

National Children's Study Recruitment Underway

BY MARY ELLEN SCHNEIDER

Researchers in North Carolina and New York are beginning to recruit volunteers as part of a huge federal study that will examine the effects of genes and environment on children's development.

The researchers plan to track 100,000 women through pregnancy and then follow their children through age 21 years as part of the National Children's Study. In addition to tracking their development, they will collect biological and environmental samples from participants; aiming to use the information to identify environmental and genetic factors that

contribute to conditions such as autism, cerebral palsy, learning disabilities, birth defects, diabetes, asthma, and obesity.

Women are being recruited and enrolled from areas of the country that are representative of the diversity of U.S. children. Recruitment began in mid-January in the borough of Queens, N.Y., and in Duplin County, N.C. In April, five other centers will begin recruiting. Ultimately, the study is expected to recruit participants from 105 locations across the country.

The National Children's Study was authorized by Congress in the Children's Health Act of 2000 and has been developed by the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

"Findings from the study will ultimately benefit all Americans by providing researchers, health care providers, and public health officials with informa-

tion from which to develop prevention strategies, health and safety guidelines, and possibly new treatments for disease," Dr. Peter Scheidt, director of the National Children's Study, said during a press briefing on the study. ■

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