



Ined
Inserm
EFS
InVS
Insee
DGS
DGPR
Drees
Cnaf

Protocol of the Elfe survey at two months

1	Study population	3
2	Survey waves and number of families to be contacted	3
3	Survey implementation.....	3
3.1	Protocol for contacting the parents.....	4
3.2	Protocol for the type of questionnaire to be used.....	4
3.2.1	Specific cases relative to choice of questionnaire type.....	6
3.2.2	Specific cases relative to modules shared between reference parent and cohabiting parent	6
4	Creation of a reference parent datafile from the variables of the “mother” and “father” questionnaires.....	6
4.1.1	Interlinked variables	7
5	Summary of participation levels.....	8
6	Sources and references of questions relating to the various modules	9

The survey at two months is the first follow-up stage after the inclusion of the Elfe children in maternity units. It was conducted very soon after the initial survey in maternity units for several reasons: to promote parental involvement via renewed contact shortly after the birth; to take advantage of the parents' availability, given that many were still on maternity or paternity leave at the time of the survey; and last, to minimize recall bias by asking questions about the pregnancy when the mother still had a clear memory of it.

The main aims of this survey at two months were to determine the sociodemographic and housing characteristics of the children's families and to obtain initial information on the parents and children, and on the children's diet and care arrangements.

The survey at two months was approved by the CCTIRS and authorized by the French data protection authority (CNIL) (authorization no. 910504). Its public interest and statistical quality were certified by the CNIS certification committee (*comité du label*) (visa 2011X716AU).

1 Study population

All the families¹ where the mother had given her consent for the follow-up of her child were eligible to take part in the survey at two months and had to be contacted.

Both parents were interviewed, whether they lived together with the child or were separated.

2 Survey waves and number of families to be contacted

Four survey waves corresponding to the four waves of the maternity unit survey took place shortly after the children reached the age of two months. The same protocol was applied for each one.

- Wave 1: 30 May to 16 July 2011
2,734 families to be contacted
- Wave 2: 29 August to 2011 to 22 October 2011
4,512 families to be contacted
- Wave 3: 28 November 2011 to 24 January 2012
5,059 families to be contacted
- Wave 4: 30 January 2012 to 27 March 2012
5,545 families to be contacted

Total survey duration: 10 months

Number of families to be contacted: 17,850

3 Survey implementation

Following a call for tenders in 2010, the GFK polling company was selected to conduct the surveys at two months.² Its remit was to conduct a phone survey (CATI) on each of the children's parents based on two main questionnaire categories: a "mother's" questionnaire and a so-called "father's" questionnaire.³

¹ With the exception of those who had informed the project team in the meantime that they did not wish to participate.

² GFK was also selected under the same call for tenders for the surveys at one year and at two years.

³ The father's questionnaire is "so-called" as the mother's current partner was also interviewed if he lived with the mother and child.

3.1 Protocol for contacting the parents

An initial letter announcing the survey was sent to the families by the Elfe team around two weeks before the survey began (letter approved by the Comité du Label de la Statistique Publique).

Initial contact with the families was to be made through the mother who, except in a few cases (see below), was also interviewed first.

After checking the phone numbers corresponding to the addresses recorded during the survey in maternity units,⁴ the Elfe IT department transmitted to GFK the full contact details of all the interviewable families in the database: phone numbers (landline and mobile), email addresses, postal addresses of parents and contact persons.

Last, three days before the start of the survey, all the mothers for whom Elfe had an email address received an email informing them that they would shortly be contacted by an interviewer.

During the survey wave, in cases where the father, mother or contact person could not be reached, GFK implemented specific procedures to recover addresses or telephone numbers:

- Manual search to obtain the mother's number when the number called to contact her was a Fax/Modem, an answerphone or an invalid number
- Calls to father's or contact person's numbers to obtain the mother's number
- Sending of additional email messages
- For mothers with an email address but for whom a new number was not found through a manual search, sending of an email to ask the mother for her new phone number
- Letter sent by mail to mothers with no email address or valid phone number.
- Calls to contact person's number
- Re-use of refusals/dropouts

3.2 Protocol for the type of questionnaire to be used

The use of CATI programming means that the questionnaire administered to the mother is determined at the time of contact by means of questions to determine the mother's family situation and the child's living arrangements.

The mother's questionnaire is thus referred to as:

- **“mother as reference”**: if the child lives with her (all the time or under a shared custody arrangement).
This is the most detailed questionnaire. It includes practically all questions about the child and the household where the child lives.
- **“non-cohabiting mother”**: if the child lives exclusively with the father
This questionnaire obtains detailed information on the household of the non-custodial mother but includes few questions about the child since he/she lives with the father.

⁴Quality controls (RNVB) were performed to verify the computer-assisted entry of addresses recorded during the survey in maternity units before the phone numbers were validated via the telephone directory of a Poste.

- **“mother as reference, child in care”**: if the child lives with neither the mother nor the father. This questionnaire is very similar to that of the “non-cohabiting mother” but includes specific questions on the child’s placement in care.

At the end of the interview with the mother, **if the father’s contact details are available**, the interviewer indicates that he will contact the father in the next few days.⁵ If the mother is happy for the father to be contacted (or does not indicate that he was unwilling to take part), the CATI program defines the type of questionnaire to be administered to the father using the same criteria as those used to determine the questionnaire administered to the mother.

This questionnaire could be referred to as:

- **“father as reference”**: the mother answers the “non-cohabiting mother” questionnaire (child living with father only).

This questionnaire is practically identical to the “mother as reference” questionnaire.

- **“non-cohabiting father”**: the mother answers the “mother as reference” questionnaire and the child lives with her, exclusively or under shared custody.

This questionnaire includes detailed questions to characterize the household of the father, who does not have exclusive custody of the child, but few questions on the child since he/she lives mainly with the mother.⁶

- **“cohabiting father”**: the mother answers a “mother as reference” questionnaire and the child lives with both mother and father.

This questionnaire, which does not include questions to characterize the household (already reported by the mother) includes:

- specific questions concerning the father himself (his health for example),
- questions on his relationship with the child,
- questions already asked in the “mother as reference” questionnaire, but for which both partners need to give an answer.

In addition, certain lengthy modules are completed partly by the mother as reference and partly by the cohabiting father (see below).

- **“cohabiting father, child in care”**: the mother answers the questionnaire “mother as reference, child in care”.

This questionnaire is very similar to the “cohabiting father” questionnaire, but obviously does not include questions about the father-child relationship.

- **“non-cohabiting father, child in care”**: the mother answers the questionnaire “mother as reference, child in care” and does not live with the father.

This questionnaire is very similar to the “non-cohabiting father” questionnaire, but obviously does not include questions about the father-child relationship.

⁵ It was not possible to administer a mother’s and father’s questionnaire successively on the same day as some of the answers given by the mother were used as filters in the father’s questionnaire to avoid asking duplicate questions. These answers were identified at the end of each day by GFK to prepare the father’s questionnaire for the following day.

⁶ It is true that in cases of alternating custody, we cannot be certain that the child lives mainly with the mother. In this case, questioning the father as if he did not live with the child follows the same logic as that used to choose the mother as reference parent in situations where the child lives with both parents: we consider that the mother is generally better able to answer certain questions about the child (health, diet). Moreover, in light of the results of the pilot tests, there was every reason to believe that mothers would participate more frequently than fathers, thereby justifying the decision to ask the main questions about the child to the mother.

3.2.1 Specific cases relative to choice of questionnaire type

- 1) The contacted mother may express a preference for the father to be the reference person, or cannot assume this role because of language problems, health problems or a prolonged absence, for example.

In these cases, whenever the father is available and agrees to participate, he answers a “father as reference” questionnaire. However, **for the very same reasons which prevent the mother from being the reference person, the “mother as reference” questionnaire is not administered.**

- 2) The mother does not speak/understand French sufficiently to answer the questionnaire and the father who should have been the reference is unable to participate for the same reasons.

The interview is conducted in one of the following languages: English, Arabic, Turkish, Wolof or Soninke. In such cases, the questionnaire is a reference person questionnaire (administered to the mother or father) and the questions are translated by the interviewer into the language spoken by the respondent.

- 3) The mother has a cohabiting female partner

In this case, the mother answers a “mother as reference” questionnaire and the partner answers a “cohabiting father” questionnaire.

3.2.2 Specific cases relative to modules shared between reference parent and cohabiting parent

A certain number of questions concerning modules relative to the “household” (housing, income and living conditions, educational level and occupational status of all household members) are shared between the “mother as reference” and “cohabiting father” questionnaires. In other words, answers to all questions on the theme concerned are obtained from one or other parent. Two exceptions to this sharing system – linked to non-participation of the cohabiting partner – should be noted:

- 1) The contacted cohabiting father refuses to participate or cannot be reached.

In this case, the mother is contacted again and invited to answer the questions that should have been shared between herself and the cohabiting father.

- 2) At the end of the questionnaire as reference parent, the mother states that the father should not be contacted as he does not wish to participate

In this case, she is invited to answer the questions that should have been answered by the father in the modules concerned.

However, the mother did not always agree to answer the questions as in some cases she could no longer be reached. These modules are therefore incomplete, even though the mother’s questionnaire is complete.

The variables contained in these modules are called interlinked variables as they may be found either in the cohabiting father questionnaire (when he took part) or in the mother as reference questionnaire when she agreed to answer the questions that should have been answered by the father.

4 Creation of a reference parent datafile from the variables of the “mother” and “father” questionnaires

The Pandora database in which users can choose the set of variables they require, includes the following for each child in the base:

- all the variables given by the mother (prefix M02M_) in the “mother” questionnaires database and
- all the variables given by the fathers or female partners (prefix M02P_) in the “father” questionnaires database.

whatever the type of questionnaire (reference person, cohabiting, non-cohabiting) to which the respondents replied.

Hence, to obtain the most detailed information on each child, i.e. that given by the reference parent (for each child in the base, there is a completed “mother as reference” or “father as reference” parent questionnaire), users must recover the variables in each of the two databases and concatenate the “mother as reference” and “father as reference” questionnaires (after harmonization of variable names).

However, as interlinked variables exist, this concatenation is not sufficient to fully document a certain number of modules (housing, income and living conditions, educational level and occupational status of all household members) since certain variables are sometimes given in the “mother as reference” questionnaire and sometimes in the “cohabiting father” questionnaire.

Hence, in the file resulting from concatenation, the interlinked variables are included if they were given by the “reference parent” but not if they were given in a “cohabiting father” questionnaire.

To obtain complete information concerning, for example, the dwelling where the child lives, the occupational status and educational levels of all household members, or household income, these “interlinked” variables must be recovered from the “cohabiting father” questionnaire.

4.1.1 Interlinked variables

In the “Education” block: all variables.

Hence from the variable **ETUDES** to the variable **DIPLSEC4** for all household members except the mother, i.e. all individuals with suffixes from _4 to 12 (the mother – always suffix _3 – has given the information for herself; and the ELFE child(ren) aged two months – always suffixes _1 and _2 – are not yet of school age).

In the “Main labour market situation” block: all variables.

Hence from the variable **CONGMATPAR** to the variable **RECHEMPL01** for all household members except the mother, i.e. all individuals with suffixes from _4 to _12 (the mother – always suffix _3 – has given the information for herself; and the ELFE child(ren) aged two months – always suffixes _1 and _2 – are not yet of working age).

In the “housing block: from variable **STOC** to variable **GARAG** then from the variable **LOGHT** to the variable **FQPOUC**.

In the “household income” block: from the variable **RSAL** to the variable **ACLCMGP**.

In the “Living conditions” block: from the variable **LOYER** to the variable **RENT** then from the variable **PFACT** to the variable **REPA**.

Special cases

In certain cases, the interlinked variables may have been given by both parents.

The mother is the reference and the **father** (or female partner) is cohabiting but **sometimes lives elsewhere**. In this case, the mother was asked all the questions relating to interlinked variables.⁷

⁷We assumed that the father (female partner) was less likely to participate or to be able to answer the questions asked. As the father (or mother’s female partner) was nonetheless invited to participate as cohabiting partner, when he(he) took part, he(he) may also have given answers for the interlinked variables.

5 Summary of participation levels

Wave 1:

Families to be contacted 2,737

Complete mother as reference questionnaires 2,373

Complete father as reference questionnaires 28

Total reference person questionnaires 2,401

% participation: 87.7%

Wave 2:

Families to be contacted 4,512

Complete mother as reference questionnaires 3,877

Complete father as reference questionnaires 34

Total reference person questionnaires 3,911

% participation: 86.7%

Wave 3:

Families to be contacted 5,059

Complete mother as reference questionnaires 4,381

Complete father as reference questionnaires: 22

Total reference person questionnaires 4,403

% participation: 87%

Wave 4:

Families to be contacted 5,545

Complete mother as reference questionnaires 4,807

Complete father as reference questionnaires 32

Total reference person questionnaires 4,839

% participation: 87.3%

For the data other than those reflecting the parents' opinions or practices, users must therefore choose whether the variables should be recovered from the reference parent questionnaire or the cohabiting partner questionnaire.

6 Sources and references of questions relating to the various modules

List and personal details of dwelling occupants

Drawn from surveys on resources and living conditions (Enquêtes sur les ressources et conditions de vie, SRCV), INSEE

Child in care

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Family situation

Drawn from surveys on resources and living conditions (Enquêtes sur les ressources et conditions de vie, SRCV), INSEE and

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Siblings living outside household

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Extended family

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Education

Drawn from labour force survey (Enquête Emploi en continu, EEC) INSEE

Further studies

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Main labour market situation

Drawn from labour force survey (Enquête Emploi en continu, EEC) INSEE

Housing

INSEE Housing Survey and questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Household income

Drawn from surveys on resources and living conditions (Enquêtes sur les ressources et conditions de vie, SRCV) , INSEE

Living conditions

Drawn from surveys on resources and living conditions (Enquêtes sur les ressources et conditions de vie, SRCV) , INSEE

Exposure and environment / pregnancy history

Behaviour during neonatal period: based on Brazelton's Neonatal Behavior Assessment Scale NBAS, HOME items of Caldwell and Bradley, the French language version of Q-Sort, and questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Maternity leave and intention to return to work

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Parents' union status

Drawn from surveys on resources and living conditions (Enquêtes sur les ressources et conditions de vie, SRCV) , INSEE

Child's health

Respiratory diseases: adaptation of the ISAAC questionnaires and, for younger children, the PARIS cohort questionnaires.

Accidents: adaptation of the INVS questionnaires on domestic accidents and questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Being a parent

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Organization of daily activities

the French version of the Generations and Gender Survey (ERFI, INED)

Relationship between parents

National survey on violence against women in France, Paris 1 University

Child's diet since birth

The dietary module was created specifically for Elfe by adopting and complementing the questionnaires of the EDEN and Opaline cohorts.

Mother's health and family health history

Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (Cox JL, 1987) and questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Household expenses

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Care arrangements

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey