

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENTAL INITIATIVE

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S STUDY Background and Funding Needs

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Background. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development was authorized to implement a National Longitudinal Cohort Study of American Children in the Children's Health Act of 2000:

(a) PURPOSE- . . . to authorize NICHD to conduct a national longitudinal study of environmental influences (including physical, chemical, biological, and psychosocial) on children's health and development.

(b) IN GENERAL- The Director of NICHD shall establish a consortium of representatives from appropriate Federal agencies (including the CDC and EPA) to--

(1) plan, develop, and implement a prospective cohort study, from birth to adulthood, to evaluate the effects of both chronic and intermittent exposures on child health and human development; and
(2) investigate basic mechanisms of developmental disorders and environmental factors, both risk and protective, that influence health and developmental processes.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS- There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$18,000,000 for fiscal year 2001, and such sums as may be necessary for each the fiscal years 2002 through 2005.

The National Children's Study is a bold and unique scientific venture. It will be the richest information resource for questions related to child health that this country has ever seen. It will form the basis of child health guidance and prevention policy for generations to come. This study will make unique and significant contributions to our understanding how behavioral, social and environmental factors in early life may cause or predispose individuals to certain chronic diseases or conditions. It will save the lives and improve the health of millions of American children.

Since the legislation authorizing the NCS was enacted, working groups convened by NICHD have largely completed research protocols to study the environmental links to diseases that affect not only children but adults as well – asthma, cardiovascular diseases, neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's, diabetes, obesity and osteoporosis, just to name a few.

Funding has never been more critical for this important study. The study has already been delayed by one year because it did not receive funds it needed in Fiscal Year 2004. Without at least \$27 million in Fiscal Year 2005, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development will likely be forced to cancel this important work in children's environmental health. The \$12 million in the President's request would allow only planning activities to continue, and would delay the study by at least an additional year.

To implement the Study as planned in late 2005 in FY 05, NICHD needs a total of \$27-48 million in new dollars outside the institute's regular budget in FY 05. The first \$12 million

would be used to complete planning for the study, and the remainder would be used to implement the following:

- Establish a data coordinating center for the Study,
- Establish a repository where blood, urine and other samples obtained during the study would be stored, and
- Establish four regionally distributed vanguard sites across the nation, where NICHD would start to recruit participants and test out the protocols to ensure that the study goes smoothly when it ramps up to testing 100,000 children from birth to age twenty-one.

If NICHD receives a total of \$27 million, it would implement the Vanguard Sites towards the end of the fiscal year. If the Institute were to receive \$48 million, NICHD would implement the Vanguard Sites earlier, thereby accelerating the piloting that needs to be done before full implementation occurs. These two cost estimates are outlined below:

	Slower Implementation	Accelerated Implementation
Continued Planning	\$12 million	\$12 million
Data Coordinating Center	\$10 million	\$10 million
Repository for Samples	\$10 million	\$10 million
Vanguard Sites	\$5 million (\$1.25 million/site)	\$16 million (\$4 million/site)

Six of the chronic diseases whose potentially preventable cause are to be sought through the Children's Study cost America \$642 billion per year:

Obesity	\$117 billion
Injury	\$393 billion
Asthma	\$13 billion
Diabetes	\$98 billion
Schizophrenia	\$9 billion
Autism	\$12 billion

Even if the National Children's Study were to result in only a 1% reduction in the cost of these chronic diseases, that it would save \$6.4 billion per year alone, much more than the \$2.7 billion that the study will cost over twenty-five years. Delaying the discovery of possible environmental causes of childhood diseases delays the implementation of preventative measures and possible treatments.

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