



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

We invite you to take part 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 into contact with the child welfare system. As a part of this study, we will examine different reasons families come into contact with the system and the different ways agencies handle situations like yours.

What is the National Survey of 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 this 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 survey, you have a chance to have your voice heard, to talk about your child's needs from your own point of view, and to help other families in similar situations. The selected child named in the accompanying letter and/or a caregiver were interviewed before in our first round of interviews. You may have participated in that earlier round of interviews. We are now following up with families approximately 36 months after that last interview to see how things may have changed.

Who sponsors and conducts this study?

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sponsors this 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 contact and schedule interviews with selected 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. Your child is among 4,000 randomly selected children taking part in the study. We want to interview you about your child, your experiences with the child welfare system, and your family. As a token of our appreciation, you will receive a \$50 gift card for your time. Children ages 11 and older receive a \$20 gift card plus a small gift of equal value for participating.

What does my involvement require?

We ask questions about your child's development, including his or her learning, behavior, health, and friendships. We also ask questions about your family's situation and any services your family may receive.

To help us understand changes over time, we may contact you and your child in the future to update our information. You can decide to join the study at that time.

What is my child's involvement in the study?

The interviewer will ask for your permission to talk with your child. The interview asks children about their development, family experiences, school, and friends.

How will you conduct the study?

If you decide to take part, the first part of the interview can take place over the telephone or in person. The second part of the interview will take place over the Internet. We will also ask your permission to use in our research any information outside of the interview that we may obtain about you or your child for research purposes only.

How long will it take?

The interview with you and the interview with your child will last about 45 minutes. We will schedule the interview at a convenient time for you and your child. The section over the Internet can be completed at your own pace. If the interview is conducted in person, the interviewer can provide a laptop for you to use for the Internet section.

Are the questions personal?

Some questions may seem personal to some people. We keep your information 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 collect your responses using a secure computer. We send the collected information to RTI by the computer 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 your child and 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 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.

The interviewer will ask for your permission before approaching your child for an interview. At that point, your child may choose whether to participate in the study. To protect your privacy and that of your child, neither of you will know the other's answers to the interview questions. We combine your answers with responses from thousands of others from around the country. We report results only in percentages, averages, and other statistics.

Where do I get more information about the study?

If you have 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.