



# Introducing NLTS2

Fall 2001



The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) is part of a valuable portfolio of congressionally mandated studies sponsored by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U.S. Department of Education. NLTS2 will provide a rich description of the characteristics, experiences, and achievements of youth with disabilities who are served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and will identify factors that contribute to positive outcomes for youth.

NLTS2 involves a nationally representative sample of almost 12,000 students who were 13 to 16 years old and receiving special education in December 2000. The study, being conducted by SRI International, will follow them until 2010 in an effort to understand their educational, vocational, social, and personal experiences as they transition from adolescence to early adulthood. NLTS2 focuses on factors such as high school coursework and placement, academic performance, extracurricular activities, postsecondary education and training, adult services, employment, independent living, and community participation. NLTS2 will be of great value to the U.S. Congress; federal, state, and local education agencies; parents and youth; educators; researchers; and advocacy groups as they shape policy and practice for young people with disabilities over the next decade and more.

## Data Collection Activities

NLTS2 information will represent the important perspectives of parents, youth, and school staff who serve students with disabilities, and will document student coursework and performance. All information gathered by NLTS2 is confidential. It will not be shared with anyone in any way that identifies individual students, parents or guardians, teachers, schools, or school districts.

**Parent and Youth Interviews and Surveys.** Parents or guardians will be interviewed by telephone about the experiences of their students and households. Youth who are able to complete a telephone interview also will be interviewed, beginning in 2003. Parents and youth who cannot be interviewed by telephone will be sent a questionnaire by mail. Information will be gathered from parents and youth every 2 years until 2009.

**School Data Collection.** For each NLTS2 student, a teacher and/or another school staff member who knows the student's school program will be asked to complete a mailed questionnaire. These surveys will take place in the spring of 2002 and 2004 for all youth who are still in school at the time.

- The **School Program Survey** will be completed by the person who knows each student's school program best to provide information on the student's overall school program, special education and vocational courses, and performance in school.

- The **General Education Teacher Survey** will collect information from the teacher about the experiences and performance in class of each student who takes general education academic courses. One focus of the survey will be students' participation and progress in general education classes.

•The **School Characteristics Survey** will provide descriptions of the student body and school policies and resources in the schools students attend.

**Direct Assessments.** An assessment of students' core academic skills (vocabulary, reading comprehension, mathematics), content knowledge in science and social studies, self-concept, and self-determination skills, and an interview about their views of school will be conducted by a trained professional. These in-person assessments will take about an hour and will be given only once for each student, in the spring of either 2002 or 2004, when he or she is between 16 and 18 years old. The assessment will be done at school or at home at a time that is convenient for the student and family. If the form or content of this assessment is not appropriate for a student, accommodations will be made, or an alternate assessment will be given.

**Transcripts.** High school transcripts will be collected to describe the courses students take and how they do in school. Transcripts will be collected in 2002 and 2004 for all students who are still in school and again for each student in the year he or she leaves school, so that a complete record of high school courses and performance is available. If a student's special education program is not recorded on a transcript, an alternative form for describing the content of instruction will be used.

**NLTS2 welcomes feedback !**

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Visit NLTS2 on the Web:

[www.nlts2.org](http://www.nlts2.org)



*NLTS2 is conducted by SRI International, 333 Ravenswood Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025*

## The Sample

The NLTS2 sample is designed so that information from the study will represent youth with disabilities nationally as a group, youth in each of the 12 federal special education disability categories, and youth in each of the five single-year age groups in the study.

Almost 12,000 students, representing all special education disability categories, were selected from more than 500 school districts and state-supported special schools throughout the United States. School districts were chosen, representing all geographic regions and variation in district enrollment and wealth. State-supported special schools for the deaf and blind also were invited to participate. In all, 476 school districts and 38 special schools were willing to be part of the study.

Then, students were selected from rosters of all students receiving special education services who were 13 to 16 years old, in at least 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and receiving special education as of December 1, 2000. Students were selected randomly from each disability category so that approximately 1,000 students are in the sample in most categories (fewer are in the low-incidence categories of traumatic brain injury and deaf/blindness). This number of students will ensure that an adequate number of youth will remain for analyses in the later years of the study.

## Looking Ahead

Through quarterly topical updates, NLTS2 will keep parents, youth, educators, policy-makers, and researchers informed of study activities and findings. NLTS2 has tremendous potential for making a difference in the lives of youth with disabilities in transition; with your support and help, it will.