

## About the Working Group

### How the Working Group Came to Be

The National Childrens Study was created in 2000 when President Clinton signed the Childrens Health Act of 2000 into law. The National Childrens Study received modest funding from Congress in the first half of this decade, but was not fully-funded until Fiscal Year 2007, when it was awarded \$69 million in the 2007 Continuing Resolution.

A long-time advocate for childrens health, Rep. Doris Matsui took an early interest in seeing the National Childrens Study receive full funding. She worked with her colleagues in Congress to bring full funding of the Study to fruition.

She authored a letter and recruited 38 cosigners that was delivered to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees requesting \$69 million for the Study in Fiscal Year 2007.

Rep. Matsui, along with 42 cosigners, sent a letter to President Bush requesting strong funding for the National Childrens Study in his budget request for Fiscal Year 2008.

Finally, Rep. Matsui sent a funding request letter to the House Appropriations Committee, requesting \$110.9 million for the Study in Fiscal Year 2008. The National Childrens Study has been awarded this funding in the 2008 Labor, Health, and Human Services Appropriations bill.

However, Reps. Doris Matsui and Christopher Smith recognized that the work of maintaining Congressional support of the Study did not end there. Because of the scope of the Study and its longitudinal nature, the Study must retain the support of Members of Congress and the general public

Together, Reps. Matsui and Smith launched the Congressional Childrens Study Working Group to ensure that the National Childrens Study will receive the attention and funding it deserves.

### About the National Childrens Study

In 1997, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13045 that established a Task Force on Environmental Health and Safety Risks to Children. The Task Force was charged with recommending strategies for protecting childrens health and safety. Three years later, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Childrens Health Act of 2000, which was signed into law in October of that year and with President Clintons signature, the National Childrens Study was born.

The National Childrens Study will examine the effects of environmental influences on the health and development of more than 100,000 children across the United States, following them from before birth until age 21. The goal of the study is to improve the health and well-being of children.

The study defines environment broadly and will take a number of issues into account, including:

- Natural and man-made environment factors
- Biological and chemical factors
- Physical surroundings
- Social factors
- Behavioral influences and outcomes
- Genetics
- Cultural and family influences and differences
- Geographic locations

Researchers will analyze how these elements interact with each other and what helpful and/or harmful effects they might have on children's health. By studying children through their different phases of growth and development, researchers will be better able to understand the role of these factors on health and disease. Findings from the study will be made available as soon as possible as the research progresses.

The study will also allow scientists to find the differences that exist between groups of people, in terms of their health, health care access, disease occurrence, and other issues, so that these differences or disparities can be addressed.

The National Children's Study will be one of the richest information resources available for answering questions related to children's health and development and will form the basis of child health guidance, interventions, and policy for generations to come. It is anticipated that the preliminary results from the first years of the study will be available in 2009-2010.

Fully funded for the first time in Fiscal Year 2007, the National Children's Study has now begun in earnest. With the establishment of Study Centers across the nation, enrollment has begun on a widespread basis.

Link to the NCS site:

<http://www.nationalchildrensstudy.gov/>

Link to join the Study Assembly and get e-mail updates from the NCS:

[http://www.nationalchildrensstudy.gov/get\\_involved/stay\\_informed/join/index.cfm](http://www.nationalchildrensstudy.gov/get_involved/stay_informed/join/index.cfm)

Link to become a participant in the NCS:

[http://www.nationalchildrensstudy.gov/get\\_involved/participant/](http://www.nationalchildrensstudy.gov/get_involved/participant/)

