

<3> every month

##### Problems:

The Round 2 question asks for a weekly amount but allows respondents to report an amount other than weekly if need be. The question includes a "read if necessary" probe to collect the periodicity. In a few of the interviews, respondents reported a dollar amount but did not state a periodicity. Without cognitive probing, we may not have realized that these were not weekly food expenditures. About half of the Round 2 respondents reported

amounts either biweekly or monthly amounts to this item. We recommend deleting the “read if necessary” and having all amounts and periodicities confirmed with respondents.

The son of one respondent is away from home at a boarding school. The respondent is paying his room and board and was not sure whether expenditures for food while he is at school should be included. The respondent decided to estimate the portion of room and board that she thought was for food. Whether this should be included or not needs to be addressed in the training manual and on a help screen.

Some respondents were more comfortable providing a range for this item (e.g. \$75-\$100 per week) rather than giving an exact dollar amount. The CPS Food Security Supplement (FSS) allows respondents to report a range if they cannot give a single dollar amount. We may want to consider this as well.

Recommendations: The next set of questions are about your food-related expenses.

Thinking about all the places (you shop/your household shops) for food—for example, the supermarket, warehouse clubs, convenience stores, bakeries, produce stands—about how much does your household usually spend per week on groceries? (Please include any purchases made with food stamps.)

(X) Enter “X” if range given (enter range on separate screen)

\$\_\_\_\_\_

Is that per week, every two weeks or every month?

<1> week

<2> every two weeks

<3> every month

**Round 2**

**Tested wording:** **How much of the \$\_\_\_\_\_ was for non-food items, such as pet food, paper products, detergents, or cleaning supplies?**

(This item was not included in Round 1. It was tested in Round 2 to see if respondents are including non-food items when reporting grocery expenditures.)

**Problems:** All but two respondents did include purchases of non-food items in their reports of grocery expenditures. Of those who reported amounts spent on non-food items, two respondents reported the percentage of their bill that they spend on non-food items. FRs will need training on how to deal with such situations (check the CPS FSS FR manual). Three respondents reported a range for this item. We may want to allow respondents to report a range if they can't give an exact dollar amount (as is done in the CPS FSS). One respondent reported the amount the household spent on non-food items, but this was not out of the amount reported in the previous question; it was in addition to that amount. This respondent received food stamps, and reported only food expenditures in the first question, so he/she should have reported \$0 to this item, but instead reported \$50-\$60 per month. FRs will need to be trained to listen for possible respondent confusion on this item.

**Round 1**

**Tested wording:** **About how much does your household usually spend per week for food at restaurants, fast food places, cafeterias, and vending machines?**

**Problems:** Some respondents do not buy food from restaurants weekly, but do within a month's time. We modified the Round 2 wording to allow respondents to report either a weekly or monthly amount. In a few instances, respondents were only thinking about meals at restaurants and were not including purchases such as snacks from vending machines, or lunches from their children's school cafeteria.

**Round 2**

**Tested wording:** **About how much does your household usually spend for meals or snacks at restaurants, fast food places, cafeterias, and vending machines? Please provide either a weekly or monthly amount.**

**READ IF NECESSARY:**

**Is that per week or per month?**

<1> week  
<2> month

Problems: Two-thirds of the respondents reported a monthly amount, with the remainder reporting a weekly amount. This suggests that the option for reporting a monthly or weekly amount should be retained. Most respondents included smaller purchases made at fast food places and vending machines when estimating a dollar amount. One respondent initially thought the question was only about eating out at restaurants and did not include times they stop for fast food or vending machines. Another respondent asked whether the question was only about times the entire family ate together at a restaurant.

Recommendation: Use Round 2 wording.

## 2. Transportation Expenditures

### Round 1

**Tested wording:** **What type of transportation do you usually use to get to work?**

(Universe: Persons 15 or over who are currently working.)

- <1> car, truck, van
- <2> bus or street car
- <3> subway or elevated
- <4> railroad
- <5> taxicab
- <6> motorcycle
- <7> bicycle
- <8> other vehicle
- <9> walked only
- <10> works at home

Problems: Respondents understood this question.

### Round 1

**Tested wording:** **How much do you usually spend, per week, on transportation to and from (your/his/her) job. Do not include expenses paid or reimbursed by someone else.**

Problems: Respondents reported gasoline expenses (if that was their primary mode of transportation to work), but they did not include maintenance on their car. Unless the car was exclusively used for transportation to and from work, respondents reported usual weekly gas expenditures, which also included personal use of the car.

**Tested wording:** **Is there public transportation for this area?** (Universe: All household.)

Problems: Respondents understood this question. Question order was sometimes awkward if respondents had just reported that they took public transportation in response to the previous question.

Recommendation: Reorder series to ask about availability and use of public transportation first, followed by the questions on type of transportation used to get to work and weekly transportation expenditures. Note that the questions on availability and use of public transportation are household-level questions and those on type of transportation used and weekly transportation expenditures are person-level questions.

**Tested wording:** **Does anyone in the household use public transportation at least once a week?**

Problems: Respondents understood this question.

### 3. School Expenditures

**Tested wording:** Including adults and children, did anyone in this household have any school-related expenses during the past 12 months, such as:  
 .....rental or purchase of school books, equipment, or supplies; or  
 .....tuition (excluding daycare/nursery school expenses); or  
 .....room and board?

**Problems:** The question was long and difficult for interviewers to read. Many respondents reported expenditures for school trips, which is not listed as an example in the question.

**Recommendation:** Delete this item. Use a person-level question to collect school expenditures (see recommendations for next item). If a household-level question is used, we recommend the following wording:

Including adults and children, did anyone in this household have any school-related expenses during the past 12 months, such as:  
 .....school books, supplies, or trips;  
 .....tuition, room or board (excluding daycare/nursery school expenses)

**Tested wording:** How much in total were these expenses for the past 12 months?

**Problem:** This is a household-level question. Respondents had to count up many different expenses for multiple children—school supplies, supplies for projects, school trips, required reading materials, etc. Respondents found this task to be difficult and some just took wild guesses. Some could give a monthly figure more easily than a yearly figure. Others thought providing a range would be easier.

**Recommendation:** The sponsoring division may want to consider asking one person-level question about school-related expenses in each of the adult and children's educational enrollment series, perhaps at the end of each series. Persons who report being enrolled in school could be asked, "How much did (you/your household) pay for school-related expenses such as books, supplies, school trips, tuition, room or board between September 1998 and May 1999 for (name)?"

#### 4. Health Insurance Expenditures

(Universe: Persons who had health insurance for all or part of the preceding calendar year.)

**Tested wording:**      **Between January and December 1997, about how much did [fill policyholder name] pay for health insurance?**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_       Weekly  
    Biweekly  
    Twice monthly  
    Monthly  
    Quarterly  
    Annually

**Problems:**      Only three respondents were eligible for this item. One knew the annual amount (\$2,400) because she had just written the check. Another respondent did not have any idea because her husband takes care of it. When probed, she reported that she wouldn't even be able to give a range. Another respondent said her husband doesn't have to pay anything for health insurance. There is not enough evidence to determine whether this question "worked," but it's likely to have a high "don't know" rate.

**G. Months Receiving Rental Assistance**

(Universe: Persons who reported receiving rental assistance during the preceding calendar year.)

**Round 2**

**Tested wording:**      **During which months in 1998 did you receive rental assistance (through Section 8)?**

Problems:              The one respondent who was on rental assistance thought this question was asking “Do I get money from them to pay like the utilities, gas, electric, water?” The interviewer re-read the question and the respondent reported “every month.”

## V. COGNITIVE TEST RESULTS - CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL HISTORY

We tested two completely different versions of the residential history module. Presented below are general comments regarding the series we tested followed by the results from Round 1 and then the results from Round 2. The Steering Committee has tentatively decided to field this module in 2000, rather than 1999. Recommendations for revising question wording are not included in this report since discussions are currently taking place between Census and external experts regarding the objectives of the series as well as deciding questionnaire design issues. Problems identified during cognitive testing, however, are included.

### A. General comments

1. What is the universe for the question on children under 18 who live outside the household? Which adults do we want to ask this about? Should it be asked of 100-level people age 15 or over? Should it be asked of all adults in the household? Questions on residential history are asked for all children added to the roster at this point. The concern is that we will collect residential history data for children who have no attachment whatsoever to this household and for whom we have no data other than residential history.
2. In Round 1, the questions were framed in terms of separations of the child from the respondent. Thus, the responses depended on who answered the questions and didn't provide consistent data for all children. For example, if the child is living with a grandparent, the separation data would be separations from the grandparent. No data were collected on separations from the biological mother or father. Moreover, even if the respondent was a biological parent, these questions did not obtain data on separations from the other biological parent. In Round 2 we addressed this issue by asking about separations from the biological mother and biological father, as well as the person the child is currently living with.
3. In Round 1, the presumption was that the child went to live with someone else during the separation. In some cases, the respondent went to live elsewhere (e.g. due to work) and the child stayed at home with the other parent. We addressed this by modifying the question wording in Round 2.
4. The length of time of the separation and the number of separations for which we collected data differed between Rounds 1 and 2. In Round 1 we collected separations of one month or more and only collected data on the first and last separation during the child's lifetime. In Round 2 we collected separations of four months or more and collected data on up to four separations during the child's lifetime. We need to determine what length of separation we want to collect data for and the number of separations. Do we need data for the child's lifetime or just since the panel began?

5. In Round 2, we added questions on additional people who may have provided “care for the child.” The question about living with a grandparent caused problems for some respondents particularly when the biological parent and child lived with the child’s grandparent and the biological parent continued to care for the child. In such cases, the child lived in the same house with the grandparent, but the grandparent wasn’t in charge of caring for the child. The question about living with a step-parent was awkward for respondents who are currently living with both biological parents. This could be corrected by skipping these people over the stepparent questions.

Item by item results are shown below.

## **B. Results of Round 1 Testing**

(Universe: All households.)

**Tested Universe:** *Display roster of all children younger than 18 for whom this person is the biological, adoptive, or step parent or guardian.*

**Problems:** We need clarification on the universe. Should foster children be included? If the respondent is not the legal guardian, but the children live with her, should those children be included?

**Tested wording:** **I have listed the following children under 18 in this household.**  
*Name of Child Sex Age Relation of child to this person*

**Do you have any (other) biological children who are currently under 18 and living somewhere else?**

**Problem:** Although respondents indicated that they would include step or adopted children in this item, all respondents answered the question appropriately and all respondents had the correct understanding of term “biological children.” It’s possible that respondents meant they would have reported step and adopted children on the original list because they treat them as their own children.

**Tested wording:**     **What is that child's name?**  
                               **What is that child's sex?**  
                               **What is that child's age?**

Problems:                Questions were understood.

*Display roster of all children younger than 18 for whom this person is the biological, adoptive, or step parent or guardian.*

**Tested wording:**     **I have listed the following children under 18.**

Name of Child Sex     Age     Relation of child to this person

**Is that correct?**

Problems:                Question is redundant and unnecessary.

**Tested wording:**     **Since (child's name) (was born/first began living with you), has (he/she) ever lived apart from (you/designated parent's name) for one month or more?**

Problems:                In one case, the mother lived apart from the family for two three-month periods because of her job. Does this count as living apart if child stays with other parent?

For the most part, the results indicated that respondents understood question and were able to answer it. Some people knew answer immediately. Others needed to think whether period lasted 30 days or more.

**Tested wording:**     **How many different times did (child's name) live apart from (you/designated parent's name) for one month or more since (he/she) (was born/first began living with you)?**

Problems:                A few respondents thought this question was the same as the next question and answered how long the child lived apart. One respondent had difficulty answering because her son is at boarding school, but comes home on the weekend. She thinks of her son being gone for nine months of the year even though he is home on the weekends.

**Tested wording:** **What is the total amount of time (child's name) lived apart from (you/designated parent's name) since (he/she) (was born/first began living with you)?**

\_\_\_\_\_ months

\_\_\_\_\_ years

**Problems:** Some respondents had trouble with this question since they didn't know whether they were supposed to include shorter durations of time that the child spent away, such as weekends away. Others respondents thought this question and the previous one were the same. One respondent included the 9 months her son was at boarding school even though he came home on the weekends.

**Tested wording:** **How old was (child's name) when (he/she) began living apart from (you/ designated parent's name) (the first time)?**

**Problems:** Question was understood.

**Tested wording:** **How many months did (child's name) live apart from (you/designated parent's name) the first time?**

\_\_\_\_\_ months

**Problems:** One respondent thought this was the same question as the previous item that asked about the total amount of time the child lived apart from the designated parent. Some respondents reported years rather than months.

**Tested wording:** **During this time, did (child's name) live with another person or family, in an institution, alone, or in some other arrangement?**

MARK ALL THAT APPLY

- <1> Another person or family
- <2> Institution (hospital, orphanage, etc.)
- <3> Living alone
- <4> Other arrangement
- <D> Don't know
- <R> Refused

**Problem:** Question was not well understood. Respondents usually reported relationship of person the child lived with. Relationship was sometimes reported as relationship to respondent and sometimes as relationship to

child. One respondent couldn't answer the question because she lived elsewhere due to work and the child stayed at home with the rest of the family. The term "other arrangement" was not well understood. Many respondents thought it meant a person other than an immediate family member.

**Tested wording:**     **How was the person that (child's name) went to live with (the first time) related to (him/her)?**

- <1>    Child's other parent
- <2>    Child's grandparent
- <3>    Child's aunt or uncle
- <4>    Other relative of child
- <5>    Friend
- <6>    Foster parent
- <7>    Other (specify \_\_\_\_\_)

**Problems:**     Some respondents thought this question was asking how the person the child lived with relates to him (e.g. "she's like a mother to him"). Category "child's other parent" didn't apply to situation in which grandmother cared for the children, but they went to live with their biological mother for a 2-year period and then came back and lived with the grandmother. Question needs to be "mark all that apply" because in a couple of cases, the children lived with different people during the extended absence from the biological mother.

**Tested wording: Why did (child's name) begin to live apart from (you/designated parent) (the first time)?**

**MARK AS MANY REASONS AS APPLY.**

- <1> Child on vacation with other relatives or friends
- <2> Child in summer camp
- <3> Child in boarding school
- <4> Marital conflict between parents
- <5> Parent/guardian on vacation or business trip
- <6> Child living with other biological parent
- <7> Physical health problem of parent
- <8> Mental health problem of parent
- <9> Substance abuse problem of parent
- <10> Incarceration of parent
- <11> Physical health problem of child
- <12> Mental health problem of child
- <13> Substance abuse problem of child
- <14> Behavior problem of child
- <15> Financial hardship
- <16> Child removed by government agency (court, child protective services)
- <17> Other reason (specify\_\_\_\_\_)

**Problems:** Reasons respondents gave for children living apart often did not fit into the response categories (e.g. "because I migrated," "because I worked...I got a job in another state," "I was young when I had her and I was wild and wanted to do things my way."). Respondents did not always focus on the reason they began living apart and sometimes gave the current reason.

### C. Results of Round 2 Testing

**Tested wording:** I have listed the following children under 18 in this household.

*Name of Child Sex Age Relation of child to this person*

**Do you have any other biological children who are currently under 18 and living somewhere else?**

Note: If appropriate, ask:

**Does (spouse's name) have any biological children who are currently under 18 and living somewhere else?**

Problems: Question was well understood. However, we need to determine which adults in the household this question should be asked about, so that we aren't collecting residential histories for children who have only marginal ties to the household. Do we want to collect residential history of all children born to 100-level people who are currently age 15 or over, or is there some other group for which we want to collect this information?

**Tested wording:** What is that child's name?  
What is that child's sex?  
What is that child's age?

Problems: Questions were understood.

**Tested wording:** How old was (adopted child's name) when she was adopted by (you/designated parent)?

Problems: Question was never asked.

**Tested wording:** Did (child's name) ever live apart from (you/name of biological mother/his or her biological mother) for a period of 4 months or more at a time?

Problems: Question was well understood. In one case, the respondent wanted to report absences from the mother for both of her children at the same time. This series of questions does not allow for that.

**Tested wording:** **How many different times did (child's name) live apart from (you/name of biological mother/his or her biological mother) for a period of 4 months or more from the time (child's name) was born until now?**

**Problems:** Only two respondents answered this question. Both had trouble understanding the question. The one respondent who has been separated from her child since her divorce was confused by the concept of "how many different times." She interpreted the question to mean "how long have they lived apart from me." The other respondent, whose child is away at school, reported the date that he left from school in response to this question. The interviewer re-read the question, and the respondent answered "just one time, because since he's left he's only been back to visit."

**Tested wording:** **How old was (child's name) in years and months when (he/she) began to live apart from (you/name of biological mother/his or her biological mother) (the first/second...time)?**

\_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months old

**Problems:** Only two respondents answered this question. One could provide the child's age in years but not months. The other provided both because she knew which month her son left for school.

**Tested wording:** **How many months did (child's name) live apart from (you/name of biological mother/his or her biological mother) (the first/second...time)?**

\_\_\_\_\_ months  
\_\_\_\_\_ years

**Problems:** Only two respondents answered this question. One respondent provided the number of years the child has been away (child currently lives away). The other respondent was able to provide year and months (1 year and 8 months), but wondered why the questions didn't ask about separations from the father as well.

**Tested wording (Note: Two versions of the question were tested during Round 2):**

- a. How was the person that (child's name) lived with (the first/second...time) related to (child's name)?
- b. Who was the person that (child's name) was living with when he/she was living apart from (you) (the first/second...time)?**

SHOW FLASHCARD

MARK ALL THAT APPLY

- <1> Child's biological/adoptive father  
 <2> Child's stepparent  
 <3> Child's grandparent  
 <4> Other relative  
 <5> Friend  
 <6> Foster parent  
 <7> Away at school  
 <8> Hospital or other health-related institution  
 <9> Other institution (e.g. orphanage, juvenile detention center)  
 <10> Living alone  
 <11> Other (specify \_\_\_\_\_)

Problems: Both respondents who answered this question received the first version of the question shown above as "a." As a result of these two interviews, the question was revised as shown in "b." Unfortunately, no other respondents reported absences from biological mothers after these two interviews. Version "a" was very confusing for the respondent whose son lived away at school. She thought we were asking about the time before her son left to go to school (i.e. when he was still living at home). The other respondent thought the wording was awkward and suggested rephrasing the question "What relative or what person did the child live with?" We revised the wording as shown in "b," but did not test it on additional respondents because no subsequent respondents were eligible for this item. The same change was made to the comparable item regarding separations from the biological father. See results of cognitive testing for similar item below.

**Tested wording:** (The first/second...time,) why did (child's name) and (you/name of biological mother/his or her biological mother) begin to live apart?  
**MARK AS MANY REASONS AS APPLY.**

- <1> Child went to live with biological or adoptive parent
- <2> Child adopted
- <3> Child's illness
- <4> Child in boarding school
- <5> Child placed in foster care
- <6> Child jailed/institutionalized
- <7> Child cared for by friend/relative while mother looked for work
- <8> Child got married
- <9> Child out on own/ got a job
- <10> Mother's illness
- <11> Mother's work schedule
- <12> Mother jailed/institutionalized
- <13> Mother moved elsewhere
- <14> Mother and father separated or divorced
- <15> Mother died
- <16> Agency/court took child away from mother
- <17> Financial hardship
- <18> Other reason (specify\_\_\_\_\_)

Problems: Only two respondents answered this question. No problems identified.

**Tested wording:** Did (child's name) ever live apart from (you/name of biological father/his or her biological father) for a period of 4 months or more at a time?

Problems: Question was well understood.

**Tested wording:** How many different times did (child's name) live apart from (you/name of biological father/his or her biological father) for a period of 4 months or more from the time (child's name) was born until now?

Problems: The concept of "how many different times" was confusing for respondents whose children had lived away from their fathers for one long extended period or for those who never lived with their fathers. They usually reported that the father and child hadn't lived together since the child was age "x", or that it had been "x" years since the father and child had lived together, or that they had lived apart the child's "entire life." The concept of "how many different times" didn't make sense to these respondents.

One respondent, whose husband is in the military, said that her husband

was usually gone for 105 days at a time, which was less than the four months asked about in the question. This same respondent reported two extended absences from the father for one of her children, but almost failed to report the same absences for the other child. It was later, when asked the question about living with a grandparent that she caught her mistake. This is an instance where a calendar aid would likely have helped to improve accuracy of reporting across children in this family.

One respondent had trouble reporting this information about the biological children of her husband who live outside the household. Her husband has two biological children, by two different women. The children have never lived in the respondent's household.

**Tested wording:** **How old was (child's name) in years and months when (he/she) began to live apart from (you/name of biological father/his or her biological father) (the first/second...time)?**

\_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months old

Problems: A few respondents were unable to provide months, but could report the child's age in years.

**Tested wording:** **How many months did (child's name) live apart from (you/name of biological father/his or her biological father)(the first/second...time)?**

\_\_\_\_\_ \_months  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \_years

Problems: Several respondents reported the number of years the child and father lived apart. One respondent reported 16 years. The father of this child is deceased, but we don't know how old the child was when the father died. Another respondent thought this question and the previous question were the same.

**Tested wording (Note Two different versions of the question was tested in Round 2):**

- a: How was the person that (child's name) lived with (the first/second...time) related to (child's name)?
- b. Who was the person that (child's name) was living with when he/she was living apart from (you) the (the first/second...time)?

SHOW FLASHCARD;

MARK ALL THAT APPLY

<1> Child's biological/adoptive mother

<2> Child's stepparent

<3> Child's grandparent

<4> Other relative

<5> Friend

<6> Foster parent

<7> Away at school

<8> Hospital or other health-related institution

<9> Other institution (e.g. orphanage, juvenile detention center)

<10> Living alone

<11> Other (specify \_\_\_\_\_)

**Problems:**

Version "a" was confusing for all three respondents who received this version of the question. In two cases, the father was away due to military service and the children continued living with their mothers. This caused some confusion because the question sounds like the child changed residences and went to live with someone else, which was not the case for either respondent. One of the respondent's said "...the "how" question, that is what is throwing me off. How is the person that (name) lived with, ... that shouldn't be a how question, I think it should have been a who question. Like who did the child live with..." The second respondent also had trouble. The child lived with the mother while the father was in the Navy, but they went to live with her parents. This respondent said, "And they mean now the first time there was a separation from the father...because I was still with him? We went to stay with my parents, which would be (name)'s grandparents, because my husband was in the Navy but he was going out to sea. We went to live with them because we had a new baby and no house."

The third respondent, who also lived with his biological mother while the father was away, thought that the question might mean "who else does he live with." He explained that his wife lives with her sister and her family.

There were no problems noted with version "b."

**Tested wording:** (The first/second...time,) why did (child's name) and (you/name of biological father/his or her biological father) begin to live apart?

MARK AS MANY REASONS AS APPLY

- <1> Child went to live with biological/adoptive parent
- <2> Child adopted
- <3> Child's illness
- <4> Child in boarding school
- <5> Child placed in foster care
- <6> Child jailed/institutionalized
- <7> Child cared for by friend/relative while father looked for work
- <8> Child got married
- <9> Child out on own/ got a job
- <10> Father's illness
- <11> Father's work schedule
- <12> Father jailed/institutionalized
- <13> Father moved elsewhere
- <14> Father and mother separated or divorced
- <15> Father died
- <16> Agency/court took child away from father
- <17> Financial hardship
- <18> Other reason (specify\_\_\_\_\_)

**Problems:** In general, this question was well understood. A few of the responses didn't fit into the precoded response categories, such as: "Cause we stopped seeing each other," "He didn't want to have anything to do with him," " He had his own thing to do...he had to work everyday." (These could be coded into "other.")

**Tested wording:** Since (child's name) first came to live with (you/designated parent's or guardian's name), has (he/she) ever lived apart from (you/designated parent's or guardian's name) for a period of 4 months or more at a time? (Universe: Children who don't live with either biological parent.)

**Problems:** No respondents received this question.

**Tested wording:** How many different times did (child's name) live apart from (you/designated parent's or guardian's name) for a period of 4 months or more since (he/she) first came to live with you?

**Problems:** No respondents received this question.

**Tested wording:** **How old in years and months was (child's name) when (he/she) began living apart from (you/designated parent's or guardian's name) (the first/second...time)?**

\_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months old

Problems: No respondents received this question.

**Tested wording:** **How many months did (child's name) live apart from (you/designated parent's name) (the first/second...time)?**

\_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months

Problems: No respondents received this question.

**Tested wording:** **Who was the person that (child's name) was living with when he/she was living apart from you (the first/second...time)?**

SHOW FLASHCARD

MARK ALL THAT APPLY

- <1> Child's biological/adoptive father
- <2> Child's stepparent
- <3> Child's grandparent
- <4> Other relative
- <5> Friend
- <6> Foster parent
- <7> Away at school
- <8> Hospital or other health-related institution
- <9> Other institution (e.g. orphanage, juvenile detention center)
- <10> Living alone
- <11> Other (specify \_\_\_\_\_)

Problems: No respondents received this question.

**Tested wording:** (The first/second...time) why did (child's name) and (you/designated parent's or guardian's name) begin to live apart?

MARK AS MANY REASONS AS APPLY

- <1> Child living with biological/adoptive parent
- <2> Child's illness
- <3> Child in boarding school
- <4> Child placed in foster care
- <5> Child jailed/institutionalized
- <6> Child cared for by friend/relative while (you/designated parent/guardian) looked for work
- <7> Child got married
- <8> Child out on own/ got a job
- <9> (Your/designated parent's/guardian's) illness
- <10> (Your/designated parent's/guardian's) work schedule
- <11> (You/designated parent/guardian) jailed/institutionalized
- <12> (You/designated parent/guardian) moved elsewhere
- <13> Marital conflict between guardians
- <14> Financial hardship
- <15> Other reason (specify\_\_\_\_\_)

Problems: No respondents received this question.

**Tested wording:** How old in years and months was (child's name) when (he/she) began living apart from (you/designated parent's name/designated guardian) the last time? (Universe: Children who don't live with either biological parent and have had more than four separations from their designated guardian.)

\_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months old

Problems: No respondents received this question.

**Tested wording:** How many months did (child's name) live apart from (you/designated parent's name/designated guardian) this latest time?

\_\_\_\_\_ months \_\_\_\_\_ years

Problems: No respondents received this question.

**Tested wording:** **Who was the person that (child's name) living with when he/she lived apart from (you) this last time?**

SHOW FLASHCARD

MARK ALL THAT APPLY

- <1> Child's biological/adoptive father
- <2> Child's stepparent
- <3> Child's grandparent
- <4> Other relative
- <5> Friend
- <6> Foster parent
- <7> Away at school
- <8> Hospital or other health-related institution
- <9> Other institution (e.g. orphanage, juvenile detention center)
- <10> Living alone
- <11> Other (specify \_\_\_\_\_)

Problems: No respondents received this question.

**Tested wording:** **This last time, why did (child's name) and (you/designated parent/designated guardian) begin to live apart?**

MARK AS MANY REASONS AS APPLY

- <1> Child living with biological/adoptive parent
- <2> Child's illness
- <3> Child in boarding school
- <4> Child placed in foster care
- <5> Child jailed/institutionalized
- <6> Child cared for by friend/relative while (you/designated parent/guardian) looked for work
- <7> Child got married
- <8> Child out on own/got job
- <9> (You/designated parent's/guardian's) illness
- <10> (You/designated parent's/guardian's) work schedule
- <11> (You/designated parent/guardian) jailed/institutionalized
- <12> (You/designated parent/guardian) moved elsewhere
- <13> Marital conflict between guardians
- <14> Financial hardship
- <15> Other reason (specify \_\_\_\_\_)

Problems: No respondents received this question.

**Tested wording:** Next, we are interested in gathering information on adults other than biological parents who may have provided care for the child.

**Did (child's name) ever live with a stepmother for a period of 4 months or more from the time (he/she) was born until now?**

**Problems:** Question was understood but seemed awkward for some respondents, particularly those who are currently living with both biological parents. This question was difficult for one respondent to answer because the child about whom the question was asked is her husband's child from a previous marriage and she doesn't know that much about that child's living arrangement.

**Tested wording:** At what ages, in years and months, did (child's name) live with a stepmother?

From age \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

To age \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

Were there any other times? If "yes", enter ages.

From age \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

To age \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

**Problems:** Only one respondent answered this question. She could only report the children's ages in years, not months.

**Tested wording:** Did (child's name) ever live with a stepfather for a period of 4 months or more from the time (he/she) was born until now?

**Problems:** For the most part, this question was understood. One respondent had trouble answering this question. The child was her husband's child from a previous marriage. The biological mother remarried. This respondent said "Well he moved in with the. It's not like she left her mother to live with her step father." This respondent thought the question implied that the biological mother was not living with the child while she was living with the step father, which is not the intention of the question.

**Tested wording:**     **At what ages, in years and months, did (child's name) live with a stepfather?**

From age \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

To age     \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

Were there any other times? If "yes", enter ages.

From age \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

To age     \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

**Problems:**           Only one respondent answered this question. That respondent didn't know the answer because the child is her husband's from a previous marriage. The respondent said, "I don't know all that woman's business, but I think she had two or three husbands and I think she's on number 4." This indicates that the child has lived with two or three stepfathers. This question doesn't allow us to capture that the stepfather changed. Moreover, do we want to collect residential history data on children about whom we know nothing else?

**Tested wording:**     **Did (child's name) ever live with a grandparent for a period of 4 months or more from the time (he/she) was born until now?**

**Problems:**           This question was problematic for several respondents. Respondents whose children had lived in the same household with a grandparent while the biological parent was present didn't know how to answer this question. In one case, the mother and her two children moved in with her parents while her husband was at sea in the Navy. She said that the children lived with the grandparents but the grandparents didn't take care of the children. She did. "The house actually was their house. So we lived with them, but I was there so it wasn't like he was living with them...it wasn't like they were taking care of him." A second respondent who answered "no" to this question, later explained that the grandmother moved in after she became ill. "I was thinking in term of "with his grandparents" at their house...he has lived in conjunction with them at his aunt and uncle's house for the last two years." A third respondent thought the question meant that the child had to be living with grandma alone, without a biological parent present.

**Tested wording:** **At what ages in years and months did (child's name) live with a grandparent?**

From age \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

To age \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

**Problems:** One respondent was only able to provide years, not months. A second respondent said that this question confirmed her belief that the preceding question was asking if the grandparents were the child's caretaker. This respondent's son is at boarding school in the same state as the grandparents. He sees them on weekends and stayed with them last summer. The respondent said that this was less than four months, so didn't count it. This respondent then asked "Are you looking for was this child raised by his grandparents for that year?"

**Tested wording:** **Did the grandparent receive foster care payments from the government during this time?**

**Problems:** Only two respondents answered this question. No problems identified.

**Tested wording:** **Were there any other times that (child's name) lived with a grandparent?**

**Problems:** Only one respondent answered this question and asked "for 4 months or more...cause he spent the summers there several times, but that would be two or three months?" The question does not specify for 4 months or more.

**Tested wording:** **At what ages, in years and months, did (child's name) live with a grandparent during this time?**

From age \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

To age \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

**Problems:** The one respondent who answered this said she didn't remember which summers her son actually stayed with his grandparents.

**Tested wording:** **Did the grandparent receive foster care payments from the government during this time?**

**Problems:** Only one respondent answered this question. No problems identified.

**Tested wording:** **Did (child’s name) ever live with an unmarried partner of a biological parent for periods of 4 months or more from the time (he/she) was born until now?**

**Problems:** In general, the question was well understood. One respondent who answered “yes” said that she and her husband were not married for the first 4 years of their child’s life, but they all lived together. In this case, the “unmarried partner” was the biological father. If we are trying to capture persons who are not biological parents, we will need to specify this. Another respondent had trouble answering this question about her husband’s children from his previous marriages. She wasn’t sure if the biological mothers of those children had lived with the men that they later remarried.

**Tested wording:** **At what ages in years and months did (child’s name) live with an unmarried partner of a biological parent?**

From age \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

To age \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

Probe: Any other times? If yes, enter ages.

From age \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

To age \_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_ months

**Problems:** The one respondent who answered this question said “four years.” This respondent is the one who lived with the child’s biological father for four years before they were married. The respondent didn’t know that we were asking from what age to what age since it is not clear from the question that this is the information we are asking for.

The Proposed Time Line for Developing and Testing  
a  
Five to Ten Minute Module  
on  
The 1999 SPD Survey

November 1 ,1997 thru January 31, 1998	Identify Module Content
February 1, 1998 thru February 28, 1998	Develop Test Plans and Protocols
March 1, 1998 thru April 30, 1998	Cognitive Testing of Questions
May 1, 1998 thru June 15, 1998	Analysis of Interviews and Preparations of an Analysis Report
June 16, 1998	Issue Cognitive Analysis Report
June 17, 1998 thru July 31, 1998	Finalize Module Questions and Skip Patterns
August 1, 1998 thru December, 31, 1998	Specify, Author and Test Instrument
January 4, 1999	OMB receives SPD 1999 Questionnaire Request
January 4, 1999 thru March 15, 1999	Systems Test of the SPD Instrument
April 30, 1999 thru June 30, 1999	Data Collection

**OBJECTIVES FOR THE 1999 SURVEY OF PROGRAM DYNAMICS  
CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING QUESTIONS  
(Prepared by Child Trends, Inc.)**

**POSITIVE INTERACTION**

Stress due to mandated employment, sanctions, or time limits, may affect how parents interact with their children. Among the most consistent findings in child development research is that parental warmth exhibited in the first few years of life is one of the strongest predictors of positive developmental outcomes. Warmth, sensitivity, and nurturance are global constructs that include numerous affective and behavioral components. Supportive parenting is associated with positive child outcomes, even in the presence of extreme socioeconomic disadvantage. Sampson and Laub also suggest that positive parenting provides a buffering effect for children in poverty.

**COGNITIVE STIMULATION/HOUSEHOLD RESOURCES**

Welfare reform provisions have several implications for parents' provision of cognitively stimulating resources and children's participation in cognitively stimulating activities. For instance, by altering labor-force behavior, the size and duration of cash grants, and family composition, numerous waiver provisions may produce important changes in the level of family income. Family income can affect children because money can be used to buy things that are essential for growth and development. Money may provide such resources as books, toys, and musical instruments, that facilitate learning. Money can also enable participation in child care settings, activities and lessons that support positive development. Lack of resources to purchase toys or good quality child care may mean that low-income children do not have as many stimulating experiences (such as reading, playing learning games or playing musical instruments) as do children in more affluent families.

An environment that is stimulus-rich without being overwhelming and chaotic is important for children's healthy cognitive and emotional development. High levels of appropriate stimulation in multiple aspects of the environment, as measured by the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment scales (HOME) have been found to be positively associated with social and mental development, including measures of cognitive development and IQ in preschool and later, and school achievement.

For younger children, we have included a cognitive stimulation scale used in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K) Parent survey. For older children and adolescents, we have included a set of items adapted from the HOME scale and developed by Child Trends, Inc.

## **CONFLICT BETWEEN PARENTS**

One of the goals of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWOR) is to reduce dependence on public assistance through marriage and to encourage the formation of two-parent families. At the present time, there is not much that is known about the impacts of prior welfare reforms on family formation and dissolution. However, the legislation potentially has several implications for the quality of the marital relationship. First, sanctions and time limits may encourage the formation of families for recipients who are at risk of losing some of their income. These marriages may be harmonious or conflictual, depending on the nature of the relationship prior to the marriage. Other incentives may force adults to stay in high-conflict relationships when they might have otherwise separated. The quality of the marital relationship is also associated with economic instability. Thus, families that move into poverty because of welfare reforms may find that their lives are more stressful, conflictual, and unpredictable. On the other hand, improvements in a family's financial circumstances through employment may lessen marital conflict.

There is substantial evidence that marital conflict, like marital status, is strongly linked to children's adjustment. There is also evidence that the children of married parents in high conflict relationships have adjustment problems that are similar to those experienced by children of single parents. Welfare reform program incentives that lead adults to stay in high-conflict relationships may not result in benefits to children.

For biological parents who live in the same household, we have included a brief set of items used previously in the National Survey of Families and Households. We have included a set of seven items, also from the National Survey of Families and Households, for those biological parents who do not reside together.

## **FAMILY CONFLICT**

Several welfare reform provisions, such as sanctions, time limits, and mandated participation in employment, may serve to increase family stress and conflict. It is not only interparental conflict, but other forms of family conflict that appear to have negative effects on children. Exposure to physically violent conflict, in particular, is associated with serious behavioral and emotional disorders in children. In contrast to family conflict and violence, family cohesion is associated with positive outcomes for children.

As a measure of family conflict, we recommend a 6-item family conflict scale used in the Panel Study of Income Dynamics Child Supplement 1997. This is an adapted version of the Family Environment Rating Scale (FERS) which is also being used in the Early Head Start 14-month parent interview (except for one item about calmly discussing problems).

## **CHILD CARE QUALITY**

Children's activities and time use are very likely to be affected by changes in maternal employment that may arise due to welfare reform provisions. Younger children are likely to experience an increase in nonparental child care. Extent and quality of child care in turn have the potential to affect children's development. The research literature suggests that high quality early childhood programs can play a significant, positive role in the lives of disadvantaged children. Quality of care and stability of care over time have been found to be related to children's cognitive and socioemotional development.

We have included a series of questions from the Child Outcomes Study of the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (formerly the JOBS Child Outcomes Study) which tap two aspects of child care quality: group size, and the ratio of providers to children.

## **AGGRAVATION IN PARENTING**

Parents who are mandated to participate in employment and educational activities might experience an increase in their subjective sense of stress, which can lead to more impatient, more aggravated parenting practices. For example, questionable feelings of self-efficacy, time stress, or difficulties securing transportation or child care might increase parents' feelings of aggravation in the parenting role. Alternatively, involvement in activities beyond the family may diminish negative feelings toward the parenting role. Greater parenting aggravation, in turn, is associated with poorer child outcomes. The 5-item Aggravation in Parenting Scale was created for the Child Outcomes Study of the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (formerly the JOBS Child Outcomes Study) and has been used previously in the National Survey of America's Families, as well as the PSID 1997.

## **FAMILY ROUTINES**

In the debate about the TANF legislation, there was much discussion about how the movement from welfare to work would cause parents to *establish regular routines*, such as regular bedtimes and mealtimes. Through this mechanism, child well-being would be enhanced. The actual effect of the welfare reform legislation on family routines is not known; it is plausible that the effect could be positive or negative. Employment may improve family routines, as mentioned above. Alternatively, the home environment may become more disorganized and less routinized as a result of increased stress or because employment occurs sporadically or at varying hours. Parents who work long hours could have less time to spend with children and less time to participate in family activities. Prior research studies have demonstrated that children benefit from organized and predictable family routines. The provision of regularly scheduled routines or rituals such as meals and bedtime activities can also be beneficial to parents because they "...help to define roles and responsibilities within the family and may be particularly important in the early stages of parenthood as roles and responsibilities become more clearly defined in family organization." We have included a family routines scale used previously in the ECLS-K Parent Survey.

## **BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS**

Welfare reform provisions may affect children's behavior through several different conduits. For instance, it is possible that maternal stress or depression rates could increase due to reduced grants, because of sanctions or time limits, or due to the mandatory nature of the welfare programs with regard to participation. Maternal depression, in turn, is related to an increased incidence of behavior problems in children. If the welfare program affects the family's living arrangements or socioeconomic status, changes in behavior problems may also result. Yet if welfare programs bring about enhanced maternal psychological well-being (for example, because of satisfaction with new employment roles), improved family economic well-being, and/or residence in a better neighborhood, behavior problems could diminish. Children's behavior problems, in turn, are related to later negative outcomes during adolescence.

We have included an adapted version of a mental health indicator measure developed by Achenbach for the National Health Interview Survey that was also included in the National Survey of America's Families.

## **SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT**

PL 104-193 has several provisions that are targeted toward increasing a behavioral measure of school engagement (i.e., school attendance) among children. For instance, states have the option to sanction families in which an adult fails to ensure that his or her children attend school. School engagement is important because of strong evidence that school absences are associated with poor academic achievement and school grades, school dropout, disruptive classroom behavior, and juvenile delinquency. Engagement, in turn, has been found to predict better academic performance over time. For example, James Connell and his colleagues report that parent, child, and teacher reports of school engagement are predictive of school outcomes, such as attendance, grade point average, test scores, suspensions, and grade retention, measured two years later.

A short four-item parent report engagement scale has recently been developed by Connell and Lisa Bridges from the Institute for Research and Reform in Education for use in the Urban Institute/Child Trends' National Survey of America's Families. We are recommending this scale for inclusion in the 1999 SPD.

**Proposed Content NOT cognitively tested by CSMR**

**Aggravation in Parenting**

Please tell me how often the following statement are true for you.

(Response options: all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, none of the time.)

My child/children does/do things that really bother me a lot.

I find myself giving up more of my life to meet my child's (children's) needs than I ever expected.

I feel angry with my child (children).

I feel trapped by my responsibilities as my child's (children's) parent.

I felt my child (children) is/are much harder to care for than most children

**School Engagement**

For each of the following statements, please tell me if you think it is often true, sometimes true, or not true. Would you say (child)..

Cares about doing well in school?

Only works on schoolwork when forced to?

Does just enough schoolwork to get by?

Always does homework?

**Family Routines**

I'm going to read some statements about things that may occur in your family.

In a typical week, please tell me the number of days...

At least some of the family eats breakfast together.

Your family eats dinner together.

The evening meal is served at a regular time.

**Children's Routines**

**(children ages 2-5)**

I'm going to read some statements about things that may occur in your family.

In a typical week, please tell me the number of days..

(Child's name)'s bedtime routine is the same.

**(children ages 2-11)**

(Child's name)'s has breakfast at a regular time.

(Child's name)'s goes to bed at a regular time.

**(children ages 6-17)**

During the school year, how many times a week does (child) usually get his/her homework done on time?

During the school year, how often is (child) usually late for school?

During the school year, how often is (child) usually late for a class?

## **Mental Health Indicator**

### **Ages 2-3**

Now I am going to read some statements that describe behavior problems many children have. Please tell me whether each statement has been **OFTEN** true, **SOMETIMES** true or **NOT** true of (child) during the past 3 months.

Has been uncooperative.      Has that been **OFTEN** true, **SOMETIMES** true, or **NOT** true of (child) in the past 3 months?

Has trouble getting to sleep.

Has speech problems.

Is unhappy, sad, or depressed.

Has temper tantrums or a hot temper.

Has been nervous or high strung.

### **Ages 4-11**

Has been nervous, high strung, or tense.

Can't concentrate or pay attention for long.

Doesn't get along with other kids.

Feels worthless or inferior.

Has been unhappy, sad, or depressed.

Acts too young for his/her age.

### **Ages 12-17**

Lies or cheats.

Doesn't get along with other kids.

Has been unhappy, sad, or depressed.

Can't concentrate or pay attention for long.

Does poorly at schoolwork.

Has trouble sleeping.

## **Food Bank**

In the last 12 months did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever get emergency food from a church, a food pantry, or food bank?

How often did this happen - almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

In the last 12 months, did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever eat any meals at a soup kitchen?

### **Coping Mechanisms When Losing Benefits**

What did you do to get by when your family lost benefits? (Code all that apply)

- 01 Cut back on expenses for necessities (food, doctor's bills, etc.)
- 02 Cut back on discretionary expenses (e.g., toys, movies, etc.)
- 03 Moved to cheaper housing
- 04 Moved in with others /doubled up
- 05 Stopped paying bills/paid bills late
- 06 Got a job
- 07 Did something illegal (sold drugs, shoplifted, prostitution)
- 08 Borrowed money from friends/family
- 09 Got my children's father to give me child support
- 10 Applied for benefits in another program
- 11 Placed my child/children in someone else's care
- 12 Got married
- 13 Other:\_\_\_\_\_

### **Substance Abuse**

CIDI-SF 12 Month Dsm-IV Version

#### Alcohol Dependence

G1. The next questions are about how frequently you drink alcoholic beverages. By a "drink" we mean either a bottle of beer, a wine cooler, a glass of wine, a shot of liquor, or a mixed drink.. With these definitions in mind, what is the largest number of drinks you had in any single day during the past 12 months--none, between one and three, four to ten, eleven to twenty, or more than twenty drinks in a single day?

**Interviewer:      If R Volunteers "I never drink", Accept the answer and check "NONE" in the response options**

- 1. None, go to P. 25, H1
- 2. 1-3, go to P. 25, H1
- 3. 4-10,
- 4. 11-20
- 5. MORE THAN 20

**Interviewer: The next questions are awkwardly worded. Read slowly.**

G2. In the past 12 months, was there ever a time when your drinking or being hung over interfered with your work at school, or a job, or at home?

1. YES, go to G2a
5. NO
9. I AM A CASUAL/SOCIAL DRINKER (VOLUNTEERED), go to P. 25, H1

G2a. How often--once or twice, between 3 and 5 times, 6 to 10 times, 11 to 20 times, or more than 20 times in the past year?

1. Once or Twice
2. Between 3 and 5 times
3. Between 6 and 10 times
4. Between 11 and 20 times
5. More than 20 times

G3. During the past 12 months, were you ever under the influence of alcohol in a situation where you could get hurt--like when driving a car or boat, using knives or guns or machinery, or anything else?

1. YES
5. NO
9. I AM A CASUAL/SOCIAL DRINKER (VOLUNTEERED), Go to P. 25, H1

G4. During the past 12 months, did you have any emotional or psychological problems from using alcohol--such as feeling uninterested in things, feeling depressed, suspicious of people, paranoid, or having strange ideas?

1. YES
5. NO
9. I AM A CASUAL/SOCIAL DRINKER (VOLUNTEERED), Go to P. 25, H1

G5. During the past 12 months, did you have such a strong desire or urge to drink that you could not keep from drinking?

1. YES
5. NO
9. I AM A CASUAL/SOCIAL DRINKER (VOLUNTEERED), Go to P. 25, H1

G6. During the past 12 months, did you have a period of a month or more when you spent a great deal of time drinking of getting over the effects of alcohol?

1. YES
5. NO
9. I AM A CASUAL/SOCIAL DRINKER (VOLUNTEERED), Go to P. 25, H1

G7. During the past 12 months, did you ever have more to drink than you intended to, or did you drink much longer than you intended to?

1. YES, Go to P. 24, G7a
5. NO
9. I AM A CASUAL/SOCIAL DRINKER (VOLUNTEERED), Go to P. 25, H1

G7a. How often--once or twice, between 3 and 5 times, 6 to 10 times, 11 to 20 times, or more than 20 times in the past year?

1. Once or Twice
2. Between 3 and 5 times
3. Between 6 and 10 times
4. Between 11 and 20 times
5. More than 20 times

G8. During the past 12 months, was there ever a time when you had to drink much more than you used to to get the same effect you wanted?

1. YES
5. NO
9. I AM A CASUAL/SOCIAL DRINKER (VOLUNTEERED), Go to P. 25, H1

## CIDI-SF 12 MONTH DSM-IV VERSION

## SECTION H: DRUG DEPENDENCE

H1. The next questions are about your use of drugs on your own. By “on your own” we mean either without a doctor’s prescription, in larger amounts than prescribed, or for a longer period than prescribed. With this definition in mind, did you ever use any of the following drugs on your own during the past 12 months?

(How about/during the past 12 months, did you use...) YES NO

- A. sedatives, including either barbiturates (bar-BIT-chew-its) or sleeping pills on your own? (e.g. Seconal, Halcion, Methaqualone)
- B. tranquilizers or “nerve pills” on your own? (e.g. Librium, Valium, Ativan, Meprobamate, Xanax)
- C. amphetamines (am-FET-ah-means) or other stimulants on your own? (e.g. Methamphetamine, Preludin, Dexedrine, Ritalin, “Speed”)
- D. analgesics (an-uhl-JEEZ-icks) or other prescription painkillers on your own? (NOTE: this does not include normal use of aspirin, tylenol without codeine, etc, but does include use of tylenol with codeine and other Rx painkillers like Demerol, Darvon, Percodan, Codeine, Morphine, and Methadone)
- E. inhalants that you sniff or breathe to get high or to feel good? (e.g. Amylnitrate, Freon, Nitrous Oxide (“Whippets”), Gasoline, Spray paint)
- F. marijuana (mare-ih-WAH-nah) or hashish (HASH-eesh)?
- G. cocaine (KO-kane) or crack or free base?
- H. LSD or other hallucinogens (ha-LOOSE-en-oh-jens)? (e.g. PCP, angel dust, peyote, ecstasy (MDMA), mescaline)
- I. heroin (HAIR-oh-in)

**Interviewer: If necessary, clarify: “By ‘on your own’ we mean either without a doctor’s prescription, in larger amounts than prescribed, or for a longer period than prescribed.”**

## H2. INTERVIEWER CHECKPOINT

1. AT LEAST ONE YES RESPONSE IN A THROUGH I, Go to H3
2. ZERO YES RESPONSES IN A THROUGH I, End

**Interviewer: The next questions are awkwardly worded. Read slowly.**

H3. In the past 12 months, did your use of (NAME OF DRUG/any of these substances) ever interfere with your work at school, or a job, or at home?

1. YES
5. NO

H3a. How often--once or twice, between 3 and 5 times, 6 to 10 times, 11 to 20 times, or more than 20 times in the past year?

1. Once or Twice
2. Between 3 and 5 times
3. Between 6 and 10 times
4. Between 11 and 20 times
5. More than 20 times

H4. During the past 12 months, were you ever under the influence of (NAME OF DRUG/any of these substances) in a situation where you could get hurt - like when driving a car or boar, using knives or guns or machinery, or anything else?

1. YES
5. NO

H5. During the past 12 months, did you have any emotional or psychological problems from using (NAME OF DRUG/any of these substances) -- such as feeling uninterested in things, feeling depressed, suspicious of people, paranoid, or having strange ideas?

1. YES
5. NO

H6. During the past 12 months, did you have such a strong desire or urge to use (NAME OF DRUG/any of these substances) that you could not keep from using it?

1. YES
5. NO

H7. During the past 12 months, did you have a period of a month or more when you spent a great deal of time using (NAME OF DRUG/any of these substances) or getting over (its/their) effects?

1. YES
5. NO

H8. During the past 12 months, did you ever use much larger amounts of (NAME OF DRUG/any of these substances) than you intended to or did you use (it/them) for a longer period of time than you intended to?

1. YES, go to H8a
5. NO

H8a. How often--once or twice, between 3 and 5 times, 6 to 10 times, 11 to 20 times, or more than 20 times in the past year?

1. Once or Twice
2. Between 3 and 5 times
3. Between 6 and 10 times
4. Between 11 and 20 times
5. More than 20 times

H9. During the past 12 months, was there ever a time when you had to use more (NAME OF DRUG/any of these substances) than you used to get the same effect you wanted?

1. YES
5. NO