

What is the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study: Birth Cohort?

The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort (ECLS-B) is a nationally representative study designed to collect detailed information on early childhood experiences of children from nine months old through kindergarten. The ECLS-B began in 2001 with a diverse sample of approximately 10,700 children, including oversamples of American Indian and Alaska Native children, Asian and Pacific Islander children, Chinese children, twins, and low and very low birth weight children. Information about the children in the ECLS-B sample was obtained from multiple sources including parents/primary caregivers, child care and early education providers, teachers, and the children themselves. The ECLS-B is sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics in collaboration with The Economic Research Service (ERS), U.S. Department of Agriculture, and agencies within the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

What does the ECLS-B offer family researchers?

The ECLS-B provides researchers with comprehensive data on experiences taking place during children's early developmental years. These data address issues such as children's health, development, care, and education. Trained assessors visited the children multiple times over the course of the study, evaluating them in a variety of activities intended to measure developmental skills. The ECLS-B is comprised of the following waves of data:

- [9-month round](#) (2001-2002)
- [2-year round](#) (2003-2004)
- [Preschool round](#) (2005-2006)
- [Kindergarten round](#) (2006-2007)

At each wave, ECLS-B collects information from the primary caregiver: parental attitudes, childrearing, and child care arrangements, in addition to detailed information on household characteristics (food sufficiency, income/assets, and neighborhood quality) and community participation coupled with sources of social support. Finally, the primary caregiver data address issues concerning the child's well-being, health, and temperament, exposure to violence, development, and education.

The first two waves of data collect information from both *resident* and *non-resident* fathers. These data primarily address parenting practices, attitudes toward fatherhood, current relationship with the child's mother, socioeconomic background (including education and employment status), social support/community involvement, and legal child support arrangements.

The ECLS-B also collects data from childcare providers and teachers to assess child care arrangements, the child's relationships to caregivers and interactions with other children, and the background characteristics of caregivers and teachers having regular interaction with the child. Additional school data were obtained from the NCEC Common Core of Data (CCD) and Private School Universe Survey (PSS) data files.

How do I use the ECLS-B?

Documentation for interviews and administered questionnaires for all rounds of data are available in PDF format at the [instruments and assessments](#) section of the ECLS-B website. Users can also find matrices giving overviews of available content for each of the [various questionnaires](#). Finally, the [ECLS-B Direct Child Assessment Components Matrix](#) provides users with an overview of the utilized assessment instruments across all waves of the study.

How do I access the ECLS-B data?

For users interested in accessing ECLS-B data, variables from the 9-month wave are currently available for public use and can be accessed on the NCES webpage through the [Data Analysis System \(DAS\)](#). The DAS is an on-line software tool allowing users to construct tables of weighted estimates, calculate t-tests and produce correlation matrices for use in linear regression analyses. To protect respondents' confidentiality, sensitive data are restricted. The restricted ECLS-B data are available to qualified researchers who have applied for and obtained a restricted-use data license. Further information on acquiring the restricted data is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/licenses.asp>.

Where can I learn more about the ECLS-B?

To learn more about the ECLS-B, visit the main webpage, through the [National Center for Education Statistics](#) site. The ECLS-B provides a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) tab for data users. The ECLS-B website also provides a link allowing researchers to email [specific questions](#) to an appropriate staff member.

Suggested Citation

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