

The 2023-2024 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) Combined Dataset

FAST FACTS

What is the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH)?

- The NSCH is a national survey, funded and directed by the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA MCHB), that provides rich data on multiple, intersecting aspects of children's health and well-being – including physical and mental health, access to and quality of health care, and the child's family, neighborhood, school, and social context.
- The NSCH has been fielded annually since 2016 by the United States (U.S.) Census Bureau and 2024 is the ninth administration of the redesigned NSCH.
- Starting in 2016, several key changes were instituted to the survey. Among these changes, the NSCH consolidated content from two previous surveys (the [NSCH](#) and the [National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs](#)) and is administered via web-based and mail instruments. NSCH surveys conducted prior to 2016 are not comparable as the methods and design of the survey changed significantly; therefore, comparison or trend analyses cannot be conducted between surveys completed prior to 2016 and those completed starting in 2016 to now.
- Most data collected in 2023 and 2024 will be comparable to data from NSCH surveys conducted since 2016 as they were conducted with the same design and administration. However, due to imputation and weighting revisions applied to the NSCH in 2024, some NSCH data available on the Data Resource Center website are not comparable across years. (See detailed data notes regarding the NSCH weighting and imputation changes below).

What is the purpose of the National Survey of Children's Health?

- The NSCH is designed to produce national and state-level data on the physical and emotional health of children 0 - 17 years old in the United States.
- Additionally, the NSCH provides estimates for 42 [Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant](#) National Outcome, Performance and Standardized Measures and data for each state's Title V needs assessment.
- For more information on the purpose and specific topics asked about in the NSCH, see [2023 NSCH Fast Facts](#) and [2024 Fast Facts](#), as well as [2023 NSCH Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#), [2024 NSCH FAQs](#) and [NSCH supporting documents](#).

Who sponsors and conducts the National Survey of Children's Health?

- The Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA MCHB) provides the primary funding and direction for the NSCH. More information can be found here: <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/data/national-surveys>.
- The NSCH is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau on behalf of HRSA MCHB. The U.S. Census Bureau oversees the NSCH's sampling plan and administration by web and mail. They also collect data and create sampling weights.
- Additional funding for specific questions on the 2023 and 2024 surveys was provided by:
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD)

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP)
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).

Who were the participants in the National Survey of Children's Health?

- Households were randomly sampled and contacted by mail to identify those with one or more children under 18 years old. In each household, one child was randomly selected to be the subject of the survey.
- The survey oversampled children with special health care needs and children 0-5 years of age.
- A total of 106,537 surveys were completed for 2023 and 2024 combined. 55,162 surveys were completed in 2023 and 51,375 in 2024. The state range in the 2023-2024 combined dataset is from 1,425 to 9,137.
- The Overall Weighted Response Rate was 35.8% for 2023 and 36.1% for 2024.
- Survey data were weighted (and adjusted for the combined dataset) to represent the population of non-institutionalized children ages 0-17 who live in housing units nationally and in each state.

How were data for the survey collected?

- Households received a mailed invitation asking an adult in the household who is familiar with the child's health and health care (usually a parent) to complete a short screener questionnaire (via web or paper). The screener asked participants to identify all children ages 0-17 living in the household.
- If a child (or children) was reported to live in the household, participants who chose to respond online were immediately directed to a more detailed, age-specific topical questionnaire for one randomly selected child.
- Participants also had an option to complete a paper version of the screener and topical questionnaire.
- Telephone questionnaire assistance was available to complete the survey over the phone.
- The NSCH screener and topical questionnaires were available in both English and Spanish.
- For more details about individual surveys, see the [2023 NSCH Survey Sampling and Administration Diagram](#), and [2023 Methodology Report](#), and the [2024 NSCH Survey Sampling and Administration Diagram](#) and [2024 Methodology Report](#).

How similar are the 2023 NSCH and 2024 NSCH?

- All questions are consistent in the 2023 and 2024 NSCH, except for one question that was modified to ask the number of times the child has moved to a new address.
- For a comparison of the 2023 and 2024 surveys, see [What's New and Changed in the 2024 National Survey of Children's Health as Compared to the 2023 NSCH](#) and a [crosswalk of survey items](#) on the DRC website. For more details regarding the content available in the 2023 and 2024 NSCH, please see the [full-length survey instrument](#).

What is a combined dataset, and what is its purpose?

- A combined dataset is one where two or more datasets from individual survey rounds (in this case, the 2023 and 2024 NSCH) are combined into one dataset.
- Only items that are the same across both datasets are included in the DRC-produced combined dataset.
- Combining multiple years of data into one dataset gives more opportunities to conduct analyses using variables with small sample sizes or low prevalence for certain response options, as well as the ability to conduct more complex crosstabs among variables. This is particularly true for users who want to analyze data at the state level.
- The combined dataset includes the adjusted weight variable "fwc_2324" which accounts for combining two years of data. The estimates obtained from this combined dataset apply to the average annual or midpoint population size across 2023 and 2024.

- Information on how to combine the datasets and adjust the survey weights is available in the [Methodology Reports](#) and [Guide to Multi-Year Analysis](#) provided by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Are data from the NSCH available to the public?

- The Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health (DRC) website (www.childhealthdata.org) provides quick, easy, hands-on access to 2023 and 2024 NSCH survey data. The DRC's [Interactive Data Query](#) allows users to instantly access the data and compare national and state-level findings among children of different ages, racial/ethnic backgrounds, income levels, health status, and many more subgroups.
- Cleaned and labeled 2023-2024 NSCH datasets in SAS, Stata, and SPSS formats with accompanying codebooks will also be publicly available from the DRC at no cost. These datasets include key indicators, available at the national and state level, created by DRC staff. You can request the datasets on the DRC website under "[Request a Dataset](#)." For more information, contact info@cahmi.org.
- You can also access the public use datasets in SAS and Stata via the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).

Data alert regarding the NSCH weighting and imputation changes

- In 2022, HRSA MCHB and the Census Bureau revised imputation and weighting by race and ethnicity for the NSCH. The updated weights have not been applied to any of the estimates contained in the [2016-2021 archived data query](#). The estimates from this archived data query are not comparable to estimates produced using datasets with the updated weights available on the Census Bureau's website. These estimates also should not be directly compared with estimates on the [DRC's data query for 2021-2022, 2022 and beyond years of NSCH](#) which have been estimated using the updated weights.
- Some of the [CAHMI's DRC datasets](#) have yet to be updated with new weights. The indicators and measures displayed on the DRC's interactive data from 2016-2021 NSCH can be recreated with updated weights by applying the codes available in the [DRC codebooks](#) to the updated public use files provided on the [U.S. Census Bureau's website](#). Please read the [weighting revisions technical document](#) for more information.

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