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## Parent Experience Focus Group Questions

Thank you for joining our focus group. My name is <<name >>>, and I am <insert role>>. We also have with us <<insert name>>, who will be taking notes to make sure we capture the information provided today. We are interested in hearing more about your experience with the child welfare court system. I just want to remind you that participation in this focus group is voluntary. You can exit the meeting at any time, and you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer.

Your responses will be kept private – that means that your name will not be connected to anything that you say in this group, and it will not show up in our report. I ask that you also respect the privacy of others in the group and do not share with anyone outside of our group what is said during the focus group.

We have the following rules for this group:

- There are no right or wrong answers to the questions today. Please speak from your experience.
- This is not a support group or a counseling session. If you need those services, we will be happy to connect you to them
- One person speaks at a time.
- Everyone has an opportunity to speak. I may ask someone who is talking a lot to step back and give others a chance to talk. I may also ask a person who isn't talking if they have anything to share. You can say no.

Are you still interested in participating in the group?

[IF NO: Thank you for considering participating. Have a great rest of your day]

[IF YES: That's great! Let's begin ...]

We are going to start by talking about your experience with the child welfare court process.

1. Please tell us about your experience attending child welfare hearings. [1.12]
  - How were you informed about your child welfare hearings? [2.1, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8]

- Were you given an opportunity to attend hearings virtually or by phone? [1.1, 1.6]
  - Did the court work around your work and school hours? [2.6, 2.10]
  - What were the things that made it easier to attend court hearings? [2.6, 2.8, 2.10]
  - What things made it more difficult to attend? [2.8, 2.10]
2. Were you given the opportunity to explore/discuss issues/topics of importance to you during your hearings? [1.6, 1.12]
  3. How soon after a hearing did you get important documents/the court order? [1.5, 1.10, 2.6, 2.7]
  4. What kind of support or education were you given to navigate the child welfare court system? [1.6, 1.8, 1.12, 3.8]
  5. Is there anything that could have been done that would have improved the court process? [1.12, 2.10, 3.8]
    - Probes: what went well and what could be improved?

We want to talk a little bit about safety.

6. Do you understand the safety issues that led to you being subject to a child welfare case? [4.10]
7. Did you resolve those issues? [4.11]
8. What kind of support were you given to understand the safety issues? Was safety of your child(ren) discussed at court hearings? In what ways? [1.11, 4.2, 4.13]
9. Do you think the judge considered the things you do to protect your child/children in their decision? [4.2, 4.9, 4.12]

Now, we would like to talk about your attorney in the child welfare hearing.

10. Did you have an attorney who represented you for your case?
11. At what point did you get your attorney? Did you have time to talk to your attorney before the first hearing on the case? [2.3]
12. How did your attorney help prepare you for hearings? [2.8, 3.5, 3.5c]
13. What did your attorney do so that you felt heard and respected? [3.5, 3.8]
14. Were you able to meet with your attorney in between court hearings and important meetings? [3.5, 3.5c, 3.8]
15. Did you feel like your attorney asked for the things you wanted in hearings? Why or why not? [3.5, 3.5b, 3.8, 5.15]
16. Were there things that made you feel disrespected or unimportant by your legal representation? [3.8]
17. Do you have thoughts on what attorneys can do to improve practice to be more helpful to parents involved in the system? [3.8]

That is all the questions we have for you today. Is there anything we should have asked about your experience that we didn't or anything else you would like to tell us?

Thank you so much!