

Parent and Caregiver Surveys Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Background

The Parent and Caregiver Surveys are important tools that lift up the experiences of the children and families served through the Child and Family Practice Model (CFPM or Practice Model). Using the surveys provides an opportunity to gather information firsthand from parents and caregivers about their relationship and interactions with the social worker, as well as provides an important feedback loop to help child welfare agencies and their community and Tribal partners improve implementation supports and sustain the practice model.

The Surveys were developed as a part of the Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII) to gather important information on short-term outcomes of the Practice Model, including the involvement of parents in identifying problems and working with their circle of support on solutions. The surveys can be an invaluable tool for periodically seeking local input from parents and caregivers to help assess the effectiveness of the Practice Model and make the needed changes to better serve and support children and families.

This FAQ is intended to pose questions and provide answers about the Parent and Caregiver Surveys.

Parent and Caregiver Survey Questions and Answers

What are the Parent and Caregiver Surveys?

- *The parent and caregiver surveys are tools to understand how the Practice Model is being experienced. The surveys are designed for use with parents and legal guardians who are receiving Family Reunification services and caregivers of children in Permanency Planning.*
- *The surveys include questions about the parent or caregiver's relationship with the social worker; their sense of hopefulness and locus of control; family, friend, community, and Tribal member involvement in supporting the child and family; the occurrence of casework events such as visitation and family team meetings; and general demographics on the participant and their child.*

Why were the Parent and Caregiver Surveys developed?

- *In developing and testing an intervention, it's important to ensure that short-term outcomes are moving in the right direction and that the approach is not harming children or producing negative results. The Parent and Caregiver Survey data will help jurisdictions implementing the Practice Model to understand if families have:*
 - *Positive and productive relationships with caseworkers, or*

- *Connection to and support from extended family, community and Tribes. The Parent and Caregiver Surveys have been designed to gather information about these and other expected short-term outcomes of the Practice Model.*

How were the surveys developed?

- *The developers of the Child and Family Practice Model worked collaboratively with federal PII evaluation partners to develop the Parent and Caregiver Surveys. The questions were adapted from two reliable instruments already tested and in use:*
 - *Measuring the Integrity of Systems of Care – Family Scale (Decker-Fham, Farloss, & Woodbridge, 1998)*
 - *Cultural Competence Assessment – Primary Care (Switzer, Scholle, Johnson, et al., 1998)*

Additionally, the survey contains CFPM-specific items that implementing sites and their community partners helped develop in early work on short-term Practice Model outcomes.

How were the Surveys used in the PII Formative Evaluation of the Practice Model and what was learned?

- *During the initial CFPM Formative Evaluation in late 2013, telephone administration of an earlier version of the parent-legal guardian survey was attempted with approximately 95 parents/guardians served by CFPM-trained workers in Fresno, California.*
- *While the survey appeared to be a good measure of parents' perceptions of their interactions and relationship with their caseworker, telephone administration of the survey was not effective. The low response rate highlighted the need for further development and testing of survey processes to increase response rates.*

How can we be sure the questions in the Parent and Caregiver Surveys are understandable to parents and caregivers?

- *The surveys have gone through a process called Cognitive Testing. This occurred in early 2015 and was designed to study the Parent and Caregiver Surveys to ensure the survey's instructions, wording and formatting were understandable to respondents, and that the questions were getting at the intended information.*
- *During early 2015, up to 10 parents-legal guardians and 10 caregivers being served by CFPM-trained workers in Fresno were identified to test and provide feedback on survey wording, flow and timing. After taking the survey each parent and caregiver was interviewed to learn about any issues with the survey. This process informed needed revisions to ensure the current version of the survey is as clear and understandable as possible for parents and caregivers.*

How can survey response rates be increased to provide sufficient data about CFPM short-term outcomes?

- *Pilot Testing of the survey was also completed to test and refine survey administration processes. It provided an opportunity for the Parent and Caregiver Surveys to be distributed to a small sample of parents and caregivers in order to study the type, timing and percentage of responses.*

- *Pilot Testing took place during the spring of 2015. At that time surveys were distributed to approximately 28 parents and 28 caregivers in Los Angeles and Santa Clara Counties. Survey distribution included at least 2 rounds of follow-up reminders to encourage participants to complete the survey.*
- *The results of Pilot Testing identified survey processes likely to result in sufficient survey data for meaningful analysis of CFPM short-term outcomes. This included in-person distribution of Parent Surveys by social workers during a monthly contact (with 2 rounds of in-person follow-up reminders in subsequent monthly contacts) and distribution of Caregiver Surveys by mail with several rounds of post-card and phone follow-up.*

When were the Parent and Caregiver surveys distributed as part of the federal PII Evaluation?

- *The surveys were not able to be distributed as part of the federal evaluation. Internal Review Board (IRB) approval for the Parent and Caregiver Survey Study was received in late 2015, however the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) did not provide their approval for the process.*
- *Sites implementing the Practice Model are exploring strategies for handling survey administration and data collection locally.*

Are the surveys designed to be distributed to particular target populations, such as African American and American Indian parents and children who are being served by the Practice Model?

- *Distributing surveys broadly to the many diverse families being served by the Practice Model will provide the best information to understand how the Practice Model is impacting casework and short-term outcomes for families.*

Once the federal PII evaluation of the Practice Model is completed, will the Parent and Caregiver Surveys be available for use by CFPM counties and other interested jurisdictions?

- *Yes. In addition to training, coaching, fidelity and outcome data, survey data from parents and caregivers could be helpful in local efforts to support and sustain the Practice Model.*
- *The final survey instruments are available on the CFPM website (www.reducefostercarenow.org).*

The Child and Family Practice Model was developed as part of a 5-year, federally funded project to reduce long-term foster care. To learn more, visit www.reducefostercarenow.org or contact CFPMinfo@cfpic.org. The contents of this document are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Children's Bureau, which funded the CAPP/CFPM Project under Cooperative Agreement 90CT0153.

