



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*. Below you will find answers to some of the most common questions asked about the survey.

What is the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW)?

The National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW) is the first ever nationwide study of children and families who have come into contact with the child welfare system. We designed the NSCAW to collect data directly from selected children and their parents or guardians. We also collect information from caseworkers and agency records. We use this information to learn about the needs of children and families, the kinds of services used by children and families, and about other services provided by child welfare agencies.

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.

Who is RTI International (RTI)?

RTI is a private, research company located in North Carolina. RTI was founded in 1958 by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Duke University in Durham, and North Carolina State University in Raleigh. RTI conducts research projects for a wide variety of government agencies, universities, and private companies.

How were children chosen to participate?

Most surveys involve drawing a scientific sample from the population of interest and then concentrating the study on this relatively small sample. We use this approach for the NSCAW. First, we selected a random sample of over 60 child welfare agencies from the entire U.S. Within each of these agencies, we selected a sample of children at random who had contact with the child welfare system during a 12-month period. This resulted in a group of about 4,000 children who are taking part in the study. They represent children in child welfare agencies across the entire U.S.

What is the NSCAW Caseworker Survey?

During the reference period, we randomly selected children from your agency for inclusion in this study. At least one caseworker from that agency was asked to complete an initial interview that focused on the investigation that led to the family's inclusion in the study.

We are now following up with those same children and their caregivers approximately 36 months after the first round of interviews. You have been identified as the primary caseworker or service provider for one of the participating children. The caseworker survey focuses on the child's history in the child welfare system and the services he/she receives. In answering these questions, it may be necessary for you to refer to the child's services records.

We may ask you to complete interviews for more than one child during the year. The interviewer will work with you to find a convenient time to do the interview. The interview can be completed by telephone.

How are children involved in NSCAW?

The interviewer will talk with youth about their development, family experiences, school, and friends. The interviewer will obtain permission from the child's legal guardian before observing or talking with him or her.

How are parents/guardians involved in NSCAW?

We ask parents or caregivers of selected children to answer questions by telephone and over the Internet about the child's development, including his or her learning, behavior, health, and friendships. We also ask about the services the

family receives and their family environment. Additional questions focus on their attitudes about raising children, family support, involvement with school and community activities, and their interaction with the selected child.

How was my name associated with this case?

Our local interviewer working this case obtained your name from either the child's current caregiver/legal guardian, who has agreed to participate in the study, or from the participating local agency. As the primary caseworker or service provider for the sampled child's case, you were named as the person most knowledgeable about the services the child and family may have received.

Does the local agency approve of NSCAW?

Yes. An agency local to your area signed a Letter of Agreement with RTI. The letter outlined the project's responsibilities with respect to issues such as data collection and confidentiality of data. The letter also provided the agency's responsibilities including the provision of data for sampling purposes, provision of current caregiver contact information, and support of caseworker participation in NSCAW.

How is the survey conducted?

Our local interviewer will contact you in advance to schedule a convenient time to complete the telephone interview. In conducting the interview, the interviewer will read the questions from a computer screen and type the answers into the computer. You may need to refer to your records to answer some questions.

How long will the interview take?

The interview over the telephone lasts about 50 minutes. We will schedule the interview at a time convenient for you.

Will the selected child or his/her guardian know my answers?

No. We keep your information private to the extent permitted by law. The selected child, his/her guardian, and agency staff will not know any of your responses to the interview questions. We use the information we collect for research purposes only. We keep your name and other identifying information separate from your survey responses.

What happens to the information?

We collect your responses to the survey using a secure computer. We send the collected information to RTI through the computer in a safe and secure way. We combine your answers with other interviews and report our findings in summary form. We keep your name and other identifiers separate from your answers. We only use your name and other identifying information to contact you to schedule the interviews. RTI may also telephone you or send a letter to check on the quality of the interviewer's work.

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.

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. In addition, the agency that funds this research (ACF), is permitted to access information to confirm that the research is being conducted properly.

Where do I get more information?

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.