

APPENDIX B

FCL SEMISTRUCTURED PROTOCOL FOR TELECONFERENCE OR  
AGENCY VISIT

## **Fatherhood and Continuous Learning in Child Welfare Project**

### **Semistructured Protocol for Teleconference or Agency Visit**

*Thank you for taking time to meet with the FCL project team. As a reminder, the FCL project is a new study sponsored by the federal government to identify promising approaches to engaging fathers and paternal relatives of children involved in the child welfare system. This meeting and similar meetings we are having with other child welfare agencies have two main purposes. The first is for the project team to learn from agencies. To that end, we would like to hear more about your agency as an example of a quality child welfare agency, including how you administer your services and strategies you use to engage fathers and paternal relatives. The second is to let agencies know more about the FCL project, how we will be collaborating with partner agencies and what the pilot study will entail. We would also like to get your input and reactions to the planned project. What we learn today may be used to identify candidate agencies for the larger pilot study.*

*We estimate that this visit will take 180 minutes.*

*Before we start, I would like to remind you that participating in this interview is completely voluntary. There are no repercussions if you choose not to participate. If you do not know the answer to a questions asked, or you prefer not to answer a question for any reason, please let us know that and we will simply move on. All the information provided in these discussions will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. Do you have any questions? Do we have your permission to proceed with the discussion?*

To the extent information is not available from other sources, the following are guidelines for points for discussion. The discussions will be tailored to the specific persons interviewed and interview format.

### **Discussion of Father and Paternal Relative Engagement Features**

#### **I. What is the structure of the agency?**

1. What is your current position and role?
2. How long have you been with the agency? How long have you been in your current position or role?
3. Describe the roles of case-carrying workers? How many and what are the backgrounds? Is any special training or certification needed for the services they provide?
4. Has [Agency name] made any staffing changes since we last spoke? Have average caseloads for Child Protective Service (CPS) workers changed? Have average caseloads for case-carrying workers (in-home and foster care) changed?
5. Describe your approach to training new staff specifically around fathers/paternal relatives?

**II. What services does the agency provide to fathers and paternal relatives?**

1. What efforts does the agency make to involve fathers and paternal relatives? How successful have these efforts been? What have you learned about engaging fathers and paternal relatives by trying these strategies?
2. Review the services provided to fathers and paternal relatives. Has the agency added any new programs or services? Do you plan to incorporate new strategies to engage fathers and paternal relatives in the future? If so, please describe the strategies. What prompted the planning for these new strategies?
3. Do you use curricula that guide service delivery to fathers and paternal relatives? Are there program guidelines or any best practice information that guides how the agency engages fathers and paternal relatives?
4. Have your staff participated in trainings/workshops on engaging fathers/paternal relatives? If so, please describe the training/workshop.
5. To what agencies do you typically refer fathers and/or paternal relatives? Who are your key partners in the community for serving fathers and/or paternal relatives? Any new partnerships since the initial phone call?

**III. How does the agency operate?**

1. How does your agency communicate policies and procedures? To internal staff? To partners (including judges, attorneys, etc)? How about policies and procedures to engage fathers and paternal relatives?
2. How does your agency work with other partners in the child welfare system?
3. How does your agency monitor compliance with agency policies/procedures?
4. Do agency staff in different service areas work across their areas to engage and involve fathers/paternal relatives or do they tend to operate within their area only?
5. How are services offered to fathers/paternal relatives funded?

**IV. What are community characteristics that influence service delivery?**

1. What are the major issues or challenges facing the community, such as opioid use disorder or mental illness, that affect families' involvement with your agency? Do any of these issues have a particular effect on fathers/paternal relatives?
2. Please describe how community characteristics influence your service approach and design? Do you collaborate with other agencies or organizations to identify and address the needs in the community for all clients? For fathers and paternal relatives in particular?
3. How does the agency engage and build new positive relationships with community partners?

#### **IV. Case flow and potential father and paternal relative engagement touchpoints**

##### **Investigation or assessment phase**

1. What staff are typically involved in the investigation or assessment?
2. What process does [Agency name] use to engage fathers and paternal relatives at this stage?
3. Does the agency have a specific approach to interviewing fathers? Is it the same for mothers? What, if any, limitations do your staff encounter when attempting to interview fathers?
4. How often does your agency attempt to involve paternal relatives during the investigation or assessment phase, if at all?

##### **In-home services**

5. How does your agency help mothers and fathers work together or coparent to ensure child's safety while remaining at home?
6. Describe your agency's approach to involving fathers and paternal relatives in case planning?
7. Are there instances where it is determined a father should not be engaged in case planning? If so, please describe those instances. [For example, in cases of domestic violence, maternal preference.]
8. What services do you offer to fathers and paternal relatives of children involved with your agency? What services are provided by other service providers?
9. What are the physical locations from which services are provided? During what hours are services provided?
10. Walk through how a father flows through the services. Are there any eligibility requirements for particular components? How are the components sequenced? Are they concurrent or one after the other?
11. What supports (e.g., transportation, child care) do you offer to help fathers and paternal relatives participate in services?
12. What is the intended length of the service components? How long do fathers tend to stay involved? What are the primary reasons for fathers' departures prior to the intended end of the program or service components?
13. Does your program have a waitlist for any components?

### **Out-of-home services**

14. How does your agency help mothers and fathers work together or coparent to plan for permanence after the child's entry into care?
15. Describe your agency's approach to involving fathers and paternal relatives in case planning?
16. Are there instances where it is determined a father should not be engaged in case planning? If so, please describe those instances. [For example, in cases of domestic violence, maternal preference.]
17. What services do you offer to fathers and paternal relatives of children involved with your agency? What services are provided by other service providers?
18. What are the physical locations from which services are provided? During what hours are services provided?
19. Walk through how a father flows through the services. Are there any eligibility requirements for particular components? How are the components sequenced? Are they concurrent or one after the other?
20. What supports (e.g., transportation, child care) do you offer to help fathers and paternal relatives participate in services?
21. What is the intended length of the service components? How long do fathers tend to stay involved? What are the primary reasons for fathers' departures prior to the intended end of the program or service components?
22. Does your program have a waitlist for any components?

### **Other potential touchpoints and overarching questions**

23. Is there a place or touchpoint in the life of a case where it is challenging to engage fathers and paternal relatives? If so, please describe. Is there a place or touchpoint in the life of a case where engaging fathers and paternal relatives is more fruitful?
24. What are the main challenges your program faces in engaging fathers and paternal relatives? What concerns have staff expressed about engaging fathers or paternal relatives?
25. Do you plan to incorporate new strategies to engage fathers and paternal relatives in the future? If so, please describe the strategies?

## **V. Readiness to participate in a continuous learning effort**

*Continuous learning refers to the processes your agency uses to learn and adapt to the changing needs of the community that you serve, use data about how what you are doing is working or not, and address issues over time within your agency and with your partners.*

1. Describe how decisions are made and information is communicated by the management team within your organization. What are the continuous learning processes in place? What is their breadth across the agency? How much buy-in exists to implement these activities across the agency?
2. Describe [Agency name] case review process? Who reviews the case? What is the schedule? How are cases selected? Are there policies, written manuals, and instructions to assist staff/volunteers in reviewing cases? What data are collected during the case review?
3. Where do you capture/document continuous learning activities? What kind of data do you capture about these activities?
4. Have your staff participated in trainings/workshops pertaining to a continuous learning effort? If so, please describe the training.
5. Which staff are designated to participate in continuous learning activities?
6. Are there written policies, procedures, and practices for continuous learning activities?
7. What process does [Agency name] use to collect data (quantitative and qualitative) on father/paternal relative engagement and involvement?
8. In addition to the Statewide Automated Child Welfare System (SACWIS), what systems does your agency have in place to track information on father/paternal relative engagement and involvement? What system do you use to track services they are offered and receive? How flexible is it to make adjustments to data collection systems?
9. What staff are involved in analyzing data and what training have they received to conduct data analyses?
10. Describe how your agency analyzes and evaluates the level of father/paternal relative engagement and involvement using data?
11. How do you use data to assess and improve daily casework practice? Who reviews the data and makes decisions about how to make improvements?
12. To what extent does the agency engage fathers or paternal relatives of children involved with your agency to provide input and enhance service delivery?
13. To what extent does [Agency name] engage stakeholders to provide input and enhance service delivery?
14. To what extent does [Agency name] engage with other parts of the child welfare system to enhance service delivery, including but not limited to the court system, law

enforcement, etc.?

15. Please discuss recent successes or challenges with system improvements, and the level of community support for the agency's work.

### **Topics for Discussion about Study Design**

1. Is your organization currently involved with another study? Has your organization participated in a study previously?
2. Review the list of questions they indicated being interested in during the initial phone call. Would you add or prioritize the questions differently after hearing more detail about the study?
3. Where would you envision the touchpoints in the life of a case that should be a focus for strategies to engage fathers and paternal relatives? Are they feasible? Are they relevant? Would you change or add anything?
4. Would you use your existing continuous learning approach to support/strengthen father and paternal relative engagement? What support would the agency need to do this? Would you engage with the broader community to implement these strategies?
5. Do you have any other comments or advice for the project team?

#### **The Paperwork Reduction Act Statement**

This collection of information is voluntary and will be used to gather preliminary information about father and paternal relative engagement in child welfare, and explore with child welfare agencies the research questions that are of interest and the design options that are feasible. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Send comments regarding any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing burden to Matthew Stagner; [mstagner@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:mstagner@mathematica-mpr.com); Attn: OMB-PRA (0970-0356).