



Ined
Inserm
EFS
InVS
Insee
DGS
DGPR
Drees
Cnaf

Protocol of the Elfe survey at two years

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
	It is strictly identical to that of the surveys at two months and one year.	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.....	7
	4.1 General principle	7
	4.2 Special cases.....	7
5	Summary of participation levels.....	8
6	Sources and references of questions relating to the various modules	8

Two years after inclusion of the children at the maternity unit, and one year after the survey at one year, a further telephone survey was conducted on the parents of Elfe cohort children. The survey protocol was similar to that of the surveys at “two months” and “one year” conducted in 2011.

The main aims of this new survey were to continue documenting changes in the families' sociodemographic characteristics, to record any residential changes and the reasons for them, to continue collecting data on the children's health, diet and care arrangements, to characterize multiple aspects of their development and to record their play activities. It also aimed to find out more about the families and their environment through questions on their neighbourhood and their social circle.

The survey at two years was approved by the CCTIRS and authorized by the French data protection authority (CNIL) (authorization no. 913074). Its public interest and statistical quality were certified by the CNIS certification committee (Comité du Label) (visa 2013X719AU).

1 Study population

The survey included all families who had given their consent at the maternity unit and who had not formally withdrawn their consent by directly informing the Elfe research unit, **whether or not they had taken part in the survey at two months** and/or at 1 year. 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's second birthdays. The same protocol was applied for each one.

- Wave 1: 17 May 2013 to 9 September 2013
2,607 families to be contacted

- Wave 2: 1 July 2013 to 24 October 2013
4,303 families to be contacted

- Wave 3: 30 September 2013 to 30 January 2014
4,877 families to be contacted

- Wave 4: 28 November 2013 to 9 April 2014
5,314 families to be contacted

Total survey duration: 10.5 months
Number of families to be contacted: 17,708

3 Survey implementation

Following a call for tenders in 2010, the GFK polling company was selected to conduct the surveys at two months, one year and two years. It was thus GFK which conducted this third phone survey (CATI) on each of the children's parents. Like the surveys at two months and one year, it was based on two main questionnaire categories: a mother's questionnaire and a so-called father's questionnaire.¹

¹The father's questionnaire is “so-called” as the mother's current partner was also interviewed if he lived with the mother and child.

As the questionnaire was very long, we tested the idea of systematically inviting respondents to answer the reference parent questionnaire in two separate halves. This approach was abandoned in wave 2, however, as it substantially increased the survey duration and very probably reduced the participation rate (difficulties in reaching the respondent again, or in getting him/her to answer a second batch of questions). Moreover, when the interviewer broke off the interview, respondents often wanted to continue and couldn't understand why this was not possible.

3.1 Protocol for contacting the parents

It is strictly identical to that of the surveys at two months and one year.

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 made through the mother who, except in a few cases (see below), was also interviewed first (even if the father was the reference parent in the previous surveys).

After checking the phone numbers corresponding to the addresses recorded during the survey at two months (or in the maternity unit for families which did not take part at two months) 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
- Second contact of refusals/dropouts by experienced interviewers

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.

- **“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.

Regarding the father’s participation, contrary to the rule applied in the two previous surveys, the question of his **potential participation** was mentioned **not at the end of the mother’s questionnaire** but at the beginning, at the time of initial contact, when the father’s contact details were verified or recorded.

There are several types of “father’s” questionnaire:

- **“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.

- **“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 composition 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.

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 parent, 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 same reasons which prevent the mother from being the reference parent, 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 reason.

The interview is conducted in one of the following languages: English, Arabic, Turkish, Wolof or Soninke. In such cases, the questionnaire is a reference parent 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” or the child (housing, income/neighbourhood, father’s educational level and occupational status, income, the child’s play activities and development) 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. Four exceptions to this sharing system – linked to non-participation – should be noted:

1) The household did not take part in the survey at two months and one year.

The entire modules concerned, which were also administered in the surveys at two months and/or one year are administered to the reference parent.

2) Responses to the module(s) concerned were incomplete in the survey at two months or one year (non-participation of the cohabiting partner and missing information not obtained from reference parent).

The entire modules are administered to the reference parent.

3) The mother states at the very beginning of the interview, when the father’s contact details are verified, that he will not take part.

The entire modules are administered to the reference parent.

4) 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. As it was not always possible to reach these mothers again, the modules remain incomplete, even if 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, or when the entire modules were administered to her alone.

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

4.1 General principle

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

- all variables given by the mother (prefix A02M_) in the “mother” questionnaires database and
- all the variables given by the fathers or female partners (prefix A02P_) in the “father” questionnaires database,

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

Hence, to obtain the most detailed information on the household in which each child lives and to work on the largest number of children, users must recover the variables given by the reference parents in the “mother” and “father” databases and concatenate (after harmonization of variable names) the “mother as reference” and “father as reference” questionnaires.

However, this concatenation is not sufficient to fully document certain modules characterizing the household (housing, income, father’s educational level and occupational status, child’s play activities and development, neighbourhood) since some of so-called interlinked variables are sometimes given in the “mother as reference” questionnaire and sometimes in the “cohabiting father” questionnaire.

This is because in the file resulting from the 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 or the household income, these variables must be recovered from the “cohabiting father” questionnaire.

4.2 Special 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 is asked all the questions relating to interlinked variables.
- The mother as reference gives all these variables (the household did not participate in the previous surveys or did not answer all questions in the relevant modules at two months or one year).

As the father (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.

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.

5 Summary of participation levels

Wave 1:

Families to be contacted: 2,607

Complete mother as reference questionnaires: 1,879

Complete father as reference questionnaires: 33

Total reference parent questionnaires: 1,912

% participation: 73.3%

Wave 2:

Families to be contacted: 4,303

Complete mother as reference questionnaires: 3,222

Complete father as reference questionnaires: 18

Total reference parent questionnaires: 3,240

% participation: 75.3%

Wave 3:

Families to be contacted: 4,877

Complete mother as reference questionnaires: 3,618

Complete father as reference questionnaires: 25

Total reference parent questionnaires: 3,643

% participation: 74.7%

Wave 4:

Families to be contacted: 5,314

Complete mother as reference questionnaires: 3,847

Complete father as reference questionnaires: 36

Total reference parent questionnaires: 3,883

% participation: 73.1%

6 Sources and references of questions relating to the various modules

To identify the questions of the standardized questionnaires, use the “search by theme” function of the data access platform

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

Situation of non-cohabitation or non-permanent cohabitation of parents

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Separation and relationship with other parent; continued contact with him if he does not live in the household

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Education

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

Main labour market situation

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

Housing

Housing survey (Enquête Logement), INSEE

Household income

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

Extended family

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Care arrangements

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

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

Child's play activity

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Mother/father's health

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Child's diet since birth

Child eating behaviour questionnaire (Wardle)

Parent's cultural practices

Adapted from 'Pratiques culturelles des français' (cultural practices of French people) Ministère de la Communication

Child rearing practices

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Neighbourhood

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Parents' social network

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Relationship between parents and division of domestic tasks

Adapted from the national survey on violence against women (Paris 1 University) and the French version of the Generations and Gender Survey (ERFI, INED)

Child development

K6 (Kessler RC et al. Psychol Med 2002; 32:959-76), M-Chat (Chlebowski C et al. Pediatrics 2013;131:e1121-17) Mac Arthur (Kern S et al. Approche Neuropsychologique des Apprentissages chez l'Enfant 2010: 217-228)