



Welfare, Children and Families: A Three City Study Update to Data Files

A new data file has been added to the Welfare Children and Families data sets. A new cross-wave person-level unique identifier for caregivers was created so that users can be sure that they are working with the same caregiver in longitudinal analysis. (Without this identifier, it's hard to keep track of, for example, caregivers who were separated from the focal child at wave 2 and then were reunited with the focal child at wave 3.)

A household may have multiple associated caregivers over time. For example, a child may reside with her biological mother at wave 1, with her grandmother at wave 2, and again with her biological mother at wave 3. In order to facilitate tracking caregivers across waves, NEWID was created. Each caregiver at each wave is assigned a value on NEWID. NEWID takes the value HHID+01 for the wave 1 caregiver. Where a new caregiver is introduced, his/her values of NEWID is HHID+02. (After data cleaning, no cases were found where a child resided with one new caregiver at wave 2 and a different new caregiver at wave 3. Had that been the case, NEWID would equal HHID+03 for the second new caregiver.) Data users may match caregivers across waves by merging caregiver data files by NEWID.

The example below shows how NEWID works for a case where a child had a new caregiver at wave 2 and was reunited with her wave 1 caregiver at wave 3:

Table 6. An example of NEWID

HHID=0180010	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Child's primary caregiver	Child's mother: 018001001	Child's grandmother: 018001002 (new CG)	Child's mother: 018001001 (continuing CG, reunited with child)
Separated caregiver		Child's mother: 018001001 (separated CG)	

To use the unique identifier, it's necessary to start with the newid.por or newid.xpt file. The file includes one record for every caregiver interview conducted in the course of the study; it pools all wave 1 caregiver observations, wave 2 new, continuing, and separated caregiver observations, and wave 3 new, continuing, and separated caregiver observations. The file contains four variables: ZRID, NEWID, MNEWID, and HHID. ZRID is the wave-specific unique identifier, NEWID is the new person-level unique identifier, MNEWID is a flag indicating whether NEWID is missing (as it is for two wave 2 caregivers), and HHID is the unique identifier for a household that is constant across interview types and waves. To use NEWID, it is necessary to merge this new file on to each existing caregiver data file by ZRID. Then, users can merge multiple waves together by NEWID if they want to work with the same caregiver over time.

This file is now included with all 3 Cities data sets. If you obtained your copy before September 2007, please contact Sociometrics' Research Support Group at socio@socio.com or 800-846-3475.