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Title Slide: Introduction to the NHES

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This module introduces users to the National Household Education Surveys Program, or NHES for short. It provides users with basic information about the study's target populations, sample and study design, and data collection years, topics, and methods. The module also provides a broad overview of the topics for which data are available for analysis to help answer the fundamental question, "Are NHES data for me?" The subsequent NHES training modules contained within this system will discuss some of these topics in greater detail and address questions about how to effectively use the dataset for your analytic purposes.

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The NHES is a set of nationally representative, repeating cross-sectional surveys that collect descriptive data directly from households at a single point in time. The NHES was developed by the National Center for Education Statistics, or NCES, to complement its school-based and institutional surveys.

The NHES has been used to collect data on populations from newborns to retirees – populations that are difficult to study using institution-based collections due to a lack of exhaustive lists from which sampling frames could be devised. The household-based design of NHES allows NCES to collect information on children in different types of care and education arrangements and adults who participate in a multitude of learning activities across their lifespans. Accordingly, NHES includes nationally representative samples of children from birth through grade 12, as well as adults.

The NHES unit of analysis is the child or the adult, depending on the survey topic assigned. Each NHES administration includes a Screener survey and two or three Topical surveys that collect detailed information on a particular education topic, such as school readiness. The specific age groups included in the Topical surveys vary depending on the specific survey. Only one member of each eligible household is selected for a Topical survey.

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NHES uses a two-stage, stratified sample design. Households are sampled in the first stage, and then a person within the household is sampled in the second stage.

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The NHES data collection occurs in two parts. In the first part, the Screener survey is administered to all sampled households and consists of a short set of questions designed to list household members and collect basic demographic information about

each member. This information is used to determine if anyone in the household is eligible for the second part of the survey.

The second part of the survey is an in-depth Topical survey that focuses on the education experiences of one specific household member. The specific education topic of the survey varies by year. There are generally two or three Topical surveys focused on different age groups in each year that the NHES is administered. For example, the NHES:2012 included one Topical survey that focused on young children who were not yet enrolled in school and one Topical survey focused on children in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Topical surveys about a specific child are completed by the focal child's parent or guardian. Topical surveys about adult education are completed by the focal adult.

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The household-based design of the NHES allows NCES to gather data on a wide range of issues, such as early childhood care and education, children's readiness for school, before- and after-school activities of school-age children, adult education, and parents' involvement in education, school choice, and homeschooling. These topics are addressed through a series of Topical surveys.

The table shown lists the different topics that have been the focus of NHES surveys, and the years in which the Topical surveys were administered. Each Topical survey instrument can be accessed by clicking on the corresponding underlined screen text. Many of the Topical surveys are repeated on a rotating basis, while others are one-time-only collections. This allows the use of NHES data for the analysis of trends over time.

In a given year, the NHES will typically include multiple Topical surveys that focus on different age groups.

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From 1991 through 2007, the NHES was conducted by telephone interviewers using list-assisted random-digit-dialing, or RDD, and computer assisted telephone interviewing, or CATI, methodologies. Data were collected between January and June approximately every other year during this period. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish.

Following the standard schedule, the next NHES would have been conducted in 2009. However, after the 2007 data collection, the NHES underwent a methodological redesign. This redesign resulted in a five-year gap in data collection between 2007 and 2012.

In 2012, and for future planned collections, the NHES was and will be conducted by mail using Address-Based Sampling, or ABS. Address-based sampling entails sampling from a frame, or list, of addresses that has near-universal coverage of households. In the United States, this frame is available from the U.S. Post Office Address Management System. The advantage of ABS is that it provides greater coverage than

landline random digit dialing (RDD), because it compensates for households with only cell phones, as well as those without telephones.

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One motivation for the NHES redesign was declining response rates to the telephone survey. Response rates to the Screener fell from approximately 80 percent in 1991 to 53 percent in 2007.

A second motivation for the redesign was concern about population coverage using a landline telephone frame when the percentage of households with only cell-phones was increasing.

The redesign process included a variety of activities, such as expert panel meetings with survey methodologists; a feasibility pilot test to determine the viability of the change from RDD to ABS sampling; cognitive interviews, which used concurrent probing techniques to explore knowledge, recall, and comprehension of targeted items in the redesigned survey questionnaires and materials; and, a full-scale field test of the new methodology and instruments.

As a result of the redesign, the NHES was converted from a telephone survey to a mail survey that collects data using self-administered paper questionnaires.

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In 2012, the first full-scale data collection using the redesigned NHES methodology was conducted. The NHES:2012 included a nationally representative address-based sample of approximately 160,000 households. The data were collected between January and August. As in previous administrations, the instruments could be completed in either English or Spanish. The administration included a screener and two Topical surveys: the Early Childhood Program Participation Survey, or *E-C-P-P*, and the Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey, or *P-F-I*.

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The two NHES:2012 Topical surveys have different target populations. The ECPP target population includes children from birth to age 6 who are not yet enrolled in kindergarten. The PFI target population includes children age 20 or younger who are enrolled in public or private school for grades K through 12 or homeschooled for these grades. Information provided at the Screener stage was used to determine whether any household members were eligible for a Topical survey and to sample children for Topical follow-up.

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The ECPP survey includes questions about nonparental child care arrangements. Items ask about the type of child care children participate in, the amount of time children spend in care, and characteristics of the care arrangement. Parents are asked how

difficult it was to find child care and to rate the importance of different factors when choosing child care. Parents are also asked about their children's early literacy and numeracy skills, such as the child's ability to recognize letters of the alphabet and how high the child can count.

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For students enrolled in public or private school for kindergarten through 12th grade, the PFI survey includes questions about parents' participation in school activities, events, and meetings; school practices to involve families, parents' reports about their child's school performance, and parental involvement in homework.

For students who are homeschooled for kindergarten through 12th grade, the PFI survey includes questions about sources of curriculum used in homeschooling, the use of distance learning by homeschooled students, and parents' reasons for homeschooling their child.

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In addition to the content described earlier that is specific to each Topical survey, all NHES child Topical surveys include common demographic information.

Both the ECPP and PFI surveys collect information about child characteristics, including the child's race/ethnicity, language, country of origin, and the child's general health and disability status.

Both Topical surveys also collect background information about the child's parents or guardians such as age, race/ethnicity, language, country of origin, marital status, educational attainment, and employment status.

Finally, both Topical surveys also collect information on household characteristics such as home ownership, household income, and receipt of public assistance.

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The NHES data provide a snapshot of the target populations each time the surveys are administered. Data from the NHES can <u>also</u> be used in combination with other NCES surveys for research. The design of the NHES instruments is coordinated with other NCES surveys, particularly those focused on early childhood and elementary school. There is some overlap with the questions on the NHES Topical surveys and questions in the birth and kindergarten cohorts of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, or ECLS. Therefore the NHES can be a valuable resource to use in conjunction with NCES longitudinal studies of children's development. The DLDT modules for ECLS-B and ECLS-K can be accessed by clicking on the corresponding underlined screen text.

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Let's take a look at one example of how analysts can consider the NHES data in conjunction with data from the ECLS-K.

This figure shows the percent of first-time kindergarteners from the 1998-99 school year with each of four risk factors: those who live in a single-parent family, those whose mother has less than a high school education, those whose family has received welfare or food stamps, and those whose parents' primary language is not English.

Since ECLS-K is longitudinal, it cannot tell us how many children in the current population will be entering kindergarten with these same risk factors or how this trend has changed over time. This is where NHES comes in. Items from the 'Child's Family' and 'Your Household' sections of the 2012 NHES Early Childhood Program Participation Survey such as: "Is there a second parent or guardian living in this household?", "What is the highest grade or level of school that this parent or guardian completed?", "In the past 12 months, did your family ever receive benefits from any of the following programs?", and "What was the first language this parent or guardian learned to speak?" can help analysts examine these risk factors across different years.

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As just highlighted, a primary use of NHES data is in the analysis of trends over time. The rotating cross-sectional design of the NHES generates repeated measures of the same topic in different years, which allows for trend analysis. Some questions have been repeated in as many as seven administrations of the NHES.

Data users interested in using the NHES for trend analysis that includes NHES:2012 data will need to take into consideration the change in data collection mode that occurred between 2007 and 2012, as well as the gap in time between 2012 and prior data collections.

Additional concerns for conducting trend analyses using the NHES data are presented in the module titled "Considerations for Analysis of NHES Data".

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This module has provided you with an introduction to the NHES and described the study's design, target populations, sample design, and the years in which data were collected. This module has also highlighted topics for which data are available for analyses; and provided an overview of the use of NHES data for trend analysis and some of the challenges associated with trend analysis.

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Additionally, important resources that have been provided throughout the module summarized here along with the module's objectives for your reference.

The subsequent NHES training modules discuss these topics in greater detail and address questions about how to effectively use the NHES data for your analytic purposes.

You may now proceed to the next module in the series, or click the exit button to return to the landing page.