



Questions and Answers about the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being

We invite you to participate in an important study called the *National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being* (NSCAW). Below you will find answers to some of the most common questions asked about the survey.

The NSCAW is the first ever nationwide study of children and families who have come in contact with the child welfare system. As a part of this study, we will examine different reasons families come in contact with the system and different ways agencies handle situations like yours.

What is the National Survey on Child and Adolescent Well-Being?

We designed the NSCAW to collect data directly from children and their parents or guardians. We will also collect information from caseworkers and agency records. We use the information to learn about the needs of children and families, about the kinds of services used by children and families, and about other services provided by child welfare agencies.

Why should I participate?

By taking part in this study, you have a chance to have your voice heard, to talk about your child's needs from your own point of view and help other families in similar situations. We are following up with families approximately 36 months after the last interview to see how things may have changed.

Who conducts this study?

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sponsors the study. ACF hired a team of researchers from RTI International (RTI), the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Washington University in St. Louis to conduct the study. The research team is not connected with the child welfare agency.

Who is RTI International?

RTI International (RTI) is a research company located in North Carolina. RTI conducts research projects for a wide variety of government agencies, universities, and private companies. Our local interviewers will schedule and conduct interviews with children, families, and caseworkers.

How was I chosen?

In doing this survey, we cannot talk to everyone in the country. That would cost too much and take too long. We selected a sample of children at random who came into contact with the child welfare system during a 12-month period. A child currently or very recently in your care is among 4,000 other children taking part in this study across the nation. This child gave us permission to contact you. You will receive a \$50 gift card to thank you for participating.

What does my involvement require?

If you agree to take part, we will ask you some questions over the telephone and others you will answer privately on the Internet. The interview can also be conducted in person. We will schedule the interview at a time convenient for you. The section over the Internet can be completed on your own time and at your own pace. If the survey is conducted in person, the interviewer can provide a laptop for you to use to complete the section over the Internet. We ask questions about your child's development, including his or her learning, behavior, health, and friendships. We also ask about your family's situation and any services your family may receive.

We may contact you in the future to update our information.

How long will it take?

Your interview lasts about 45 minutes. We will schedule the interview at a time convenient for you.

Are the questions personal?

Some questions may seem personal to some people. We keep your answers private to the extent permitted by law. No one else (even other household members) will know what you said during the interview. You do not have to answer any question that you do not want to answer.

What happens to the information?

We store your survey responses in a safe and secure way. We combine your answers with other interviews and report in summary form. We do not link your name or your child's name to the information you provide. We keep your names and other identifiers separate from your answers. We only use your name and address to contact you in the future for another interview. We may telephone you or send a letter to check on the quality of the interviewer's work.

What will you ask child welfare agency personnel?

We ask the caseworker about the kinds of child welfare services provided to you and your family. We also ask the caseworker to refer to your child's service records when answering our questions.

What about Privacy?

We keep your responses private to the extent permitted by the law. We keep your interview answers on a secure computer labeled with an ID number. We do not identify you by name. All staff involved in this research signed a Privacy Pledge.

Part of the study will ask you to enter information in a secure website. We anticipate that your participation in this study presents no greater risk than everyday use of the Internet. Though we are taking precautions to protect your privacy, you should be aware that if you email information in an unsecure manner, it could be read by a third party before it reaches our secure environment.

This research is covered by a federal protection called a Certificate of Confidentiality. This means the researchers cannot share the information they gather that may identify you. This paper prevents researchers from revealing this information even if it is subpoenaed by a court.

However, this paper does allow researchers to share information in some situations. For example, researchers must follow reporting laws about child or adult abuse. Also, as a part of agreeing to be in this study, you are giving permission for researchers to share information in the rare circumstances that it is needed to prevent serious risk to yourself or others. In addition, the agency that funds this research (ACF), is permitted to access information to confirm that the research is being conducted properly.

We never identify a single person in our reports. Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write up the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the combined information. You will not be identified in any published or presented materials.

Where do I get more information about the study?

If you have other questions, please call toll-free: Jennifer Keeney at RTI, 1-800-334-8571, extension 919-316-3525 or send us an email via our study email box, NSCAW@rti.org. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, call toll-free: **RTI's Office of Human Research Protections** at 1-866-214-2043.