March 17, 1994

MEMORANDUM FOR   Sherry Courtland
                          Chief, Demographic Surveys Division

Through: Elizabeth A. Martin
                          Chief, Center for Survey Methods Research

From: Esther R. Miller
                          Center for Survey Methods Research

Subject: Final Report of the Results of the SIPP "Proof of Paternity"
                          Research

Please find attached the Final Report of the Findings from the Cognitive and Field Interview Research on Questions about "Proof of Paternity". A meeting is being scheduled between ASPE, members of your staff, FLD, HHES and CSMR to discuss the results of this report.

If you have any questions or comments please contact me at 763-1447.

Attachment

cc:
E. Davey	(DSD)
D. Fischer	"
D. Lampe	"
P. Benton	"
C. Bloxham	(FLD)
T. Meigs	"
E. Welniak	(HHES)
G. Lester	"
E. Lamas	"
T. DeMaio	(CSMR)
J. Moore	"
J. Rothgeb	"
W. Davis	"
J. Turek	(HHS/ASPE)
L. Mellgren	"
D. Oellerich	"

Findings from the Cognitive and Field Interview Research
on Questions about "Proof of Paternity"

Esther R. Miller and Wendy L. Davis
Center for Survey Methods Research

March 18, 1994

I. Introduction

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) asked the Census Bureau to add questions about proof of paternity to the Child Support Topical Module of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). The Center for Survey Methods Research (CSMR) was asked by Demographic Surveys Division (DSD) to conduct research on the proposed questions. The purpose of the data collection is to estimate the number of children who have paternity established but who are not covered by legal child support obligations by their father. The goal of the research was to revise the proposed proof of paternity questions and pretest the questions to determine if respondents would (I) be able to comprehend the questions; (2) have the knowledge to answer the questions and; (3) consider the questions too sensitive to answer or to continue with an interview.

The first version of the paternity questions was drafted with guidance of staff from ASPE. Then, cognitive think-aloud interviews were conducted in two phases. The results from the think-aloud interviews were used to revise the proof of paternity questions for use in a field test. The revised questions were then tested in a field test and an interviewer debriefing was held following the test. A final version of the questions was recommended as a result of the field test analyses.

This report is organized as follows. First, the research methodology is described. Second, definitions of terms related to paternity are discussed along with some questionnaire design issues that influenced the initial development of the proof of paternity questions. Third, the analysis of the cognitive interviews and the recommended wording changes are presented. Fourth, the field test and results from the response distribution analysis, the behavior coding analysis, respondent debriefing, and interviewer debriefing are discussed. In the conclusion of the report, our final recommendations for the proof of paternity question series are presented.

A. Methodology

In order to collect information about what respondents know about proof of paternity, staff from CSMR designed a study using both cognitive laboratory think-aloud interviews and a field test to develop and pretest the paternity questions. The laboratory technique of cognitive think-aloud interviews was used in this study to determine how concepts and questions were understood. A nonrandom sample of 24 women who do not have paternity established for their children were interviewed in order for us to determine the best way to operationalize survey concepts (e.g. establishing paternity) and to determine specific question wording.

A field test of 29 households was conducted and various question evaluation techniques were used. These included behavior coding analysis, response distribution analysis, and respondent and interviewer debriefings. During the field test Field Representatives (FRs) tape recorded "live" interviews. Subsequently, behavior coding was conducted. Behavior coding is used to systematically code exchanges between FRs and respondents. The coding

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provided information about the delivery and reception of a question and provided information about the degree to which a question may be problematic. In addition to behavior coding, an analysis of response distributions allowed us to examine response patterns to particular questions. Any response patterns that occurred which were different than expected indicated an improvement or a problem with existing question wording. Respondent debriefings consisted of adding probing questions to the end of the interview. The debriefing questions informed us about the respondents' perceptions of the questions asked during the interview. Interviewer debriefings provided us with qualitative information that was complementary to the more quantitative information obtained by our response distribution and behavior coding analysis. For further discussion of laboratory techniques and field tests see DeMaio, T., Mathiowetz, N., Rothgeb, Beach, M. E., Durant, S., 1993.

B. Proposed "Proof of Paternity" Questions

Researchers from the Census Bureau representing CSMR, DSD, Housing, Household and Economics Statistics (HHES), and researchers from ASPE met to discuss the definitions of the proposed "proof of paternity" questions (See Exhibit 1). The questions would be asked about all children who were not covered by legal child support agreements, as identified in the Child Support Supplement to the SIPP. Methods to establish paternity for these children include whether:

(1) a child's parents were ever-married;
(2) some type of court action ever occurred;
(3) blood or genetic tests were ever taken;
(4) the child's father signed the birth certificate; and
(5) the child's father signed any other paper of acknowledgement of paternity

1. Design Problems with the Proposed Questions

Three types of problems that could produce measurement error existed with the proposed questions: the layout of the questions, the operationalization of the concepts; and the possibility that ever-married women would construe the questions as inappropriate. Another issue, that is not a design problem, but is one that was addressed as this research was conducted was whether respondents thought these questions were too sensitive to be asked. Each of these problems are discussed in more detail below.

The first problem was that the layout of the questions was quite confusing. The initial proof of paternity questions were designed for Field Representatives (FRs) to "read all responses" and "mark all that apply". In order to do this, FRs would need to read the list of "proofs of paternity", one at a time, down the side of the page while only recording "yes" responses (according to the child number and letter referencing one of the five "proof of paternity" questions) across the page.

Also, it appeared that the introductory sentence to the proposed questions was supposed to be a definition of paternity, although the word paternity

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Exhibit 1

Proposed Questions to be Added to the
Child Support Topical Module to the SIPP

One reason why families may not have a [written] child support agreement or award is that the child's father has not taken any action to legally establish his rights and obligations as the child's father.

Do any of the following proofs of paternity exist for your child(ren) that are [covered by the unwritten child agreement or understanding] not covered by a child support agreement or understanding?

Read responses. Mark all that apply for each child [covered by the unwritten agreement] not covered by an agreement.

ITEM		PERSON		TYPE OF PROOF			
		#	A	B	C	D	E
A.	Marriage to child's other parent?	_____	_Yes	_Yes	_Yes	_Yes	_Yes
B.	Court action?	_____	‾Yes	‾Yes	‾Yes	‾Yes	‾Yes
C.	Blood/genetic tests?	_____	_Yes	_Yes	_Yes	‾Yes	‾Yes
D.	Father signed birth certificate?	_____	_Yes	_Yes	_Yes	_Yes	_Yes
E.	Father signed other paper of acknowledgement?	_____	_Yes	_Yes	_Yes	_Yes	_Yes

appeared for the first time in the question following the introductory sentence. The list of "proofs of paternity" that followed were intended to operationalize what is meant by "establishing paternity", but the respondent may not have understood that connection. The layout of the questions made this even more problematic as the "proofs" were read as a list of items and not separate direct questions. Because of this, the respondent may not have realized that she was supposed to answer either "yes" or "no" to each item on the list.

The second problem was that there were operationalization problems with some of the items listed as "proofs of paternity"." ASPE advised us that a man must have taken a blood test and it proved he was the father of the child for a woman to accurately respond "yes" to the question about "blood/genetic tests". ASPE also advised us that the type of proof of paternity labeled "father signed other papers of acknowledgement" referred to legal statements about paternity such as an "acknowledgement of paternity", or a "declaration of parentage" that has been signed and notarized[1]. It also included documents where the children are named as legal dependents, such as on their father's insurance papers or taxes and it refers to cards or letters given to the child signed "dad". As the question was proposed, the inclusion of these documents was not apparent.

The third issue was that the first "proof of paternity" that was asked was "marriage to child's other parent?" Since marriage to the child's other parent is a presumption of paternity, it could be problematic to ask women who have been married to their child's father the remaining questions about other types of proof of paternity. Additionally, it is inappropriate to ask a never-married woman if she was ever married to the father of her child(ren).

Lastly, the information on proof of paternity proposed for data collection could be perceived as sensitive to respondents. Since the proposed types of "proofs of paternity" are not mutually exclusive, some of the proposed questions could be considered redundant and unnecessarily burdensome. This perception of redundancy and burden could increase sensitivity for those respondents who are already unhappy with the nature of the question.

2. Solutions to the Design Problems

In an attempt to reduce measurement error, we revised the proposed questions to improve respondent comprehension and better operationalize the types of proofs of paternity. The list of different proofs of paternity was revised to become completely separate "yes"/"no" direct questions (See Exhibit 2) in an effort to better communicate to respondents what is being asked. An additional question for women with multiple children not covered by child

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[1] Across the U.S., there is a wide range of names referring to a legal statement of paternity signed by the father. For convenience, in this study we referred to it as an "acknowledgment of paternity". Examples of other names for this type of document are "acknowledgement of parentage" and "declaration of parentage".

Exhibit 2

List of Questions Asked in Phase I
of the Cognitive Interviews

Introduction
One reason a parent might not have a written arrangement about child support payments is because there was never a ruling that legally identified the father.

Paternity Established Through Marriage to the Child's Father
One way to legally identify the father is through marriage.

Was . . . ever married to (child's name) father?

Paternity Established Through a Court Action
Did a court ever legally identify (child's name) father?

Paternity Established Through a Blood Test
Was (child's name) father ever legally identified by a blood test?

Paternity Established Through a Birth Certificate
A father may also voluntarily sign a paper that legally identifies him as the child's father.

Did (child's name) father's ever sign (child's name) birth certificate?

Paternity Established Through the Father's Signature on Papers Acknowledging Paternity
Did (child's name) father ever sign any other paper that says he is (child's name) father?

Do the Children Have the Same Father
Do (names of all children) all have the same father?

support agreements was also added so it could be determined if all of their children had the same father[2].

We also decided to ask a filter question of ever-married women. If they had ever been married to their child's father, they would not be asked any other questions about paternity. Never-married women would not be asked if they had ever been married to their child(ren)'s father. Last, we redesigned the layout of the questions to incorporate check items and skip instructions to roster children not covered by legal agreements through the proof of paternity questions.

3. Explanation of "Proof of Paternity" Rosters

A combination of questions and check items placed in the beginning of the child support module facilitates the determination of which of the respondent's children are not covered by legal agreements (See Appendix A page 55-56). The questions assemble each of the respondent's child support eligible children into a roster consisting of three categories. The categories are:

    (1) "no child support agreement";
    (2) "covered by the most recent agreement"; and
    (3) "covered by all other agreements".

FRs ask the series of questions about child support agreements for each child who has a parent living outside of the home. Each child must have a "yes" marked in only one of the three categories referred to above. A followup question determines whether or not the "most recent agreement" refers to a "written legal agreement" about child support or an "unwritten verbal agreement". Later in the interview the FR will ask respondents the "proof of paternity" questions about each child identified as "not covered by an agreement" and each child identified as "covered by a verbal child support agreement."

Four separate "proof of paternity" rosters were designed. Each distinct roster contains the same identical set of questions about paternity, but each incorporates different skip patterns to reflect the exact nature of the respondent's situation. All children not covered by legal agreements are rostered through the proof of paternity questions (See Appendix A pp. 60-63 and pp. 66-69 for copies of the rosters used in the Field Test). The distinctions between the rosters are dependent upon whether:

    (1) the child(ren) was(were) covered by a verbal child support agreement; or
    (2) was(were) not covered by a child support agreement; and
    (3) whether the woman was never married; or
    (4) ever married.

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[2] In the current SIPP Child Support Topical Module, one of the questions asks parents who have children not covered by child support agreements: "Do all of ...'s children without a child support award have the same absent parent?".

During analyses, data from all four rosters were combined and reported
collectively, regardless of the children's child support agreement status and
the respondent's marital status.

II.   Cognitive Interviews

A. Methodology

This section of the report presents a brief summary of the results from two
phases of cognitive interviews conducted in October and November of 1993. The
cognitive interviews presented the proof of paternity questions in the context
of the current SIPP Child Support Topical Module. Respondents were asked all
relevant module questions, including the additional proof of paternity
questions. At the end of the interview, the women were asked a few debriefing
questions to determine their perceptions of the sensitivity of the questions
(See Appendix B for a copy of the Phase I protocol).

Respondents in both phases of cognitive interviews were given $25.00 to
compensate them for their participation. The first phase consisted of 16
interviews. Based on our review of these interviews we made revisions to the
wording of the paternity questions for the second phase of cognitive
interviews. Seven women were interviewed in the second phase. Once the
second phase was completed, we made a few more recommendations for changes to
the paternity questions. These recommended paternity questions were
administered in the field test discussed in section IV of this report.

In order to more easily follow the stages of question development, each
question is presented and discussed individually for phase one, and then
discussed a second time for phase two. The specific wording of each of the
types of proofs of paternity questions tested in the interviews is written in
italics at the beginning of each discussion. At the end of the discussion of
a question, recommendations for the next phase of testing are indented and in
italics.

B. Review of Paternity Questions - Phase I

Due to time constraints, ASPE helped us quickly recruit respondents by
contacting a judge presiding over paternity cases at a local courthouse and
asking for his assistance. All but three of the 16 Phase I respondents were
recruited at the courthouse. The other three respondents were recruited
through acquaintances. The women's primary purpose for being in the
courthouse was to establish paternity in order to determine a child support
obligation. Thus, many of the participants were very familiar with the legal
language used in paternity and child support cases. In fact, contrary to what
we expected, many of these respondents initiated use of the term "establishing

paternity" in response to our probes[3]. In addition, the legal process of establishing paternity and determining a support obligation was quite salient to these respondents, for obvious reasons.

1. Paternity Established Through a Court Action

One reason a parent might not have a written arrangement about child support payments is because there was never a ruling that legally identified the father.

Did a court ever legally identify (child's name) father?

We read the introductory sentence and then immediately read the first question before probing. In most cases respondents understood the intended meaning of the introduction and question. However, in answer to probes, those respondents who were interviewed in the courthouse suggested that they included blood tests taken to identify the father as part of their interpretation of this question." To them, taking a blood test was synonymous with establishing paternity. In fact, there was one respondent who believed that "legally identified by a court" referred to the situation when the father admitted paternity only after taking a blood test.

If the father voluntarily admitted paternity without submitting to a blood test, then she did not believe he had been identified by a court, even if he admitted paternity while in a court room. However, this seemed to be an extreme interpretation as compared to other respondents, and is probably a result of the fact that the father of this respondent's child admitted paternity without taking a blood test. Consistent with her interpretation of the question, this respondent answered "no" to this question, though the correct response was "yes."

There are several possible reasons why respondents were not able to think of the father being identified by a court outside of the context of a blood test. One is that most of our respondents had to get a blood test done before the father would admit paternity. So to them, the two scenarios go hand-in-hand. Another reason could be that the question is not worded in a way that emphasizes a court ruling or a court process. It could be that respondents are only hearing "legally identified" and associating this with a blood test. In fact, the term a "court ruling" is never directly stated in either the question or the introduction. Including "court ruling" in the actual question may take some of the emphasis off of the word "identify."

Since respondents did misinterpret the question, we felt it necessary to reword the question to emphasize a "court ruling." The wording for the second phase of interviews was:

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[3] In focus groups conducted with women who had never been married, Miller and Schaeffer (1992) found that women from this population were not familiar with term "establishing paternity."

One reason a parent might not have a written arrangement about child support payments is because there was never a ruling that legally identified the child's father.

Was there ever a court ruling that legally identified (child's name) father?

2. Paternity Established Through Marriage to the Child's Father

One reason a parent might not have a written arrangement about child support payments is because there was never a ruling that legally identified the father.

One way to legally identify the father is through marriage. Was . . . ever married to (child's name) father?

We only had two respondents in our first phase of interviewing that were "ever married" and were asked this question. One respondent was married to her child's father, and the other was not. In both cases, the respondent answered this question quickly and without difficulty. Hence, no changes were made to this question for the second phase of interviews.

3. Paternity Established Through a Blood Test

Was (child's name) father ever legally identified by a blood test?

None of our respondents had any difficulty with this question. This is not surprising since, as mentioned above, many of them already had or were going to have a blood test done by order of the court or by the request of the alleged father. In response to our probes, respondents could explain what a blood test is in basic terms and why it is done. Thus, no changes were made for the second phase of interviewing.

4. Paternity Established Through a Birth Certificate

A father may also voluntarily sign a paper that legally identifies him as the child's father.

Did (child's name) father ever sign (child's name) birth certificate?

The transition sentence and the question were both read before we began probing. Almost every respondent reported that neither the father nor they themselves actually signed the birth certificate. They explained that instead of signing the birth certificate, they signed some type of form at the hospital that had allowed for their name and the father's name to be put on the birth certificate. In many cases the respondent interpreted the question to be asking whether the father's name was typed on the birth certificate. In their experience, that is the only manner in which the father's name would appear on the birth certificate.

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Another difficulty occurred as a result of the introductory sentence. Initially, the introductory sentence was intended to serve as a transition between the question about blood tests and the next two questions concerning the father's signature on the birth certificate or his signature on an acknowledgement of paternity, both of which are legal proofs of paternity. However, because the introductory sentence directly preceded the birth certificate question, it influenced respondents' interpretation of the birth certificate question.

Specifically, respondents were often interpreting "a paper that legally identifies him as the child's father" to be referring to one of two things. The first was any hospital form that asks for the father's signature. The other interpretation was that it referred to a notarized acknowledgement of paternity. These interpretations were carried over into the interpretation of question about the birth certificate. When answering the birth certificate question, respondents could have been thinking of either of these two scenarios, or of the father signing the birth certificate. However, only the latter was the intended interpretation.

To remedy these problems we made two major changes to the question before we began the next phase of interviewing. First, we deleted the transitional sentence between the blood test and the birth certificate questions. Second, we changed the wording of the birth certificate question to be consistent with the situation described by respondents. For the second phase of interviews, the question read:

> *Is (child's name) father's name on (child's name) birth*
> *certificate?*

5. Paternity Established Through the Father's Signature on Papers
    Acknowledging Paternity

    Did (child's name) father ever sign any other paper that says he is
    (child's name) father?

Some respondents interpreted this question in the same or similar manner as they had the prior question about signing the birth certificate. In fact, one respondent specifically said she was thinking of a birth certificate. Another respondent said she thought the question was referring to some type of legal document that served the same purpose as a birth certificate. Most respondents, however, also included in their interpretation a description of some type of acknowledgement of paternity, which was the intended meaning of the question. However, many of our respondents may be aware of the official "acknowledgement of paternity" papers because they are going through the court system to establish paternity.

The term "other paper" was designed with some ambiguous intentions. As designed, people were including as an "other paper" other things such as insurance papers, birthday cards, bank papers or public assistance forms. As we discussed the meaning of this question with ASPE, we were advised that inclusion of these types of documents could be problematic for their

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definition of proof of paternity because depending on the state, the court, etc., such papers may or may not be considered legal proofs of paternity. In no situation would any of these be legally considered as strong of a proof of paternity as a signed acknowledgement of paternity statement. Thus, a person who responds "yes" to this question while only thinking of an insurance form or a birthday card would not legally have the same proof of paternity as someone with a signed and notarized acknowledgement of paternity statement.

For the second phase of interviews we changed the wording of this question with three goals in mind. First we wanted to make sure that respondents were not thinking about a birth certificate as a possible document to be included in this question. Second, we wanted to clarify the term "other paper" and make it obvious we were referring only to a legal document such as an acknowledgement of paternity. However, we did not want to use the term "acknowledgement of paternity" specifically, since not all'areas of the country refer to this type of document by this name. And third, we wanted to include a separate question which would cover insurance papers, birthday cards, etc., signed by the father, which could be used in a court to establish paternity. The revised question and the additional question to be tested in the second phase of interviews were:

> *Other than an application for a birth certificate, did (child's name) father ever voluntarily sign a legal paper stating that he is (child's name) father?*

> *Did (child's name) father ever sign any other paper, such as a personal letter or insurance papers, that could identify him as (child's name) father?*

6. Do the Children Have the Same Father

> *Do (names of all children) all have the same father?*

As explained previously, this question is asked in one of two places during the interview depending on whether the mother has ever been married. If the mother has more than one child and was married to her youngest child's father, then this is the second question asked in the paternity series. If the mother has never been married and has more than one child, she is asked this question at the end of the paternity series.

Respondents had no difficulties understanding the question. All respondents who were asked this question were able and willing to provide an answer. Hence, no changes were made for the second phase of interviewing.

C. Review of Proof of Paternity Questions - Phase II

Respondents for this phase of the interviews were recruited primarily by word-of-mouth. A child care provider known by one of the researchers were asked to help recruit single mothers to be cognitive interview respondents. Several other respondents were recruited via a flyer distributed in a local day care

center. These recruiting methods helped minimize the number of respondents who were currently involved in the legal process of establishing paternity to determine child support obligations. Minimizing this type of respondent is beneficial because it allows us to speak with respondents who may not be familiar with the legal process of establishing paternity and thus, not as likely to be accustomed to thinking about the type of information we were asking about.

ASPE provided some specific feedback on the changes we made to the paternity questions concerning birth certificates and acknowledgements of paternity, after the first phase of interviews. Unfortunately, we had already conducted three of the seven second phase interviews when we received their comments. We decided to incorporate their suggestions into the remaining phase two cognitive interviews and test them in the final four interviews. Due to time constraints we were not able to conduct any more then four interviews with the questions that reflected ASPE's suggestions. Their comments, are however addressed within the discussion of each of the following questions.

Towards the end of the Phase II interviews, Field Division (FLD) staff were developing the field representatives' self-study materials for the field test. While preparing the materials, they suggested using more pronouns in the question fills rather than proper names. This suggestion was incorporated into our recommendations for the paternity questions to be used in the field test and is included in this section in the discussion of each relevant question.

Each of the proof of paternity questions asked in the second phase of cognitive interviews is included in Exhibit 3 below. The versions of the birth certificate and the acknowledgement of paternity questions prior to and after receiving input from HHS staff are also included.

1. Paternity Established Through a Court Ruling

> *One reason a parent might not have a written arrangement about child support payments is because there was never a ruling that legally identified the child's father.*
>
> *Was there ever a court ruling that legally identified (child's name) father?*

Typically, respondents interpreted this version of the question as intended. All respondents except one, who was confused from the start of the interview, felt that this question was asking whether the father had been identified in a court of law. According to these respondents, being identified in a court of law could occur either by admitting to paternity in a court, signing an acknowledgement of paternity which is provided as legal evidence in a court ruling, or by taking a blood test and having the results used as part of the court process.

Exhibit 3

List of Questions Asked in Phase II
of the Cognitive Interviews

Introduction
One reason a parent might not have a written arrangement about child support payments is because there was never a ruling that legally identified the child's father.

Paternity Established Through Marriage to the Child's Father
One way to legally identify the child's father is through marriage.

Was . . . ever married to (child's name) father?

Paternity Established Through a Court Action
Was there ever a court ruling that legally identified (child's name) father?

Paternity Established Through a Blood Test
Was (child's name) father ever legally identified by a blood test?

Paternity Established Through a Birth Certificate

Version 1
Is (child's name) father's name on (child's name) birth certificate?

    and

Version 2
Did (child's name) father ever write his signature on the application for (child's name) birth certificate?

Paternity Established Through a Legal Acknowledgement of Paternity

Version 1
Other than an application for a birth certificate, did (child's name) father ever voluntarily sign a legal paper stating that he is (child's name) father?

    and

Version 2
Other then the application for a birth certificate, did (child's name) father ever sign a statement that legally specified that he is (child's name) father?

Paternity Established Through the Father's Signature on Other Papers
Did (child's name) father ever sign any other paper, such as a personal letter or insurance papers, that could identify him as (child's name) father?

Do the Children Have the Same Father
Do (names of all children) all have the same father?

It should be noted, though, that all of the never-married respondents mentioned a blood test as part of their interpretation of the question. The two ever-married respondents did not include a blood test as part of their initial interpretation of the question. This suggests that blood tests, among the never-married population, are perceived as a typical part of the process for establishing proof of paternity. Thus, among the never-married population, blood tests may be frequently included in the interpretation of this question about a court ruling to identify the father.

We did make some minor changes to the question even though respondents seemed to understand it correctly. One change was to put the question in the active voice instead of the passive voice. We also removed the phrase "ruling that legally identified" from the introductory sentence for two reasons. The first reason is because the phrase sounded unnecessarily redundant once the question itself included the phrase "court ruling." The second reason is a result of a comment made by a respondent who was married to her child's father.

When pressed for an interpretation of "ruling that legally identified the child's father" she indicated that the phrase suggested to her that in the situation when the parents of the child were not married, a blood test was probably necessary to establish paternity. Although it is not incorrect to interpret the question in this manner, it may make the next question about a blood test seem redundant. Because this phrase continued to introduce the concept of a blood test into the respondents' interpretation of the question, we felt that perhaps it was part of the reason why our never-married respondents thought of presenting blood test results in a court room when answering this question. We also felt that the introduction to the proof of paternity questions should introduce all of the questions that follow and not just the question about court actions. The question wording recommended for the field test was:

> One reason a parent might not have a written arrangement about child support payments is because the child's father was never legally identified.

> Was (child's name) father ever legally identified by a court ruling?

2. Paternity Established Through Marriage to the Child's Father

> One reason a parent might not have a written arrangement about child support payments is because there was never a ruling that legally identified the child's father. One way to legally identify the child's father is through marriage.

> Was . . . ever married to (child's name) father?

Respondents for this question had all been married at some point and had no difficulty interpreting the question. They correctly assumed that asking about marriage to the father of the child was a way to determine whether paternity had been established. Thus, the wording of the introductory sentence was changed to be consistent with the wording of the introductory

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sentence for never-married women, but no other changes were made to the question itself.

> *One reason a parent might not have a written arrangement about child support payments is because the child's father was never legally identified. One way to legally identify the child's father is through marriage.*

> *Was . . . ever married to (child's name) father?*

3. Paternity Established Through a Blood Test

> *Was (child's name) father ever legally identified by a blood test?*

Respondents interpreted this question correctly in the second phase of interviews. However, as mentioned earlier, FLD staff suggested that when possible, we use pronouns instead of proper names for the fills. Since the previous question used a proper name in the fill, we recommended using a pronoun for this fill.

> *Was (his/her) father ever legally identified by a blood test?*

4. Paternity Established Through a Birth Certificate

> *Is (child's name) father's name on (child's name) birth certificate?*

We revised this question to be consistent with the situations respondents described in the first phase of interviews. As a result, respondents had no problem interpreting or answering this question. However, this is one of the questions for which ASPE staff suggested a revision after we had begun the second round of interviews. According to ASPE, the procedures for putting a man's name on the birth certificate varies across states. In fact, in some states, neither one of the parent's name is on the child's birth certificate. In other states, both parents must sign a document for their names to appear and, as our respondents suggested, the man may not always be present when the woman requests that his name appear on the birth certificate. Thus in many cases, it can not be assumed that he acknowledges the child as his own.

Given the multiple procedures across states concerning birth certificates, the only certain proof of paternity is when the father signs his own signature on the application for the birth certificate. ASPE staff advised us that the application for a birth certificate is a mandatory part of the birth records kept by the Division of Vital Records within each state. As a result, the practice is probably fairly standard across all states. Thus, to determine whether proof of paternity had been established through birth records, we reworded the question for the last four respondents to ask whether the father himself had signed the application for the child's birth certificate. The specific wording was:

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"Did (child's name) father ever write his signature on the application for (child's name) birth certificate."

This version of the question seemed to communicate clearly to two of the respondents that in order for them to respond positively to this question, the father must have put his own signature on the birth certificate or the application for the birth certificate. One respondent made the exact distinction we were targeting. She said that she had given the hospital the father's name and it was on the birth certificate, but the father himself never signed the birth certificate or the application for the birth certificate. She answered "no." A second respondent said "yes" to this question, adding that the father had signed for the birth certificate himself. The other two respondents, however, had some difficulty with the question. One respondent couldn't remember back to when her son was born, so she wasn't sure what her ex-husband had signed. She assumed that she and the father had signed wherever was appropriate[4]. The last respondent never did provide her interpretation of the question. She simply kept insisting that "hospitals don't do that anymore." This respondent though, was upset from the beginning of the interview and had a difficult time with all questions.

Since two respondents did interpret the question correctly, and since the other respondents had special circumstances, we decided to recommend the revised version of this question for the field test interviews. The only other minor change we made was to substitute a pronoun in the question fill rather than a proper name. The question for the field test was:

Did (his/her) father ever write his signature on the application for (child's name) birth certificate?

5. Paternity Established Through a Legal Acknowledgement of Paternity

Other than an application for a birth certificate, did (child's name) father ever voluntarily sign a legal paper stating that he is (child's name) father?

We had asked this question of two respondents before receiving feedback from ASPE staff. Both of these respondents interpreted the term "legal paper" differently. One respondent at first could not verbalize her interpretation of legal paper, but instead focused on the word "voluntarily." After some probing she finally indicated that she thought the question was asking about any kind of paper, legal or not, that the father voluntarily signed. As examples, she mentioned a statement of paternity on a sheet of regular notebook paper, or medical forms. This respondent's answer suggested that she was not clear as to what "legal papers" referred to, so she was using the word "voluntarily" as a cue for how to interpret the question.

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[4] This woman reported that at one time she and her child's father had been married, thus, during the interview she skipped over the remaining questions concerning paternity. After she was asked the debriefing questions, we decided to go back and probe her about the other proof of paternity questions.

The second respondent interpreted legal papers to be any kind of legal contract or document that was signed for the child. As examples of a legal paper she named medical forms the father has signed, income taxes on which he claims the child as a dependent, or the forms he signed for special handicapped transportation for the child. Neither of these respondents were thinking of a notarized acknowledgement of paternity which was the intended meaning of the term "legal paper."

In addition, ASPE staff felt that including the term "voluntarily" precluded documents that fathers must sign at a Child Support Enforcement Office which are considered acknowledgements of paternity. To address this problem and the ambiguity of the term "legal papers" we made several changes to the wording of the question. First, we dropped the word "voluntarily" from the question. Second we added a phrase after "legal paper" which was intended to communicate that purpose of the document was to state acknowledgement of paternity and was acceptable as a legal proof of paternity. In other words, if the document wasn't signed in a court of law or in a child support enforcement office, it must be notarized or signed in the presence of an attorney. The wording used for the final four respondents was:

> *"Other than the application for the birth certificate, did (child's name) father ever sign a legal paper to specifically state that he is (child's name) father?"*

The four respondents who heard the question, with these changes, interpreted it basically as intended. All four mentioned that the question was about a document other than the birth certificate, and suggested that it was a statement of paternity signed by the father. However, one respondent said "legal papers" referred to "court papers" which could be many things other than an acknowledgement of paternity. A second respondent mentioned "blood test papers" which are similar to, but not necessarily the same as an acknowledgement of paternity. Thus, the only changes we made for the version of the question to be recommended for the field test were to include the word "statement" as suggested by one respondent, and to drop the term "legal paper" since it still seemed to be inducing some unintended interpretations. The recommended wording was:

> *Other than the application for a birth certificate, did (child's name) father ever sign a statement that legally specified that he is (child's name) father?*

6. Paternity Established Through the Father's Signature on Other Papers

Did (child's name) father ever sign any other paper, such as a personal letter or insurance papers, that could identify him as (child's name) father?

All respondents were asked the same version of this question. Basically they interpreted it correctly, and answered without difficulty. However, when directly probed for their interpretation, respondents seemed to focus mainly on insurance papers. Although this isn't an incorrect interpretation, we did not want respondents to exclude other forms of potential proofs of paternity.

Thus, we made a minor wording change to remove some of the emphasis on insurance papers and to put more emphasis on other potential forms of proof of paternity.

> *Did (his/her) father ever sign any other paper, such as insurance papers, a personal letter or a card, that could identify him as (child's name) father?*

D. Review of the Debriefing Questions

At the end of each cognitive interview, most respondents were asked debriefing questions concerning their perceptions of the sensitivity of the questions in the interview in general, and about the paternity questions specifically. Though we were primarily interested in the perceived sensitivity of the paternity questions, we did not want to target these questions alone. There are two reasons for this. One is that if we only allowed respondents a single opportunity to express their concerns (i.e. debriefing them on just the paternity questions), it is possible that any negative feelings they had in reaction to any question on the questionnaire would be vented in this one opportunity. With just one opportunity for debriefing it is possible that we would receive their reaction to the paternity questions as well as other questions, such as questions about the amount of money they receive from the father of the child.

A second reason for not wanting to target only the paternity questions is that the strongest indication of sensitivity to an item, other than refusing to answer an item, would be for the respondent to identify the sensitive question independent of any suggestion from the FR. We felt that we would have stronger evidence of a problem with the paternity questions if respondents volunteered this information on their own.

However, by not directing the respondents to the paternity questions, it is possible that we would not receive any positive or negative feedback about the paternity questions. In the end, we composed two questions. One question asked respondents if they were comfortable or uncomfortable answering any of the questions in the interview, and the other asked if they were comfortable or uncomfortable answering the questions about a legal ruling to identify the child's father. The wording "legal ruling to identify the child's father" was included in the question because we were not sure whether all respondents would know what the word "paternity" meant. The respondent debriefing questions were:

> • *How did you feel while answering the questions in this interview? - Were you comfortable, uncomfortable, or something else?*

> • *How did you feel while answering the questions that asked about a legal ruling to identify your child's father? - Were you comfortable, uncomfortable, or something else?*

As a third measure of the perceived sensitivity of the paternity questions, we tried to gauge the likelihood of respondents to continue or discontinue their

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future participation in the survey upon completion of the child support and paternity questions. DSD felt that if the paternity questions were perceived as sensitive it might increase the rate of attrition for the next wave of SIPP interviews. However, assessing the likelihood of a future behavior in a different situation is quite difficult. In essence, we are asking respondents to imagine a hypothetical situation and then predict how they would react in that situation. So though we include respondents answers to this question, we caution about making inferences based on the results.

Of our 23 total respondents in Phases I and II, only 16 were asked the debriefing questions. Of these 16, only two respondents gave any negative feedback in response to the debriefing questions, and both of these respondents had special situations that affected their response. For one of these respondents, the father of one of her children had just recently passed away, and her other child was suffering from cerebral palsy. Her comment about the questions was that she was a little uncomfortable talking about the father of her child, presumably because he had just passed away. She also commented that she was a little uncomfortable talking about her daughter with cerebral palsy because she wasn't sure how much detail to give. Thus, though the respondent reported being slightly uncomfortable answering some of the interview questions, her reasons were independent of any specific questions on the questionnaire.

The other woman reported feeling uncomfortable answering all of the questions on the child support topical module including the paternity questions. Her reason was that she could not locate the father of her child because he had given her a false name. Upon further probing, this respondent did suggest that she got some cathartic value from answering the questions about legally identifying the father. Again, as in the above case, it seemed that the respondent was uncomfortable discussing the situations surrounding her child in general, but her feelings were independent of the questions we were asking.

The other fourteen respondents did not vocalize any negative feelings about any of the questions in the interview, including the paternity questions. (A couple of respondents did report being uncomfortable with the think aloud procedure at first, but that once they got used to the process, they were no longer uncomfortable.) When probed for reasons why they were comfortable answering the questions in the interview and comfortable answering the paternity questions specifically, reasons were fairly consistent across respondents. They indicated that they felt comfortable with the topic either because they were on good terms with the father(s) of their child(ren), or because they did not think that the questions were "very personal."

This last reason for being comfortable and willing to discuss child support and paternity with the interviewer should be qualified. Most of our respondents were either AFDC recipients or they had entered the legal system on their own for the purpose of establishing paternity or for determining a child support order. Thus, most if not all of these questions were similar to questions they had heard before. From these data, it is difficult to deduce how these questions will be received by people not in similar situations and for whom the requested information might be a less frequently discussed topic.

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The last question in the debriefing asked respondents how likely it is that they would participate in another interview if an interviewer called them or came to their house, given their experience with the interview that day. All respondents answered that they would be very likely to participate in the future. The only qualification given by some respondents was that their future participation would depend on the topic of the next interview. Only one person gave examples of interview topics for which she would not participate. She said she would not participate in a future interview if the questions were about her sexual behavior or about her health.

As mentioned above, the responses to this last question are very limited in their usefulness for several reasons. Respondents are trying to predict their behavior in a hypothetical situation which would take place some unspecified time in the future. In addition, respondents were never directly told that they would not be paid to participate in this hypothetical interview. Since respondents were compensated for their participation in the cognitive interviews, this last point alone could be a deciding factor in their continued participation.

III. Field Test

This section of the report describes the field test of the recommended proof of paternity questions. (See Exhibit 4 on the following page for the list of questions asked in the Field Test and Appendix A for a copy of the full Child Support Supplement Interview). In this section we examine respondents' comprehension and knowledge of the questions by exploring response distributions and behavior coding data obtained from the field test. We examine respondents' perceptions of the sensitivity of the questions by examining their item refusal rates, responses to debriefing questions, and willingness to continue the SIPP interview after completing the Child Support Module. We also report impressions of the interviews gained from the interviewer debriefing.

A. Methodology

Respondents for this research were selected from prior SIPP 1991 Wave 3 participating households. Based on information collected from October through December of 1991, adults who reported having a "child who was under 21 years of age with a parent living elsewhere" were identified as having child-support-eligible children. For this study, we recontacted women who reported either verbal agreements or no child support agreements for their child(ren)[5] and whose most recent interview occurred in the summer or early fall of 1993.

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[5] Women with written child support agreements were excluded from this research because they were either married to their child's father or they already have some kind of legal document obligating the father to pay support. In any case, paternity has already been established. Men were not contacted as they are not required to answer questions about proof of paternity.

Exhibit 4

List of Questions Asked During the
Field Test Interviews

Introduction

One reason a parent might not have a written arrangement about child support payments is because the child's father was never legally identified.

Paternity Established Through Marriage to the Child's Father
One way to legally identify the child's father is through marriage.

Was . . . ever married to (child's name) father?

Paternity Established Through a Court Action
Was (child's name) father ever legally identified by a court ruling?

Paternity Established Through a Blood Test
Was (his/her) father ever legally identified by a blood test?

Paternity Established Through a Birth Certificate
Did (his/her) father ever write his signature on the application for (child's name) birth certificate?

Paternity Established Through a Legal Acknowledgement of Paternity
Other than the application for a birth certificate, did (child's name) father ever sign a statement that legally specified that he is (child's name) father?

Paternity Established Through the Father's Signature on Other Papers
Did (his/her) father ever sign any other paper, such as insurance papers, a personal letter or a card, that could identify him as (child's name) father?

Do the Children Have the Same Father
Do (names of all children) all have the same father?

The purpose of this last requirement was to ensure easy contact of respondents whose children were not covered by legal child support agreements. Six FRs in three Census regions (Detroit, Chicago, and Los Angeles) were asked to collect a total of approximately 20 taped interviews from the end of December through the middle of January. Each FR was given a list of respondents to call and was asked to complete a set number of interviews, in consultation with their regional office. As we were interested in testing some of the more complicated skip patterns, we asked them to give priority for contacting respondents to those with multiple children.

Before the interviews began, a pre-notification letter was sent out to prospective respondents. Our procedures required FRs to ask to speak to the eligible child support mother, even if this person had not been the primary household respondent throughout the duration of the panel survey. Although self interviews were preferred, proxy interviews were permissible.

At the beginning of the interview, FRs requested permission to tape the interview. Interviews were to be conducted, regardless of whether or not respondents agreed to be taped. Aside from taping the interviews, FRs were to follow standard SIPP field procedures. The standard SIPP interviews usually consist of a core set of questions about income and program participation and three to five additional topical modules. For this interview, respondents were asked SIPP core questions followed by the Child Support Topical Module and a few debriefing questions.

The debriefing questions (See page 72 of Appendix A) were developed to ask respondents about their perceptions of the sensitivity of the interview questions. They were designed to be asked immediately following the child support topical module. After the debriefing questions, FRs were to ask to speak to one other SIPP eligible person. If another person was not available for a self interview, proxy interviews would be allowed. The purpose of this additional procedure was to ask respondents to continue an interview to determine if, after answering questions about paternity, they would continue with the SIPP interview.

Interviews were collected from 29 separate households in three census regions. (See Table 1 below). Seven proof of paternity eligible respondents had been married to the father of their children and, thus, these respondents did not answer the more detailed paternity questions. Eleven respondents answered the "proof of paternity" questions, and 11 interviews were ineligible for analysis[8]. Thus, only 18 interviews contained usable information. Fifteen of the 18 eligible interviews were tape recorded. Data from the 18 completed proof of paternity interviews are reported in the section on response distributions, data from the 15 tape recorded interviews are reported in the

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[8] Three interviews were not available for analysis because there were no children in the household with a parent living elsewhere. The proof of paternity questions could not be analyzed in another four interviews because the topical module was based on a written child support agreement (outside the scope of this research) and four other proof of paternity interviews were not completed due to various interviewer errors.

Table 1

**Number of Interviewers and Number and Type of
Child Support Interview By REGION**

Region	Number of Interviewers	Total Interviews	Married – Skipped out of Paternity Questions	Paternity Questions Asked	Ineligible for Paternity Questions
Detroit	1	11	1	7	3
Chicago	2	10	3	1	6
Los Angeles	3	8	3	3	2
TOTAL	6	29	7	11	11

section on behavior coding analysis and data from all 29 interviews are reported in the section on the debriefing questions. There are two major limitations to analysis of these data. The first is that the number of cases examined is very small. It is not possible to make generalizations about the establishment of paternity for the entire population of children not covered by legal agreements. The second limitation is that since one FR in Detroit conducted half of the proof of paternity interviews we can expect FR effects, especially in the behavior coding and debriefing analysis.

C. Response Distribution

Table 2, on the following page, shows the response distributions for all pretest interviews for which data on proofs of paternity were obtained. Throughout all of the questions, very few "don't know" (n=4) responses were recorded, and, at no time during any of the interviews did any of the respondents refuse to answer any of the questions about proofs of paternity.

As we have stated, the proof of paternity questions are not mutually exclusive. If more then one type of proof exists, it may be burdensome and redundant to continue asking women all of the remaining paternity questions. Therefore, in order to decide whether it is necessary to ask all of the proof of paternity questions, once a response of "yes" is provided, we examined whether relationships existed between the proofs of paternity questions.

The first type of proof of paternity examined is marriage to the child's father. Twelve ever-married women were asked if they had ever been married to the father of their youngest child (or only child). Women with multiple children were asked whether the children all had the same father. Eight of the twelve ever-married women had at one time been married to their childrens' father. Since marriage to the father is a presumption of paternity, it was unnecessary to continue asking the remaining proof of paternity questions for these women.

Questions asking about the other five types of proof of paternity were asked of 11 women about 17 separate children (See Table 2 on the following page). (These 11 women were comprised of six never-married women and five ever-married women who had not been married to the child's fathers.) Three of the childrens' fathers were identified in court rulings and no child's father was identified by a blood test. Four children had their father's signature on an application for their birth certificate and three fathers were identified through other types of papers.

Six of the fathers were reported to have signed statements legally specifying that they were the child's father. After listening to the taped interviews, we discovered that some of the respondents were interpreting this question (displayed below) to mean something other than a notarized statement of paternity.

> *Other than the application for a birth certificate, did (child's name) father ever sign a statement that legally specified that he is (child's same) father?*

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Table 2

Response Distributions for the Proof of Paternity Questions for Never-Married Women and Ever-Married Women not Married to Child's Father

Response Category	Paternity Established Through:				
	Court Ruling	Blood Test	Birth Certificate	Acknowledgement of Paternity	Other Papers
"Yes"	3	0	4	6	3
"No"	13	16	13	10	14
"Don't Know"	1	1	0	1	1
"Refused"	0	0	0	0	0
Number of Times Question is Asked	17	17	17	17	17
Number of Women Asked the Question	11	11	11	11	11

Two of the six "yes" responses were due to one father signing papers so that both of his children could receive social security payments. Such actions should not have been reported as "yes" to this question, but should have been reported "yes" to the next question in the series. When we developed this question we made a conscious decision not to include a phrase such as "acknowledgment of paternity" in the wording of the question. These field data show that respondents are including legal documents other than those recognized as "legal acknowledgements of paternity" as they interpret this question. Since it is not possible to enumerate all of the legal documents that should be excluded, it is important to realize that respondents included documents other than an official "acknowledgement of paternity" in their responses, therefore the estimates of "yes" responses could inflate estimates of children with paternity established by an "acknowledgement of paternity."

Two of the "don't know" responses (paternity through the courts and paternity through blood tests) were provided from one woman who sought help through the Child Support Enforcement Office, but who did not know what kind of papers the father may have signed. The other two "don't know" responses (acknowledgement of paternity and other papers) were reported by a woman for one of her two children who have the same father.

According to the response distribution data, the father's paternity had been established for nine of the 17 children. As previously stated, this set of questions did not ask about mutually exclusive events. For four of the nine children, multiple proofs existed. It appeared that if some type of legal form of paternity existed, another legal "proof" may exist as well.

D. Behavior Coding Analysis

Behavior coding was developed as a method of quantitative data analysis used to evaluate interviewers (Cannell, Lawson, and Hausser, 1975). The method has recently been modified to quantitatively examine interviewer and respondent interactions which take place during the course of an interview and which may be indicative of problems in questionnaire design (Oksenberg and Cannell 1990; Esposito, Rothgeb, Hess, and Campanelli 1992, Campanelli and Esposito, 1992). The interactions refer to the "turns" interviewers and respondents take as interviewers ask questions and respondents answer them. Interviewer and respondent behaviors are given distinct codes. (See Appendix C for a copy of the coding scheme used in this study.)

Coded interviewer behaviors included whether interviewers read questions exactly as worded or whether the initial question reading contained slight or major changes to the original question wording. Sometimes interviewers verified information instead of asking the question. Whether their verifications were adequate or inadequate was also coded. For this study, we also coded whether pronouns or proper names were read within the context of the proof of paternity questions.

Coded respondent behaviors included whether respondents provided adequate or inadequate answers to the survey questions. Sometimes respondents requested additional information or clarification of a question. They may have

interrupted the question reading. All of these behaviors were coded. Additionally, in this study, we coded whether respondents disclosed additional information that could have been used for verification later in the interview.

Taken collectively, behavior coding analyses can be used to quantitatively determine whether interviewers or respondents had difficulties with the reading or interpretation of questions. In the past, this information has been collected as qualitative data gathered from anecdotal evidence based on interviewer debriefings. Behavior coding data allow researchers to retrospectively observe patterns of behavior that may have affected the quality of the data collected. Based on the analysis of the data, some wording problems can be identified and subsequently addressed.

Behavior coding can either be carried out "live" as an interview is conducted or it can be completed while listening to tape recorded interviews. For this study, we coded interviews taped from the regional offices and FRs homes. As noted previously, 15 interviews were available for our analysis. Tables 3a and 3b presents the interviewer and respondent behavior coding data for the "proof of paternity" questions.

It is important to note that up to three interviewer codes and three respondent codes could be marked during a single interaction. For example, an interviewer could read a question and insert a pronoun instead of a proper name. At the same time she could read the question with a slight wording change. A respondent could supply an adequate answer to a question while qualifying her answer. All four behaviors would be coded. Since a total of three codes per interviewer and respondent could be marked per interaction, data reported in this discussion are based on the <u>total number of times the question is asked</u> and not the total number of codes marked. For our analysis, we only examine behaviors pertaining to the first interviewer respondent interaction. Followup probes by the interviewer and responses recorded during the second interaction were not reported as they occurred a minimal number of times. Moreover, we were most interested in the Frs initial reading of the questions and the respondents comprehension of the question the first time it was heard. As stated, the number of cases coded in this field test is very small. Hence, we were very conservative as we addressed recommendations for changes to the wording of the questions based on the behavior coding analysis.

1. Interviewer and Respondent Codes

Overall, the FRs read the questions either exactly as worded, or interchanged a pronoun with a proper name or vice versa 72 times out of 103 question wordings and 19 questions wordings were changed slightly (see Table 3a). Only 10 times did FRs make major wording changes to any of the questions. Behavior coding of the respondent's answers to the questions was straightforward. Overall, seventy-four of 101[7] responses were marked as adequate answers (see Table 3b). During five interactions, respondents provided additional

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[7] The introduction (n=15) was read to the respondent and did not require a response. If this is taken into account, 74 of 87 responses were coded as adequate.

Table 3a

Results of Interviewer Behavior Coding by
Question Asked in the "Proof of Paternity" Series

| Interviewer Code | Introduction | Paternity Established Through: | | | | | | Children Have the Same Father | Total |
		Married to the Father	Court Ruling	Blood Test	Birth Certificate	Acknowledge-ment of Paternity	Other Papers		
Exact	4	12	9	7	4	7	3	2	48
Stress	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pronoun	0	1	1	4	6	2	8	2	24
Exact/Pronoun	4	13	10	11	10	9	11	4	72
Slight Change	7	1	2	0	2	3	3	1	19
Major Change	3	0	2	2	1	1	1	0	10
Adequate Verify	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Inadequate Verify	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adequate Feedback	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Inadequate Feedback	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not Read	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	1	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	7
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Times Question Asked	15	14	14	13	13	13	13	8	103
Total Number of Codes	15	16	17	13	14	13	15	8	111

Table 3b
Results of Respondent Behavior Coding by
Question Asked in the "Proof of Paternity" Series

Respondent Code	Introduction	Paternity Established Through:							Total
		Married to the Father	Court Ruling	Blood Test	Birth Certificate	Acknowledge-ment of Paternity	Other Papers	Children Have the Same Father	
Adequate Answer	0	13	11	12	12	11	11	4	74
Inadequate Answer	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
Qualified	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Additional Information	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	5
Request for Clarification	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Interruption	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	3
Don't Know	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	4
Other	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Times Question Asked	15	14	14	13	13	13	13	6	101
Total Number of Codes	1	17	15	13	13	16	14	6	95

information pertaining to other questions in the interview. As reported earlier, only four "don't know" responses were recorded throughout the test and in only 3 cases was an inadequate answer to a question given by a respondent. Based on listening to the tapes and the results of the quantitative behavior coding analysis we decided that a number of slight changes to the questions were necessary. A discussion of the behavior coding data and the recommended wording changes follows.

a.   Introductory Statement

The introductory statement is read to the respondent prior to asking the first "proof of paternity" question. Thus, it does not require a response from the respondent. The introduction was read as worded 4 out of 15 times. Seven slight and 3 major wording changes were coded. Almost one half of the slight wording changes read in the introduction occurred as FRs said "One reason a parent might not have a written <u>agreement</u> about child support" instead of "written <u>arrangement</u> about child support." In the context of child support, the words "written arrangement" and "written agreement" may be used interchangeably.

Only once did a respondent make any comments after the introduction was read. Since several FRs preferred to use "agreement", we recommend implementing the change.

b. Paternity Established Through Marriage to the Child's Father

Almost every time this question was read to respondents, it was read exactly as worded (13 of 14). The 2 "other" codes occurred when FRs inserted a transition such as "and now for Peter" before the question was asked. Thirteen of 14 respondents answered this question adequately. Two of those respondents provided extra additional information. Only one respondent provided an inadequate response to this question and that women answered the question by saying "they both have the same father". We did not see any reason to recommend any changes to this question.

c. Paternity Established Through a Court Action

The question asking about a court ruling was read correctly 10 out of 14 times. Two major wording changes were coded. The respondents provided adequate answers 11 out of 14 times. A "don't know" response was obtained from a woman who was on AFDC. She stated that she did not know what actions, if any, the AFDC office had taken to establish paternity for her child. No recommendations for revisions were made for this question.

d. Paternity Established Through a Blood Test

This question was read exactly as worded 11 out of 13 times. Two major wording changes were coded. During one reading of the question the FR changed

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the wording from "Was (his/her) father ever legally identified by a blood test" to "Was he ever legally identified by a blood test?" The change of the pronoun and the omission of the word "father" could change the meaning of the question and could possibly confuse the respondent. Respondents provided an adequate response 12 out of 13 times. The don't know response came from the same woman referenced in the above question. In order to ensure proper reading and comprehension, in this question we are recommending that the child's proper name replace the pronoun fill.

e. Paternity Established Through a Birth Certificate

FRs read the question exactly as worded 10 out of 13 times. Only one major change to the question wording was recorded. During this analysis it was discovered that in households where the questions were asked about more than one child, FRs were inclined to substitute each child's proper name in the first pronoun fill. While in households with one child, FRs inserted pronouns instead of proper names in both of the fills. One FR included the words "his own signature" in her reading of the question. We decided that this phrase further emphasizes the fact that the father himself must sign the application for the child's birth certificate. All respondents, but one, provided adequate answers to this question. We recommend including the words "his own signature" in this question.

f. Paternity Established Through a Legal Acknowledgement of Paternity

FRs read the question exactly as worded 9 out of 13 times. One FR read this question with a major wording change and three slight changes were made to the reading of this question. Two respondents qualified their answers by saying things like "as far as I know", and one respondent gave the FRs additional information about her children. The one woman who answered "don't know" to this question for her first sample child answered "no" to the same question for her second sample child, even though the children have the same father. The woman who requested clarification asked "you mean besides the birth certificate?"

We are recommending a slight change ("specified" to "specifies") to present this question in the present tense.

g.   Paternity Established Through the Father's Signature on Other Papers

The FRs read this question exactly as worded 3 out of 13 times and interchanged proper names with pronouns 8 times. Three separate times, different FRs changed the question slightly and read "any other paper such as an insurance paper" instead of "such as insurance papers". Only one major wording change was coded. FRs were very likely to fill both of the fills with the child's proper name, even when asking the "proof of paternity" questions of one child in the household.

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Eleven respondents provided adequate answers. The one respondent who requested clarification asked "do you mean birthday cards?" and the don't know response came from the same woman referenced in the preceding question. We are recommending that the wording of this question be modified to emphasize plural "papers" and we are also recommending that the child's proper name be used in both fills.

h.   Do the Children Have the Same Father

FRs read this question exactly as worded only 4 out of 8 times. Many times, additional information provided to the FRs in earlier questions included the fact that the children all have the same father. Hence, FRs were able to adequately verify this question three times. Therefore, this question was either read exactly as worded or verified correctly 7 out of 8 times.

2.   Check Items and Skip Patterns

The field test was also designed to determine if FRs would have any difficulties following the check items and skip patterns that appear both before the four rosters and embedded within the rosters. We knew that the FRs would need to depend on the check items to determine which children the paternity questions referred to, and once eligibility was determined, the FR needed to correctly transcribe the correct child's name into the correct paternity roster. As we listened to the tapes, we had to determine whether the FRs were following the skip patterns correctly for ever-married women, since the skips are especially complicated for these women. (See Appendix A pages 59-63 and 65-70 for the wording of the check items and skip patterns for the Paternity Rosters).

In general, the FRs did not seem to have many difficulties marking the check items or following the complex skip patterns. Most of the time, FRs made the correct eligibility determination. Only once did a FR incorrectly mark "No". Unfortunately, data about paternity were lost due to this error.

Throughout most of the interviews the FRs seemed to rely on their memory, instead of the earlier child support roster, as they filled in the children's names in the paternity rosters. While listening to the tapes, we did not hear "flipping" pages at any of the check items, indicating that the FRs were probably relying on their memory. It is possible that the "flipping" of pages may not have been detectable on tape. We observed two kinds of errors, discussed below, caused by this practice.

In one interview a respondent had two children. One child was covered by a verbal agreement and another child was not covered by an agreement at all. Because the FR did not refer to the child support roster, the FR asked the paternity questions in the "verbal agreement" roster about the wrong child. She discovered she had made an error, asked the questions about the correct child, and then when the time was right, repeated the "proof of paternity" questions in the "no agreement" roster. In another case, a FR did not bother

to check for the child's name and ended up stumbling through the remaining paternity questions.

There were not many problems with any of the other check items; however, problems were observed with some of the skip instructions. One FR checked the correct response for marital status, but instead of skipping to the ever-married roster, she asked the questions in the never-married roster. It was obvious that the woman had been married to her child's father and would have skipped out of the paternity questions had the correct skip pattern been followed. Instead, the two struggled through the remaining paternity questions, resulting in major wording changes to the questions and don't know responses to compensate for the skip error.

Another FR had trouble with the skip patterns for a woman who had previously been married to the father of her multiple children who were not covered by any child support agreement. She read the questions correctly, filled in the correct responses but did not seem to read the instructions to the skip patterns. She eventually found a way out of the paternity roster, but went on to ask questions about the wrong children at Questions 9a-9c (See page 71, Appendix A).

Aside from the exceptions described above, all skip patterns and check items were followed smoothly. However, it is important to note that all of the paths that could be followed were not taken during this pretest due to the limited number of cases that were tested. The observations do, however, suggest that FRs need to be more alert to the skip instructions and skip patterns in the questionnaire. One way to ensure this is by communicating to FRs in the self study the importance of following the instructions, especially when transcribing the children's names from the initial child support agreement roster.

D.   Results of Debriefing Questions and Proxy Interviews

1.   Debriefing Questions

The debriefing questions were designed to obtain information regarding respondents' sensitivity to any of the questions in the SIPP interview. We purposely designed them to be nondirect, allowing respondents the freedom to tell us whether there were any questions or topics, including paternity, that they felt were too sensitive to talk about. By not asking directly about the paternity questions we were trying to determine which questions, if any, were salient enough for respondents to remember as being sensitive. The debriefing questions read as follows:

> *"Now that we have finished your interview, I would like to ask a few follow up questions. These questions will help us to improve our survey in the future. We recently sent you a letter telling you that we would be recontacting your household for this interview. Did you have a chance to read the letter?"*

33

"Were there any questions in this interview that you felt uncomfortable answering?; If yes, Which questions were they?; and What was it about the questions that made you feel uncomfortable?"; and

"Were there any questions that you did not want to answer, If yes, Which questions; and What was it about the questions that made you not want to answer them?"

The questions were designed to be read to the respondent immediately following the questions about child support. Unfortunately, not all of the FRs followed this procedure. One FR asked the questions at the very end of the interview and some FRs decided to either revise the first question before asking it or omitted it altogether.

Of the 19[8] interviews that contain information about paternity, three respondents specifically mentioned being uncomfortable with the paternity questions and one respondent mentioned she was not comfortable with the questions concerning the "dad" (See Table 4). For one of those respondents, the natural father had legally terminated his parental rights many years ago. Although the introductory questions to the child support supplement made this woman eligible for questions about child support, this woman should not have been providing answers to this supplement. The second respondent said "it is not that I am uncomfortable with the questions, it is just a part of my life that I would like to forget about." The third respondent continually asserted that she did not remember answering this "type of question", even before she heard the paternity questions.

Two of the four respondents who refused to let the FR tape the interview vocalized some discomforts with the content of the interview. However, the responses the FRs wrote down for both of these respondents seemed very vague. The first said "no" to the first debriefing question and only after the second question did she say "I am uncomfortable with the questions about the dad." The other woman declared that none of the information for all of the questions was any of the governments' business.

Two other paternity respondents reported questions, other than the paternity series, that they were either uncomfortable answering or that they did not want to answer. In two of the interviews in which none of the paternity questions were asked, some women responded that they were not comfortable with questions "about the dad".

There did not seem to be a pattern to suggest which women would be uncomfortable with the paternity questions. Some women who sounded perfectly comfortable answering the paternity questions expressed concerns and many

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[8] Due to an interviewer error, one respondent was inadvertently asked the full range of paternity questions even though she had been married to her child's father. Although we made the decision not to include her in the response distribution and behavior coding analyses, she is counted as a paternity respondent for the respondent debriefing analysis since she was exposed to the paternity questions.

others did not. These same women answered all of the questions about paternity, even though they may have subsequently indicated some sensitivity to the questions during the debriefing. Overall, the percentage of respondents reporting that they were uncomfortable with questions about

"paternity" or "the dad" is approximately the same for respondents who answered paternity questions as those who did not (see Table 4.)

2.   Proxy Interviews

Earlier we stated that none of the respondents refused to answer any of the questions about proof of paternity. Not only did they agree to respond to the questions, but they also, when asked, either summoned the next person to the telephone or served as a proxy respondent for the second person in the household, without hesitation[9]. This suggests that even if the respondent reported feeling uncomfortable with a question in the interview, they were not so negatively affected that they would refuse to continue a proxy interview or divulge information about a second household member. However, these are the same respondents who have already furnished information about their household income status for the past two and one-half years.

E.   Interviewer Debriefing

Approximately one week after field interviews were completed, we conducted a teleconference debriefing with one FR from each of the three regions participating in the pretest. We debriefed the FRs to determine what their impressions were of the questions, check items and interviews in general. It is important to remember that one of these FRs conducted half of the proof of paternity interviews and another FR, although she did not recall during the debriefing, asked only one woman if she had ever been married to her child's father.

The debriefing confirmed some of the design issues we considered as we designed the paternity rosters for a paper instrument. The FRs were more comfortable with check items which included the topic of the question being referenced, rather than just item numbers. They also appreciated page numbers placed in the skip instructions and reported no problems either writing the children's names at the top of the paternity rosters or inserting the children's names into the questions. However, all of the FRs reported that instead of relying on the child support roster to fill the names of the children in the paternity roster they relied on either their memory or the control cards. All FRs reported that if there had been a complicated family structure they "probably" would have looked back at the first child support roster to determine which of the children the paternity questions referred to.

The FRs reported some of the same patterns we found in the behavior coding. If there was more than one child in the household they reported reading the child's proper name instead of the pronoun and if they asked about only one

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[9] In one region, the interviewers did not follow the instructions to ask to speak to a second household respondent.

Table 4

Questions Perceived as Sensitive
By Paternity and Non-Paternity Respondents

Questions Perceived as Sensitive	Paternity Respondents		Non-Paternity Respondents	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Questions about Paternity	3	15.8%	0	0%
Questions About the Dad	1	5.3	2	20.0
Other Questions	3	15.8	0	0
No Questions Perceived as Sensitive	12	63.3	8	80.0
Total	19	100.0	10	100.0
Base N	19	19	10	10

child they reported reading the questions with pronouns instead of proper names. They did not report any major problems with question wording or respondent comprehension. They also reported that some respondents hesitated before answering the questions. One of the FRs thought they hesitated because the questions were sensitive, though another FR thought they hesitated because they were trying to recall answers to the questions.

When asked for general comments about the interviews, two FRs immediately commented that several of their respondents thought the questions were too personal[10]. They reported that comments about the sensitivity of the questions did not come out during the interview, but came out instead during the debriefing questions. The FRs themselves, however, seemed to think the questions were rather sensitive. Interestingly enough, at one point in the debriefing, the FR who did not think her respondents perceived the questions as personal, commented "if respondents heard the paternity questions in the third or fourth wave of interviews they may drop out of the survey". The other two FRs quickly agreed.

F.   CONCLUSIONS

The paternity questions were pretested to determine if respondents would (1) be able to comprehend the questions; (2) have the knowledge to answer the questions and; (3) consider the questions too sensitive to answer or to continue with an interview.

The behavior coding analysis shows that, overall, 98 percent of the time, the questions appeared to be clear to respondents. When respondents were not clear about the intent of the question, they requested clarification using statements such as "you mean like a birthday card?" or "aside from the birth certificate". It is clear that some respondents interpreted the "acknowledgement of paternity" question to include legal documents other than a document specifically acknowledging paternity. As previously stated, we purposely chose not to include a phrase such as "acknowledgement of paternity" in the question because this is not a term that is used across the United States. Hence, researchers must be aware that respondents are including other types of legal papers in their interpretation of this question.

We must be very careful not to make major inferences from these field data as the number of cases examined is extremely small. However, respondents do appear to be able to answer the questions. The response distributions reflect very few "don't know" responses and some of the "don't know" responses that do appear are due to a woman on AFDC who was not knowledgeable of what types of actions, if any, the Office of Child Support Enforcement had taken to establish paternity for her child.

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[10] The FR who reported that only one of her respondents thought the paternity questions were sensitive is the interviewer who conducted the majority of the paternity interviews. She is the same FR who erroneously asked the debriefing questions after the second household respondent.

It is somewhat difficult to make a statement about the sensitivity of these questions. The respondents were people who continued to participate in the SIPP for eight waves of data collection and when contacted for a ninth time, agreed to participate again. They were used to answering a battery of personal questions about their income and they were used to answering the SIPP questions for more than one person in their household.

At no time did any respondent refuse to answer any of the proof of paternity questions, even when the questions were repeated for two or three of their children. When requested, all of the respondents continued to give proxy interviews for other household members. Although some of the FRs perceived a wider sensitivity problem then was evidenced by the data, one FR did not. She was the FR who conducted the majority of the interviews, but who also erroneously asked the debriefing questions after conducting interviews about the second respondent in the household. The fact that the paternity questions were not brought up by respondents in response to her debriefing questions may reflect the fact that the women already forgot about the questions they had been asked prior to the proxy interview. If the questions were perceived as sensitive, it wasn't salient enough for respondents to remember by the time they answered questions about the second household member. Additionally, just as large of a proportion of respondents who were not asked questions about paternity, reported feeling uncomfortable with questions "about paternity or the dad" as those respondents that were asked questions about paternity. Hence, it may not just be the paternity questions that respondents find sensitive, but instead, it may be the topic of child support in general.

The questions were tested with the knowledge that the different types of proof of paternity are not mutually exclusive. The order of the questions was designed to follow a legal hierarchy so that a decision could be made to either ask about all types of proofs of paternity or stop after the first "yes" response. Marriage to the father is a presumption of paternity as is a court ruling about the identity of the child's father which actually establishes paternity. A blood test, signatures on applications for birth certificates, an acknowledgement of paternity and signatures on cards, letters and insurance papers are considered as evidence towards proof of paternity that could eventually be used in a court of law to establish paternity and future support obligations.

The data appear to show that some type of relationship exists between types of proofs of paternity. If legal paternity had been established, multiple proofs sometimes existed. In order to decrease respondent burden, perceived redundancy and sensitivity to the questions we may want to discontinue the paternity series once a "yes" response is recorded for the first time.

In summary, the FRs read the questions as worded, without major problems, and respondents were able to answer the questions. Some respondents included documents other than "acknowledgement of paternity" in their responses to the question and, based on the cognitive interviews, some respondents may be including blood tests in their interpretation of the question asking about court actions taken to establish paternity. It appears that it must be made very clear to the FRs how important it is to look back to the child support roster and to follow the skip instructions. Finally, although the paternity

questions were reported to be sensitive to some respondents, respondents who were not asked paternity questions also reported sensitivity to the questions about the "dad".

IV. FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the cognitive interviews and field pretest we recommend including the
questions about proof of paternity in the SIPP Child Support Topical Module.
The final recommendations for the wording of the proof of paternity questions
are provided below. Revisions since the field test are indicated through
shading of words or phrases.

Introduction
One reason a parent might not have a written ~~arrangement~~ agreement about child
support payments is because the child's father was never legally identified.

Paternity Established Through Marriage to the Child's Father
One reason a parent might not have a written ~~arrangement~~ agreement about child
support payments is because the child's father was never legally identified.
One way to legally identify the child's father is through marriage.

Was ... ever married to (*Child's name*) father?

Paternity Established Through a Court Action
Was (*Child's name*) father ever legally identified by a court ruling?

Paternity Established Through a Blood Test
Was ~~(his/her)~~ (*Child's name*) father ever legally identified by a blood test?

4. Paternity Established Through a Birth Certificate
Did (*his/her*) father ever write his own signature on the application for
(*Child's name*) birth certificate?

5. Paternity Established Through a Legal Acknowledgement of Paternity
Other than the application for a birth certificate, did (*Child's name*) father
ever sign a statement that legally ~~specified~~ specifies that he is (*Child's
name*) father?

Paternity Established Through the Father's Signature on Other Papers
Did ~~(his/her)~~ (*Child's name*) father ever sign any other ~~paper~~ papers, such as
insurance ~~papers~~ forms, a personal letter or a card that could identify him as
(*Child's name*) father?

Do the Children Have the Same Father?
Do (*Read names of all children recorded in Check Item T21a or T21b*) all have
the same father?

There are two additional recommendations that are suggested for implementation once the questionnaire is designed for computer-assisted interviewing. They are provided below.

1. As the types of proofs of paternity are not mutually exclusive and the data seem to show a relationship between the types of proofs of paternity, we recommend that if a woman responds "yes" to one question, the interviewer does not continue to ask about the other questions regarding other types of proof of paternity. This will decrease respondent burden and perhaps diminish any negative reactions that may occur.

    It is recommended that this revision be introduced when the instrument is programmed for computer assisted interviewing since it would be too complex to do with a paper questionnaire.

2. It is also recommended that once the instrument is computerized, the fills within the questions be modified so that questions referencing only one child in a household contain fills combining proper names and pronouns and questions referencing multiple children in the household contain fills with proper names. A transition sentence between children in the roster may also be added.

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APPENDIX A

Section 5 – TOPICAL MODULES (Continued)

Part C – CHILD SUPPORT AGREEMENTS

CHECK ITEM T12	*Refer to cc items 24 and 25.* Is . . . the parent of children under 21 years of age who live in this household?	**8400** ₁☐ Yes ₂☐ No – Skip to Check Item C1

1a. Does . . . have any children of . . .'s own in this household under 21 years of age who have a parent living elsewhere?
(Do not include adoptive or biological parents who would be living at home except for military or other job related absences.)

8401 ₁☐ Yes
₂☐ No – Skip to Check Item C1

b. How many of . . .'s own children living here have a parent living elsewhere?
(Do not include adoptive or biological parents who would be living at home except for military or other job related absences.)

8402 ☐☐ Children

c. Which of . . .'s children are those?
(Record person number and name of children in column 1C, below.)
(List children by age, youngest first.)

1C	1D/1K	1H/1J	1I
Children under 21 with parent living elsewhere	Children with NO SUPPORT agreement	Children covered, MOST RECENT agreement	Children covered, ALL OTHER agreements

Person No. Name			
8403 ☐☐☐ _____	**8404** ₁☐ Yes	**8405** ₁☐ Yes	**8406** ₁☐ Yes
8407 ☐☐☐ _____	**8408** ₁☐ Yes	**8409** ₁☐ Yes	**8410** ₁☐ Yes
8411 ☐☐☐ _____	**8412** ₁☐ Yes	**8413** ₁☐ Yes	**8414** ₁☐ Yes
8415 ☐☐☐ _____	**8416** ₁☐ Yes	**8417** ₁☐ Yes	**8418** ₁☐ Yes
8419 ☐☐☐ _____	**8420** ₁☐ Yes	**8421** ₁☐ Yes	**8422** ₁☐ Yes
8423 ☐☐☐ _____	**8424** ₁☐ Yes	**8425** ₁☐ Yes	**8426** ₁☐ Yes
8427 ☐☐☐ _____	**8428** ₁☐ Yes	**8429** ₁☐ Yes	**8430** ₁☐ Yes
8431 ☐☐☐ _____	**8432** ₁☐ Yes	**8433** ₁☐ Yes	**8434** ₁☐ Yes

1d. These next few questions concern child support.

Child support payments can be specified in written or verbal child support agreements.

Have child support payments ever been agreed to or awarded for (any of) . . .'s children that we have just listed?

8435 ₁☐ Yes
₂☐ No – *For each child listed in column 1C, mark the "Yes" box in column 1D/1K and SKIP to 5a, page 64*

e. For how many children?

8436 ☐☐ Children

CHECK ITEM T13	*Refer to 1e above.* Is "One" entered?	**8437** ₁☐ Yes – *SKIP to 1j* ₂☐ No

1f. Are . . .'s children that we have just listed covered by different child support agreements. (By that, we mean separate agreements involving different absent parents)?

8438 ₁☐ Yes
₂☐ No – *SKIP to 1j*

g. How many different child support agreements cover these children?

8439 ☐☐ Number of agreements

h. Which of these children are covered by the MOST RECENT AGREEMENT?

(Refer to the children listed in column 1C)
(For each child mentioned, mark the "Yes" box in column 1H/1J of the roster.)

i. Which of these children are covered by any OTHER child support agreements, either written or verbal?

(Refer to the children listed in column 1C. For each child mentioned, mark the "Yes" box in column 1I of the roster)
(Please note that a child cannot have more than one "Yes" box marked.)
(SKIP to Check Item T14, Page 56)

j. Which (child/children) (is/are) covered by the agreement?

(Refer to the children listed in column 1C)
(For each child mentioned, mark the "Yes" box in column 1H/1J of the roster.)

2k. How are the payments supposed to be received? Are they received – *(Read responses.)*

`8459`
- 1 ☐ Directly from the other parent?
- 2 ☐ Through a court?
- 3 ☐ Through the welfare or child support agency?
- 4 ☐ Some other method – *Specify* ⬈

_____

_____

- x1 ☐ DK

l. What is the total amount that . . . actually received in child support payments under that agreement, during the past 12 months?

`8460` $ [_____] . [00]

- x3 ☐ None – *SKIP to 2n*

OR

- x1 ☐ DK

m. How regularly are child support payments received? Are they received – *(Read responses)*

`8461`
- 1 ☐ All of the time
- 2 ☐ Most of the time
- 3 ☐ Some of the time
- 4 ☐ None of the time

n. Under the terms of the agreement with the other parent, is . . . due any back payments for child support owed prior to the last 12 months?

`8462`
- 1 ☐ Yes
- 2 ☐ No – *SKIP to 2p*
- x1 ☐ DK

o. Would you say the amount due . . . is – *(Read responses)*

`8463`
- 1 ☐ Less than $500
- 2 ☐ Between $500 and $5,000
- 3 ☐ More than $5,000
- x1 ☐ DK

p. What kinds of provisions for health care costs are included in the child support agreement?

Mark (X) all that apply.

`8464` 1 ☐ Non-custodial parent to provide health insurance

`8465` 2 ☐ Custodial parent to provide health insurance

`8466` 3 ☐ Non-custodial parent to pay actual medical costs directly

`8467` 4 ☐ Child support payments to include cash medical support

`8468` 5 ☐ None

`8469` 6 ☐ Other – *Specify* ⬈

_____

_____

q. What child custody arrangements does the most recent agreement specify?

`8470`
- 1 ☐ Joint legal and physical custody
- 2 ☐ Joint legal with mother physical custody
- 3 ☐ Joint legal with father physical custody
- 4 ☐ Mother legal and physical custody
- 5 ☐ Father legal and physical custody
- 6 ☐ Split custody
- 7 ☐ Other – *Specify* ⬈

_____

_____

r. Does the child support agreement specify the visitation arrangement between the child(ren) and the other parent?

`8471`
- 1 ☐ Yes
- 2 ☐ No

CHECK ITEM T15 *Refer to the roster, column 1H/1J.* Is more than one child marked "Yes"?

`8472`
- 1 ☐ Yes
- 2 ☐ No – *SKIP to 2t*

2s. Did all the children visit the other parent about the same number of days in the last 12 months?

`8473`
- 1 ☐ Yes – *ASK 2t for all children*
- 2 ☐ No – *ASK 2t for oldest child*

t. What is the total amount of time (the child/all children/the oldest child) spent visiting the other parent in the last 12 months?

`8474` [____] Days

`8475` [____] Weeks

`8476` [____] Months

`8477` x3 ☐ None

`8478` x1 ☐ DK

Part C – CHILD SUPPORT AGREEMENTS (Continued)

3j. How regularly are child support payments received? Are they received – *(Read responses)*

8499
- 1 ☐ All of the time
- 2 ☐ Most of the time
- 3 ☐ Some of the time
- 4 ☐ None of the time

k. Under the terms of the (agreement/understanding) with the other parent, is . . . due any back payments for child support owed prior to the last 12 months?

8500
- 1 ☐ Yes
- 2 ☐ No – *SKIP to 3m*
- x1 ☐ DK

l. Would you say the amount due . . . is – *(Read responses)*

8501
- 1 ☐ Less than $500
- 2 ☐ Between $500 and $5,000
- 3 ☐ More than $5,000
- x1 ☐ DK

m. What kinds of provisions for health care costs were agreed to?
Mark (X) all that apply.

8502   1 ☐ Non-custodial parent to provide health insurance

8503   2 ☐ Custodial parent to provide health insuran·

8504   3 ☐ Non-custodial parent to pay actual medical costs directly

8505   4 ☐ Child support payments to include cash medical support

8506   5 ☐ None

8507   6 ☐ Other – *Specify* ⤵

_____

_____

n. What child custody arrangements does the (agreement/understanding) specify?

8508
- 1 ☐ Child(ren) live with mother
- 2 ☐ Child(ren) live with father
- 3 ☐ Child(ren) live with mother and with father
- 4 ☐ None
- 5 ☐ Other – *Specify* ⤵

_____

_____

o. Does the child support (agreement/understanding) cover the visitation arrangement between the child(ren) and the other parent?

8509
- 1 ☐ Yes
- 2 ☐ No

CHECK ITEM T16   *Refer to the roster, column 1H/1J. Is more than one child marked "Yes"?*

8510
- 1 ☐ Yes
- 2 ☐ No – *SKIP to 3q*

3p. Did all the children visit the other parent about the same number of days in the last 12 months?

8511
- 1 ☐ Yes – *ASK 3q for all children*
- 2 ☐ No – *ASK 3q for oldest child*

q. What is the total amount of time (the child/all children/the oldest child) spent visiting the other parent in the last 12 months?

8512 ☐☐☐ Days

8513 ☐☐ Weeks

8514 ☐☐ Months

8515   x3 ☐ None

8516   x1 ☐ DK

CHECK ITEM T16a   Refer to cc item 28

Sample person's Gender
- [ ] Male - *SKIP to 3s (p.64)*
- [ ] Female

CHECK ITEM T16b   Refer to cc item 26a.

Sample person's Marital Status
- [ ] Never Married - *GO to Check Item T16c (p.60)*
- [ ] All Others - *SKIP to Check Item T16e (p.62)*

Person #___ ___ ___	Person #___ ___ ___	Person #___ ___ ___	Person #___ ___ ___	Person #___ ___ ___
Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes [ ]. No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes - *ASK 3r.2-3r.6 for next child* [ ] No - *SKIP to 3s (p.64)*	[ ] Yes - *ASK 3r.2-3r.6 for next child* [ ] No - *SKIP to 3s (p.64)*	[ ] Yes - *ASK 3r.2-3r.6 for next child* [ ] No - *SKIP to 3s (p.64)*	[ ] Yes - *ASK 3r.2-3r.6 for next child* [ ] No - *SKIP to 3s (p.64)*	 [ ] No - *SKIP to 3s (p.64)*

Person #_ _ _	Person #_ _ _	Person #_ _ _	Person #_ _ _	Person #_ _ _
Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes - ASK 3r.9- 3r.13 for next child [ ] No - SKIP to 3s (p.64)	[ ] Yes - ASK 3r.9- 3r.13 for next child [ ] No - SKIP to 3s (p.64)	[ ] Yes - ASK 3r.9- 3r.13 for next child [ ] No - SKIP to 3s (p.64)	[ ] Yes - ASK 3r.9- 3r.13 for next child [ ] No - SKIP to 3s (p.64)	[ ] No - SKIP to 3s (p.64)

d. Did . . . receive any help from the agency *(Last contact)?*

| 8544 | 1 ☐ Yes |
| | 2 ☐ No – *SKIP to Check Item T18* |

e. What kind of help did . . . receive *(Last contact)?*

Mark (X) all that apply.

8545	1 ☐ Locate the other parent
8546	2 ☐ Establish paternity/maternity
8547	3 ☐ Establish support obligation
8548	4 ☐ Establish medical support
8549	5 ☐ Enforce support order
8550	6 ☐ Modify an order
8551	7 ☐ Other – *Specify* ⬚

CHECK ITEM T18 Are any children listed in 1C (p.55) of the roster marked "Yes" in 1D/1K (Children with NO Support agreement)?

[ ] Yes
[ ] No - *SKIP to 12 (p.71)*

CHECK ITEM T19 *Refer to cc item 28*

Sample person's Gender

[ ] Male - *SKIP to Check Item T28 (p.70)*
[ ] Female

CHECK ITEM T20 *Refer to cc item 26a.*

Sample person's Marital Status

[ ] Never Married - *SKIP to Check Item T21a (p.66)*
[ ] All Others - *SKIP to Check Item T21b (p.68)*

Person #___ ___ ___	Person #___ ___ ___	Person #___ ___ ___	Person #___ ___ ___	Person #___ ___ ___
Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes - *ASK 6a-6e for next child* [ ] No - *SKIP to Item 8 (p.70)*	[ ] Yes - *ASK 6a-6e for next child* [ ] No - *SKIP to Item 8 (p.70)*	[ ] Yes - *ASK 6a-6e for next child* [ ] No - *SKIP to Item 8 (p.70)*	[ ] Yes - *ASK 6a-6e for next child* [ ] No - *SKIP to Item 8 (p.70)*	[ ] No - *SKIP to Item 8 (p.70)*

Person #___ ___ ___	Person #___ ___ ___	Person #___ ___ ___	Person #___ ___ ___	Person #___ ___ ___
Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:
[ ] Yes -*If last child SKIP to Check Item T25 for this child* *If not last child Ask 7a for next child* [ ] No - *SKIP to 7c for this child*	[ ] Yes -*If last child SKIP to Check Item T25 for this child* *If not last child Ask 7a for next child* [ ] No - *SKIP to 7c for this child*	[ ] Yes -*If last child SKIP to Check Item T25 for this child* *If not last child Ask 7a for next child* [ ] No - *SKIP to 7c for this child*	[ ] Yes -*If last child SKIP to Check Item T25 for this child* *If not last child Ask 7a for next child* [ ] No - *SKIP to 7c for this child*	[ ] Yes - *SKIP to Check Item T25 for this child* [ ] No - *SKIP to 7c for this child*
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK	[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] DK
[ ] Yes - *GO to 7a for next child* [ ] No	[ ] Yes - *GO to 7a for next child* [ ] No	[ ] Yes - *GO to 7a for next child* [ ] No	[ ] Yes - *GO to 7a for next child* [ ] No	 [ ] No
[ ] Yes - *SKIP to Check Item T27 (p.70)* [ ] No - *SKIP to 8 (p.70)*	[ ] Yes - *SKIP to Check Item T27 (p.70)* [ ] No - *SKIP to 8 (p.70)*	[ ] Yes - *SKIP to Check Item T27 (p.70)* [ ] No - *SKIP to 8 (p.70)*	[ ] Yes - *SKIP to Check Item T27 (p.70)* [ ] No - *SKIP to 8 (p.70)*	[ ] Yes - *SKIP to Check Item T27 (p.70)* [ ] No - *SKIP to 8 (p.70)*

	YOUNGEST CHILD	OLDEST CHILD
9a. Why were child support payments not agreed to or awarded for . . .'s (youngest) (oldest) child without an award? *Record person number of child* *Mark (X) all that apply.*	`8555` ☐☐☐ Person number `8557` 1 ☐ Legal paternity not established `8559` 1 ☐ Unable to locate parent `8561` 2 ☐ Other parent unable to pay `8563` 3 ☐ Final agreement pending `8565` 4 ☐ Accepted property settlement in lieu of child support `8567` 5 ☐ Do not want child support `8569` 6 ☐ Did not pursue award `8571` 7 ☐ Other – *Specify* ⟋ _____ _____	`8556` ☐☐☐ Person number `8558` 1 ☐ Legal paternity not established `8560` 1 ☐ Unable to locate parent `8562` 2 ☐ Other parent unable to pay `8564` 3 ☐ Final agreement pending `8566` 4 ☐ Accepted property settlement in lieu of child support `8568` 5 ☐ Do not want child support `8570` 6 ☐ Did not pursue award `8572` 7 ☐ Other – *Specify* ⟋ _____ _____
9b. Where does the other parent for this (youngest) (oldest) child now live?	`8573` 1 ☐ Same county/city `8575` 2 ☐ Same State (different county/city) `8577` 3 ☐ Different State `8579` 4 ☐ Other parent deceased – *SKIP to* ✦ 10 `8581` 5 ☐ Other – *Specify* ⟋ _____ _____ x1 ☐ Unknown	`8574` 1 ☐ Same county/city `8576` 2 ☐ Same State (different county/city) `8578` 3 ☐ Different State `8580` 4 ☐ Other parent deceased – *SKIP to* ✦ 10 `8582` 5 ☐ Other – *Specify* ⟋ _____ _____ x1 ☐ Unknown
9c. What is the total amount of time the (youngest) (oldest) child spent visiting the other parent in the last 12 months?	`8583` ☐☐☐ Days `8585` ☐☐ Weeks `8587` ☐☐ Months `8589` x3 ☐ None `8591` x1 ☐ DK	`8584` ☐☐☐ Days `8586` ☐☐ Weeks `8588` ☐☐ Months `8590` x3 ☐ None `8592` x1 ☐ DK
10. Were any payments received from the other parent(s) in the last 12 months for any of . . .'s children without a child support agreement?	`8593` 1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No – *SKIP to* 12	
11. What is the total amount that . . . received from the other parent(s) in the past 12 months?	`8594` $ ☐☐☐ . 00 OR x1 ☐ DK	
12. Were any non-cash items or services for child support received for any of . . .'s children?	`8595` 1 ☐ Yes – *Specify* _____ _____ 2 ☐ No	

APPENDIX B

Protocol for Phase I
"Proof of Paternity" Cognitive Interviews

GLOBAL PROBES –

"Tell me what you are thinking about."

"Can you tell me more about that?"

"Keep talking."

CLARIFYING PROBES –

"I'm not sure I understand what you are saying. Can you tell me again what you mean?"

"What do you mean when you say (respondent's own words)?"

Paternity Established Through a Court Action
Tell me in your own words what you think this question is asking.

In the first sentence I just read, "One reason a parent might not have a written arrangement about child support is because there was never a ruling that legally identified the father." What do you think "a ruling that legally identified the father" means?

What does it mean to have a "court legally identify the father?"

Paternity Established Through a Blood Test
What does the phrase "legally identified by a blood test" mean?

Can you tell me anything more about what a blood test is?

Paternity Established Through a Birth Certificate
In your own words, what is this question talking about?

What did you think of when I said "voluntarily sign a paper that legally identifies him as the child's father"

What does the term "voluntarily" mean to you?

Paternity Established Through the Father's Signature on Papers Acknowledging Paternity
What do you think "any other paper" is referring to?

Can you give me an example of a paper that the father might sign that says he is the father?

APPENDIX C

Coder |____|____|____|____| Mo |____|____| Day |____|____|

Q	XL	Interviewer Behavior Codes	Respondent Behavior Codes	I Note Code	Interviewer Note	R Note Code	Respondent Note
		EX ST PR SC MC AV IV AF IF NA OT UK	AA IA QU AI RC IN DK RF OT UK				
		EX ST PR SC MC AV IV AF IF NA OT UK	AA IA QU AI RC IN DK RF OT UK				
		EX ST PR SC MC AV IV AF IF NA OT UK	AA IA QU AI RC IN DK RF OT UK				
		EX ST PR SC MC AV IV AF IF NA OT UK	AA IA QU AI RC IN DK RF OT UK				
		EX ST PR SC MC AV IV AF IF NA OT UK	AA IA QU AI RC IN DK RF OT UK				
		EX ST PR SC MC AV IV AF IF NA OT UK	AA IA QU AI RC IN DK RF OT UK				
		EX ST PR SC MC AV IV AF IF NA OT UK	AA IA QU AI RC IN DK RF OT UK				
		EX ST PR SC MC AV IV AF IF NA OT UK	AA IA QU AI RC IN DK RF OT UK				
		EX ST PR SC MC AV IV AF IF NA OT UK	AA IA QU AI RC IN DK RF OT UK				
		EX ST PR SC MC AV IV AF IF NA OT UK	AA IA QU AI RC IN DK RF OT UK				
		EX ST PR SC MC AV IV AF IF NA OT UK	AA IA QU AI RC IN DK RF OT UK				
		EX ST PR SC MC AV IV AF IF NA OT UK	AA IA QU AI RC IN DK RF OT UK				
		EX ST PR SC MC AV IV AF IF_NA OT UK	AA IA QU AI RC IN DK RF OT UK				
		EX ST PR SC MC AV IV AF IF NA OT UK	AA IA QU AI RC IN DK RF OT UK				
		EX ST PR SC MC AV IV AF IF NA OT UK	AA IA QU AI RC IN DK RF OT UK				
		EX ST PR SC MC AV IV AF IF NA OT UK	AA IA QU AI RC IN DK RF OT UK				

Comments:

Interviewer and Respondent Behavior Codes

Interviewer Codes

EX	Exact Question Wording	The interviewer reads the question exactly as written.
ST	Incorrect Stress	The interviewer does not stress capitalized words when she reads the question.
PR	Pronoun Changes	Interviewer substitutes pronouns or "this child" or "the children" for the name of the child or the names of the children.
SC	Slight Change in Question Wording	Interviewer adds or deletes <u>one or two</u> words in a way that does <u>not</u> alter the meaning of the question or response categories.
MC	Major Change in Question Wording	Interviewer adds or deletes one or more words that alter the meaning of the question from the question or response categories.
AV	Adequate Verification	Interviewer changes the <u>initial reading</u> of the question (or follows the initial reading of the question with a verification) to take into account information previously provided by the respondent, but does not change the meaning of the question or distort the information already provided by the respondent.
IV	Inadequate Verification	Interviewer changes the <u>initial reading</u> of the question (or follows the initial reading of the question with a verification) to take into account information already provided by the respondent, but changes the meaning of the question or distort information already provided by the respondent.
AF	Adequate Followup	"Followup" describes most interviewer behavior that occurs after the initial reading of the question or an initial verification. Followups include probes, answers to respondents' questions, and so on, without introducing a major change to the question wording.
IF	Inadequate Followup	"Followup" describes most interviewer behavior that occurs after the initial reading of the question or an initial verification. Inadequate followups include probes, answers to respondents' questions, and so on, in a way that introduces a major change to the question wording.
NA	Not Asked	Interviewer does not ask the question.
OT	Other	The interviewer follows the initial reading of the question with a "pre-probe" before the respondent can answer or the coder is not sure how to code the interviewer's behavior.
UK	Unknown	You cannot hear well enough to make a judgement about what code to use.

Respondent Codes

AA	Adequate Answer	The respondent provides an answer that can be coded and unambiguously meets the objectives of the question or the respondent accepts a verification or probe in a way that constitutes an adequate answer.
IA	Inadequate Answer	The respondent provides an answer to a question that cannot be coded or does not meet the question objectives or is ambiguous.
QU	Qualification	The respondent qualifies her or his answer, for example, by saying "probably," "I think," "maybe about," "as far as I know," and so on.
AI	Additional Information	The respondent provides information other than the question asked for. A question usually asks for a "yes/no" answer or a choice from among a set of offered categories. Use this code if the respondent provides information other than the requested "yes/no" or category choice. The code is used in addition to the AA and IA codes.
RC	Request for Clarification	The respondent asks for clarification or asks that the question or response categories be repeated.
IN	Interruption	The respondent interrupts the <u>initial reading</u> of the question.
DK	Don't Know	The respondent states that she does not have knowledge or information to answer the question.
RF	Refusal	The respondent refuses to answer the question.