



**Contact After Adoption or Guardianship:
Child Welfare Agency and Family Interactions**

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Sponsored by: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families

**Instrument 2b: Stakeholder Discussion Guide: Guardianship
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Note: The consent form will be covered just prior to using this guide.

A. Background Information

A1. What is your role with the agency?

A2. What other staff at the agency make contact with guardianship families, and what are their roles with the agency?

A3. Is the contact typically initiated from a public child welfare staff person, or a private child welfare staff person?

B. Agency-Initiated Contact with Guardianship Families

B0a. How many children are currently receiving guardianship subsidies in your state?

B0a1. _____ [insert number of children] state-funded guardianship subsidies

B0a2. _____ [insert number of children] federally funded guardianship subsidies

In an earlier web survey that our study team conducted, we asked you about a letter or form that your agency sends to guardianship parents to ascertain the well-being of the child in their care or to check-up on the status of the child (well-being letter).

B0b. How many well-being letters were sent in the past year, that is since [DATE]? If your agency sent such requests for information multiple times throughout the year, please count each child only once. If you do not know the exact number, please use the closest approximation.

B0b1. _____ [insert number of children] state-funded guardianship subsidies

B0b2. _____ [insert number of children] federally funded guardianship subsidies

B0c. How many well-being letter responses did your agency receive in the past year, that is since [DATE]? If you do not know the exact number, please use the closest approximation.

B0c1. _____ [insert number of children] state-funded guardianship subsidies

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B0c2. _____ [insert number of children] federally funded guardianship subsidies

B0d. How many well-being letters were returned unanswered (e.g., undeliverable, wrong postal or email address)? If you do not know the exact number, please use the closest approximation.

B0d1. _____ [insert number of children with no responses] state-funded guardianship subsidies

B0d2. _____ [insert number of children with no responses] federally funded guardianship subsidies

B0d3. How are well-being letter responses received? *Please select all that apply.*

B0d3a. E-mail

B0d3b. Phone

B0d3c. Mail

B0d3e. Other (*please specify*): _____

In an earlier web survey that our study team conducted, a representative from your agency mentioned that you initiate routine contact with families after guardianship. We would like to learn more detailed information about the contact that your agency has with families after guardianship.

In the survey your agency representative reported these types of routine contact between your agency and guardianship families [INSERT WEB SURVEY FINDINGS HERE, including how frequently this type of contact occurs].

B1. Please describe how this contact is made (e.g., Who initiates it? What are the follow-up procedures?).

B2. How many families did your agency reach out to each year, over the past 5 years? If a response is requested, how many of those families responded each year? What are your procedures for following up with families who do not respond?

B3. Which types of outreach have been most successful for receiving a response from guardianship families? Please describe why you think this type of outreach is successful.

B4. Does your agency's contact with families after guardianship differ for families receiving federal, state, or county subsidies than for families who do not receive subsidies? If yes, how?

B5. Please describe the types of information your agency receives from the families who respond.

B5a. Do you collect information on service needs?

B5b. If yes, do you make referrals?

B5c. If yes, do you have follow-up procedures (e.g., Do you refer and then your involvement is ended? Do you follow-up with the family – or service provider – after a specific time period?)? If yes, please describe.

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- B5d.** Do you collect any information about the child’s well-being (e.g., mental health, school functioning, family relationship quality)?
- B5e.** If yes, what type of information about the child’s well-being do you collect?
- B5f.** Are referrals made?
- B5g.** Is referral information maintained and used by your agency?
- B6.** Please describe your agency’s goals for collecting this information (e.g., to write reports, to track expenses)?
- B6a.** How has your agency used this information?
- B6b.** Do you have plans (hopes) for using it differently or for additional purposes?
- B6c.** Has the collecting of this information helped your agency? If yes, please describe.
- B6d.** Has the collecting of this information helped the families involved? If yes, please describe.
- B7.** Does your agency adjust post-guardianship services based on the information you receive directly from a family (through your agency’s outreach)?
- B7a.** If yes, how do you adjust services (e.g., a committee decides, specific rules are applied)?
- B7b.** Please describe the process, and what stipulations might be in place (e.g., are specific types of services handled differently).
- B8.** Does your agency adjust the financial assistance portion of a guardianship subsidy based on the information you receive directly from a family (through your agency’s outreach)?
- B8a.** If yes, how are adjustments made (e.g., a committee decides, specific rules are applied)? Please describe the process, and what stipulations might be in place (e.g., are specific types of adjustments handled differently)?
- B8b.** What challenges have you experienced when you try to contact families after guardianship?
- B9.** If you were advising others on how to set-up a process to contact or check-in with families like yours, what components do you think would be necessary to replicate your process?
- B9a.** What would you do differently if you were to set-up a new process for your contact to families after guardianship?
- B9b.** What parts of your process would you leave the same?
- B10.** [If applicable] In the survey, your agency reported that your agency’s contacts with families after guardianship are followed and recorded systematically (or “tracked”) through [INSERT WEB SURVEY FINDINGS HERE].
- B10a.** Do you have codebooks, a manual, or a user’s guide describing the system or tracking systems or procedures that you would be willing to share with us?
- B10b.** Have you had challenges tracking the results for these contacts? If so, what were the challenges?

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B10c. If you were advising others on how to set-up a tracking or reporting system like yours, ...

B10c1. What are the key components necessary to replicate your agency's system somewhere else?

B10c2. What would you do differently if you set up your system again?

B10c3. What would you leave the same?

B11. [If applicable] In the survey, your agency reported that these contacts are not tracked in any systematic way.

B11a. Has your agency ever tried to track these types of contact?

B11b. If yes, what challenges did you experience?

B11c. If no, can you tell us why they are not tracked systematically?

B12. What supports would help improve your agency's ability to track the well-being of children and their families after guardianship?

B13. How are agency staff trained to track responses of guardianship families and/or use the data system?

C. Family Initiated Contact

NOTE: Only respondents who reported that families contact their agency for post-guardianship services will be asked these questions.

C0a. Does your agency publicize how guardianship families should contact your agency for assistance?

C0b. Where is this publicized?

In a recent web survey that our study team did, a representative from your agency said that families contact your agency for post-guardianship services. The representative also mentioned that your agency has a way to track when post-guardianship services are requested by families after guardianship. We would like to learn more about how families initiate contact and how your agency tracks family outcomes.

In the survey, your agency reported these types of contact between your agency and guardianship families [INSERT WEB SURVEY FINDINGS HERE].

C1. Please describe how these types of contacts are made.

C1a. Who initiates contact (e.g., caregiver, youth, or school personnel with a concern)?

C1b. How would a guardianship parent, child, or relative know how to reach your agency?

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C2. Please describe the types of information your agency receives from families who contact your agency. For what reasons do they usually contact your agency? Do they request services? Do you make referrals to services in response to the information you receive from guardianship families?

C2a. Does your agency make changes to the post-guardianship service agreement based on the information you receive when a family contacts your agency?

C2a1. If yes, how are changes made (e.g., a committee decides, specific rules are applied)? Please describe the process, and what stipulations might be in place (e.g., are specific types of services handled differently)?

C2a2. Do you have follow-up procedures (e.g., do you refer and then your involvement is ended)?

C2a3. Do you follow-up with the family – or service provider – after a specific time period? If yes, please describe.

C2b. Does your agency make changes to the financial assistance portion of a guardianship subsidy based on the information you receive when a family contacts your agency?

C2b1. If yes, how are changes made (e.g., a committee decides, specific rules are applied)? Please describe the process, and what stipulations might be in place (e.g., are specific types of adjustments handled differently)?

C2c. If you were advising others on how to set-up a process like yours, where families are able to contact public child welfare agencies, ...

C2c1. What challenges would you say there are in your process (e.g., families' lack of knowledge about how to reach out to your agency, disseminating information to families, coordinating services for families after their contact)?

C2c2. What are the barriers to responding to families who contact your agency (e.g., do you struggle with resources with finding good providers)?

C2c3. If you could change this process, what would you change?

C3. What type of services and supports are available in your child welfare agency to families who contact your agency after they have assumed guardianship of a child who exited foster care?

C3a. What options does your agency have for following up on a need expressed by a neighbor, school, or community member about a child who has exited foster care through guardianship?

C3a1. Are services ever changed based on information received from other informants (like neighbors, school officials, or community members)?

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C2a2. If yes, please describe the process, and what stipulations might be in place (e.g., are there specific types of informants or information that are handled differently?).

C3a3. Does a family's subsidy amount ever change based on information received from *other informants*? If yes, please describe the process, and what stipulations might be in place (e.g., are there specific types of informants or information that are handled differently?).

C3a4. What options does your agency have for following up on a need expressed directly by a child who has exited foster care through guardianship?

In the survey, your agency reported that these contacts are followed and recorded systematically (or "tracked") through [INSERT WEB SURVEY FINDINGS HERE].

C4. [If your agency does not track, is this something your agency would like to do? What are the difficulties that prevent you from tracking? Please describe what your agency has tried to do in terms of tracking.]

C4a. What are the challenges involved with tracking when a family contacts your agency after guardianship?

C4b. If you were advising others on how to set-up a process like yours, for tracking family contacts to your agency, ...

C4b1. What are the key components necessary for another agency to replicate this process?

C4b2. What would you do differently if you were to set-up a process like this again in the future?

C4b3. What would you do the same?

C5. What supports would help improve your agency's ability to track family-initiated contact after guardianship?

C6. Reflecting back on all of the ways we have discussed that families are in contact with your agency, are there other types of contacts that are not mentioned that you are aware of? For example, do parents, guardians, or youth drop by your office seeking assistance? Do you find out that youth are homeless or in need of services or supports in some other fashion? If yes, please tell us about any record keeping you might do in these types of situations.

D. Tracking Instability After Guardianship

In the survey, it was reported by your agency that youth or caregivers, or other community members [INSERT WEB SURVEY FINDINGS HERE] call your agency to report that they (or about a child they assumed guardianship of):

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D1. Have run away from home.

D1a. What is your agency able to do to help these youth and their families?

D1b. What are the challenges involved with helping the youth and their families?

D2. Are homeless (living inside a car, an abandoned building, couch surfing, on the street, in a park, or in a shelter for the homeless).

D2a. What is your agency able to do to help these youth and their families?

D2b. What are the challenges involved with helping the youth?

D3. Have been placed (or are seeking placement) in a residential treatment facility or group home.

D3a. What is your agency able to do to help these youth and their families?

D3b. What are the challenges involved with helping the youth?

In the survey, it was reported that once your agency is notified of a post-guardianship instability event [INSERT WEB SURVEY FINDINGS HERE: a child/youth who has exited foster care through guardianship has run away from home, is homeless, or has been placed in a residential treatment facility or group home], your agency records and keeps track of this information.

D4. Please describe the challenges involved with tracking these situations.

D5. How does your agency use the information?

D6. [If applicable] If your agency were advising others on how to set-up a system to track these situations, ...

D6a. What key components are necessary for another agency to replicate this process?

D6b. What would you have done differently?

D6c. What would you do the same?

D7. If tools and resources could be made available to your agency, would your agency be interested in specifically tracking post-guardianship instability outcomes? Why or why not? What types of tools/resources do you think might be helpful?

E. Administrative Data Tracking

In a web survey that our study team conducted, a representative from your agency mentioned that your agency uses administrative data to monitor or track children and families after guardianship. We would like to learn more about how your agency uses administrative data.

E1. [If applicable] In the survey, your agency reported that your agency follows and records (or “tracks”) foster care reentries through [INSERT WEB SURVEY FINDINGS HERE], and that they feel [extremely to not at all confident – INSERT HERE] their system accurately tracks children who reenter foster care after guardianship.

E2. What are the problems or issues related to tracking reentry?

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E3. What would increase your confidence in your ability to track foster care reentries?

E4. If you were advising others on how to set-up a system like yours...

E4a. What are the key components necessary for another agency to replicate this process?

E4b. What would you do differently?

E4c. What would you do the same?

E5. [If applicable] Your agency reported that the ID changes when a child exits foster care through guardianship.

E5a. How are these IDs linked?

E5b. What are the issues related to linking these IDs?

E6. [If applicable] In the survey, it was reported that your agency is not able to track foster care reentries after guardianship.

E6a. Please tell us why your agency is not able to track foster care reentries.

E6b. Has your agency tried to track reentries? If yes, can you tell us what your agency did to try to track reentries?

E7. Does your agency have plans to track reentries?

E7a. Is tracking reentries a priority? If so, what types of supports would you need to track reentries?

F. Contact and Tracking Outside Your Agency

F1. Are there situations where information about guardianship families is coming from someone other than the family? This could be other agencies (i.e., contracted service providers) or community members (i.e., health care personnel, school personnel).

F2. Please describe the process of sharing the information, and what types of information are shared.

F3. Please describe the types of agencies or community members who share this information.

F4. To what extent has COVID-19 impacted your abilities to have contact with families?

F5. How has COVID-19 impacted other agency operations relevant to contact with families?