

# Identifying Transition-Age Youth With Disabilities Using Existing Surveys

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(from Honeycutt and Wittenburg forthcoming)

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**MATHEMATICA**  
Policy Research

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Center for  
**STUDYING**  
**DISABILITY POLICY**



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# Acknowledgments

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# Overview

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- **Content from existing surveys**
- **Framework to produce disability prevalence estimates for youth**
- **Present selected statistics**
- **Implications for future research**

# Findings in Brief

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- **Starting point for framing disability statistics for youth**
- **Youth with disabilities differ from adults with disabilities**
- **Substantial variation in disability prevalence across surveys, even for conceptually similar concepts**
  - Variation in context, number of questions, severity
  - Variation in youth-specific questions available

# Longitudinal Surveys

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Survey	Advantages	Limitations
MEPS	Detailed health and health access variables	Limited information in areas other than health and employment
NLSY97	Detailed annual data following cohort of 12- to 16-year-olds	Disability and health questions limited to specific years
PSID	Longitudinal data following youth into adulthood	Small sample and complicated data structure
SIPP	Panel data with detailed disability questions	Detailed disability questions only asked in some topical modules

# Cross Sectional Surveys

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Survey	Advantages	Limitations
ACS	Large sample; state-level estimates	Limited disability questions; limited information in areas other than employment and education
CPS	Large sample; official source for employment statistics for working-age adults with disabilities	Limited disability questions; disability measures only included work limitations before June 2008
NHANES	Detailed personal health information	Relatively small sample; Limited information on areas other than employment and health
NHIS	Detailed health and health access variables; State-level estimates	Limited employment and human capital measures
NSCH	Official source of special health care needs; State-level estimates	Limited to youth ages 17 and under;

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# Special Population Surveys

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Survey	Advantages	Limitations
NLTS2	Large longitudinal sample of special education students	No comparisons to youth without disabilities
NSCF	Large sample of SSI recipients	No comparisons to youths without disabilities; limited to data from 2001 and 2002.
NS- CSHCN	Large sample population; State-level estimates; Detailed health access variables	Limited to youth ages 17 and under; no comparisons to youth without disabilities; and no employment or education variables

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# Challenges: Multiple Disability Definitions and Surveys

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- **No consistent disability definitions for youth across surveys**
  - No official statistics
- **Several disability measures exist**
  - Availability of measures varies by survey



# Framework for Adult Definitions Is a Starting Point

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- **Weathers (2009) framework for adults**
  - Based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) framework
- **Disability is a function of health, environment, and personal factors**
- **Strength is in contrasting different disability definitions**

# Additional Components of Disability Definitions for Youth

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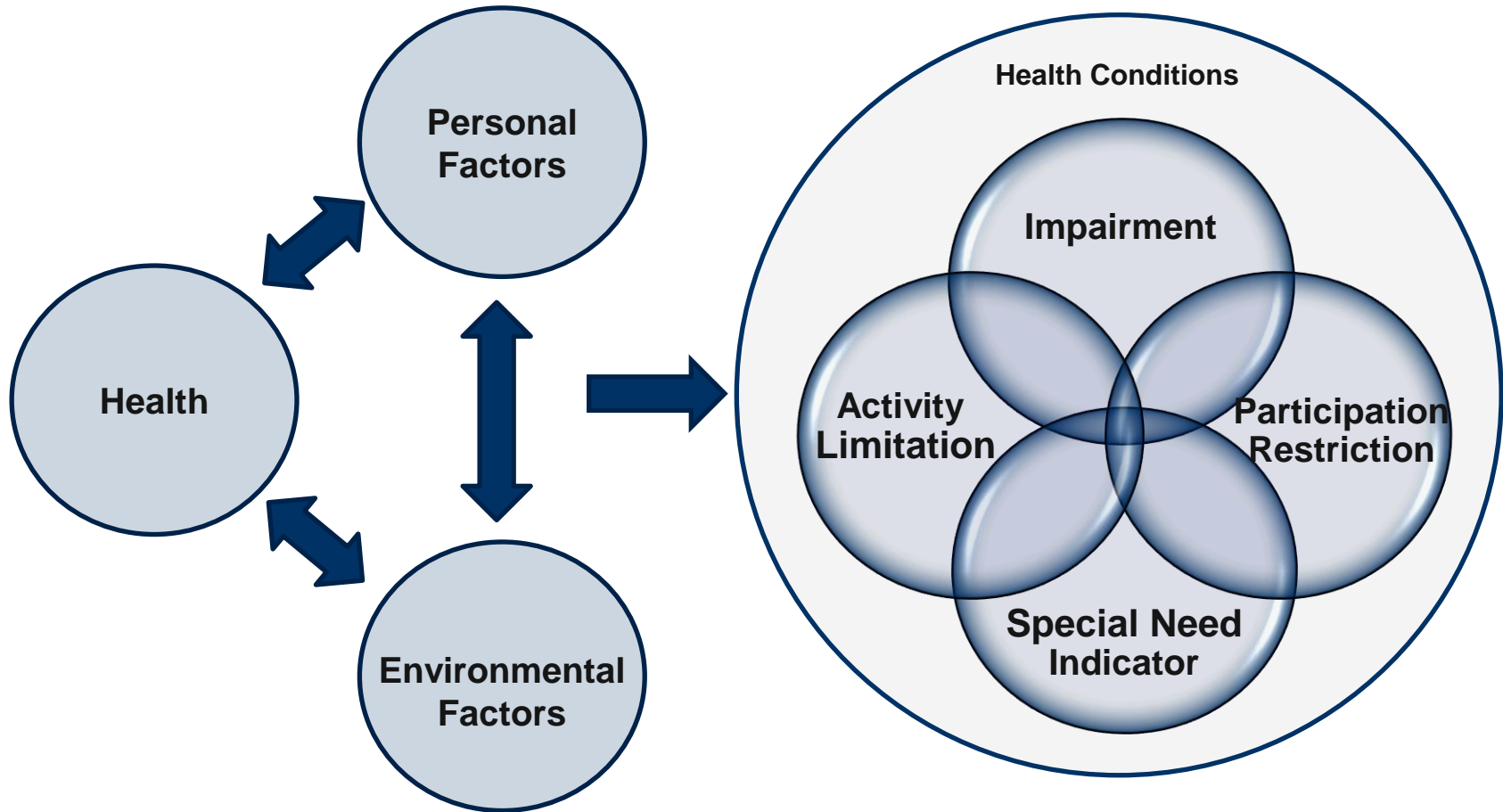
<b>Adult Disability Concept</b>	<b>Additional Youth Components</b>
<b>Impairments</b>	Youth-specific conditions (ADHD, learning disabilities)
<b>Activity Limitations</b>	No change
<b>Participation Limitations</b>	Include school-based measures  Special need indicators include special education, SSDI/SSI receipt, and children with special health needs (CSHN)

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# Youth Statistics Disability Framework

Factors That Influence Disability

Disability Concepts Measured in Surveys



# Examples of Prevalence Estimates from Selected Surveys

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- **American Community Survey (ACS)**
- **Current Population Survey (CPS)**
- **National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97)**
- **Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)**
- **National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH)**

# Applications

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- **Prevalence from national surveys**
- **Impairment severity**
- **Group quarters**
- **State prevalence**

# Disability Prevalence Across Four Surveys

	ACS, 2009	CPS, 2009– 2010	SIPP, 2005	NLSY97, 2002
Age Range	16–24	16–24	16–24	17–22
<b>Impairment (%)</b>				
Sensory	1.6	0.9	1.8	10.6
Physical	1.1	0.7	3.5	12.6
Mental	3.9	2.5	5.3	5.3
<b>Activity Limitation (%)</b>	0.8	0.5	0.6	No data
<b>Participation Limitation (%)</b>				
Functional limitation	2.0	1.2	1.4	3.1
Work limitation	No data	2.7	5.8	No data
School limitation	No data	No data	8.0	No data
<b>Special Need Indicator (%)</b>				
Special education	No data	No data	9.7	No data
Supplemental Security Income	0.9	1.0	2.2	0.5
Social Security Disability Income	1.1	0.6	0.6	No data
<b>Any Disability (%)</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>24.0</b>

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# Explanations for Prevalence Variations

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- **ACS and CPS have similar prevalence because they use similar questions**
- **SIPP has more detailed measures than ACS/CPS, but its higher prevalence is also driven by school limitations**
- **High prevalence in NLSY97 due to broad impairment measures**
- **School work and special education prevalence is higher than work limitation prevalence**

# Impairment Severity Has Sizeable Effect on Prevalence

NSCH, 2007 16- and 17-year-olds

	Mild, Moderate, or Severe Impairment	Moderate or Severe Impairment	Severe Impairment
Impairment (%)			
Sensory	5.7	3.0	1.3
Physical	14.2	5.6	1.5
Mental (specific conditions)	18.5	9.4	2.7
Mental (problem lasting 12 months or longer)	7.0	7.0	7.0
Activity Limitation (%)	4.2	4.2	4.2
Participation Limitation (%)			
School limitation	3.6	3.6	3.6
Organized activities limitation	4.9	4.9	4.9
Make friends limitation	2.9	2.9	2.9
<b>Any Disability (%)</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>13.2</b>

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# Disability Prevalence by Residence

ACS, 2009, 16- to 24-year-olds

	Percentage of U.S. Population Within Residence Type	Disability Prevalence (%)
All Residence Types	100.0	6.3
Household	91.5	6.1
Noninstitutional Group Quarters	7.2	5.7
Institutional Group Quarters	1.3	24.0

- **Few youth reside in group quarters**
- **High proportion of youth in institutional group quarters has a disability**

# Large Variations in State Prevalence

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- **CPS “any disability definition”**
  - Impairment and program participation
- **Rates vary for youth age 16 to 24:**
  - West Virginia: 9%
  - Nevada: below 4%
- **Comparison with adults**
  - Lower rates
  - Consistent with large variations in state statistics

# Summary

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- **Present a starting point for framing statistics for youth with disabilities**
- **Many existing surveys can be used to identify transition-age youth with disabilities**
  - **But those surveys vary in the extent to which they can identify different groups of youth with disabilities**
- **Prevalence varies across surveys (from 5 to 36 percent)**
- **Consider limitations of surveys and definitions when interpreting results for youth with disabilities**

# Implications for Framework

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- **Shows contrast of youth concepts not covered in adult disability definitions**
  - E.g., Impairment, school work, special health care needs and special education
- **Illustrates how questions and concepts influence prevalence rates across surveys**
- **Provides a lens for viewing research on youth with disabilities, which is generally limited outside special use surveys**

# Contact Information

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# Appendix: Surveys Vary in Extent Youth Framework Can Be Applied

	ACS	CPS	NSCH	NLSY97	SIPP
<b>Impairment</b>					
Sensory	Yes (2)	Yes (2)	Yes (3)	Yes (1)	Yes (3)
Physical	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (5)	Yes (10)	Yes (10)
Mental	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (9)	Yes (1)	Yes (5)
Detailed impairments	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Activity Limitation</b>					
	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	No	Yes (6)
<b>Participation Limitation</b>					
Functional limitation	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	No	Yes (4)	Yes (5)
Work limitation	No	Yes (2)	No	Yes (1)	Yes (2)
School limitation	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Special Need Indicator</b>					
CSHN screener questions	No	No	Yes	No	No
Special education	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
SSI/ SSDI	Yes	Yes	No	Yes/No	Yes