

**DOCUMENTATION OF THE
DETAIL NATALITY TAPE FILE FOR
1998 DATA**

**SPECIAL NOTICE
EFFECTIVE WITH 1998 DATA THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN
MARIANA ISLANDS RECORDS ARE INCLUDED
IN THE TERRITORIES PUBLIC-USE FILE.**

**EFFECTIVE WITH 1997 DATA
AMERICAN SAMOA RECORDS ARE INCLUDED
IN THE TERRITORIES PUBLIC-USE FILE.**

Public Use Data Tape Documentation - Natality Detail 1998 Data

This tape documentation was prepared in the Division of Vital Statistics. Manju Sharma of the Systems, Programming, and Statistical Resources Branch was responsible for developing the natality documentation and for providing all of the computer programming services necessary to keep it up-to-date.

Melissa Park of the Reproductive Statistics Branch prepared the Technical Appendix. The Registration Methods Section and the Data Acquisition and Evaluation Branch provided consultation to State Vital Statistics offices regarding collection of birth certificate data.

Questions on the documentation or general questions concerning the natality file should be directed to the of the Systems, Programming, and Statistical Resources Branch, Division of Vital Statistics, NCHS, 6525 Belcrest Road, Room 840, Hyattsville, MD 20782 (301-458-4777).

Questions concerning the Technical Appendix or substantive questions concerning the natality data should be directed to the Reproductive Statistics Branch, Division of Vital Statistics, NCHS, 6525 Belcrest Road, Room 820, Hyattsville, MD 20782 (301-458-4111).

Documentation of the Detail Natality Data File for 1998 Data

Since 1985 natality statistics for all States and the District of Columbia have been based on information from the total file of records. The information is received on computer data tapes coded by the States and provided to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. NCHS receives the data for this file from the registration offices of all States, the District of Columbia, and New York City. Natality data for Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (referred to as Northern Marianas) are included as separate data-set in the public-use file.

Natality data for the United States are limited to births occurring within the United States to U.S. residents and nonresidents. Births to nonresidents of the United States are excluded from all tabulations by place of residence. Births occurring to U.S. citizens outside the United States are not included in this file. Natality data for Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa and Northern Marianas are limited to births occurring within the respective territories.

Effective January 1, 1989, a revised U.S. Standard Certificate of Live Birth replaced the 1978 revision. The 1989 revision provides a wide variety of new information on maternal and infant health characteristics, representing a significant departure from previous versions in both content and format. For a more detailed discussion of the revised and new items refer to the technical appendix part of this document.

The Office of Management and Budget revised its designation of metropolitan statistical areas based on figures from the 1990 Census. Effective with the 1990 data file, NCHS has been using these new definitions and codes as indicated in the listing of 320 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA's), Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas (PMSA's), and New England County Metropolitan Areas (NECMA'S) included in this documentation. There are also 20 Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas (CMSA's), which are made up of PMSA's. Because other geographic changes based on 1990 Census became effective with 1994 data file, the metropolitan statistical area destination were updated as well. Effective with the 1994 data-file there are 311 MSA's, PMSA's, and NECMA'S and 18 CMSA's as indicated in the listing included in this documentation.

NCHS has adopted a new policy on release of vital statistics unit record data files. This new policy was implemented for the 1989 vital event files to prevent the inadvertent disclosure of individuals and institutions. As a result, the files for 1989 and later years do not contain the actual day of the birth or the dates of birth of the mother or father. The geographic detail is also restricted; only counties and cities of 100,000 or more population based on the 1990 Census, as well as metropolitan areas of 100,000 or more population based on the 1990 Census, are identified.

Included in this document are:

1. List of data elements and tape locations.
2. Machine/File/Data Characteristics.
3. Detail Record Layout.
4. Geographic Code Outline.
5. Metropolitan Statistical Areas as adapted for use by NCHS/DVS.
6. Technical Appendix.
7. Table 1. Counts of Births by occurrence and residence for each State
8. Report of Final Natality Statistics, 1998

SYMBOLS USED IN TABLES

Symbol	Explanation
---	Data not available
...	Category not applicable
-	Quantity zero
0.0	Quantity more than 0 but less than 0.05
*	Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision