

4. CONSULTATION

The survey instrument and methods were developed by the Epidemiology and Surveillance Branch (now the Centre for Epidemiology and Research), NSW Department of Health, in consultation with a Child Health Survey Technical Expert Group (CHSTEG), the NSW area health services, relevant branches of the NSW Department of Health, the NSW Health Survey Program Steering Committee (HSPSC), and a range of topic area consultants. The process was consistent with that described in a report on the overview and methods of the NSW Health Survey Program 1996–2000.⁵

Child Health Survey Technical Expert Group

The Child Health Survey Technical Expert Group (CHSTEG) was established in December 1999 as an expert group to advise on technical aspects of measuring and reporting on child health and wellbeing, in relation to the development of the *New South Wales Child Health Survey*. The CHSTEG consisted of community paediatricians; public health professionals; child and family health nurses; child health policy analysts; child mental health professionals; health promotion professionals; epidemiologists; and representatives of the NSW Commission for Children and Young People, NSW Department of Community Services, and the Association for Welfare of Child Health.

The CHSTEG oversaw the technical development of the *New South Wales Child Health Survey*, by providing advice on:

- the objectives and content of the survey in the areas of breastfeeding, food intake, food security, folate, sleeping position, environmental tobacco smoke, smoking in pregnancy, emotional and behavioural problems, oral health, immunisation, physical activity, asthma, disability, sun exposure, injury, general health

status, childcare and preschool, family functioning, family support, home visiting, and social capital;

- suitable methods for data collection, including development of question modules for proposed topic areas, the use of proxy respondents, ways to optimise response rates, and ways of addressing ethical considerations;
- the validity, quality, relevance and timeliness of the data collected;
- appropriate methods to analyse the data;
- issues related to the surveillance of disadvantaged children in NSW.

Topic area consultation

Topic area experts were consulted for the content areas of: breastfeeding, nutrition (including maternal folate), infant sleeping position, maternal smoking in pregnancy, smoking in the home, mental health status, dental health, immunisation, physical activity, emotional health, child behavioural issues, family functioning and support, asthma, disability, home visiting (health services received in the home), sun exposure, health status, injury, social capital, and attendance at child care and preschool. Topic area experts included university lecturers and researchers around the state, from other states, and overseas; state government departments; the NSW Department of Health; and NSW area health service staff with experience and knowledge of specific child health issues.

Area health service contacts

Consultation with area health services occurred through an identified contact person within each of the 17 area health services in NSW. All draft survey documents were sent to this contact person for comments and feedback. This feedback was considered by the CHSTEG, in deciding the content areas and questions for the final survey.