OVERALL, FAMILIES ARE THRIVING! HOWEVER, SOME FAMILIES MAY NEED MORE SUPPORT.

The target population included all families with children in the state of Vermont whose parents or guardians received an Adoption or Guardianship Assistance Agreement Subsidy.

Surveys were collected in cycles based on FSD district about 6 months apart. Altogether, 1,470 families were asked to participate across the state.

PROJECT PARTNERS
QIC-AG partnered with the Vermont Department for Children and Family Services, Family Services Division (DCF/FSD) and Lund.

CONTINUUM PHASE
Universal

INTERVENTION
The Vermont Permanency Survey was developed to:
1. Identify the strengths and challenges of families formed through adoption and guardianship;
2. Learn from families about their support and service needs; and
3. Recommend ways to deliver data-driven, relevant and timely prevention and intervention services.

STUDY DESIGN
Descriptive

FAMILY WELLBEING

98% of caregivers were committed to their child for life

91% had never thought about ending adoption or guardianship

86% said that adoption/guardianship had a positive impact on their family

BIRTH FAMILY CONTACT

Many caregivers did not see contact with a child’s birth family as important, and many children did not have contact with their birth family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birth sibling (not in home)</th>
<th>Birth mother</th>
<th>Birth father</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

% WITH CONTACT IN LAST 6 MONTHS WHEN CONTACT WAS POSSIBLE

RESEARCH QUESTION
Will families with children in the state of Vermont whose parents or guardians currently receive an Adoption or Guardianship Assistance Agreement Subsidy experience a reduction in post permanency discontinuity and improved child and family wellbeing if families are provided assertive outreach to complete a survey?

809 PARTICIPANTS (55% OF FAMILIES RESPONDED)

Findings

If you knew then what you know now, do you think you still would have adopted or assumed guardianship of your child?

Caregivers who were UNCERTAIN or WOULD NOT, on average:

- had older children with more behavior challenges;
- felt less confident in meeting their child’s needs;
- had more difficulty coping in times of stress;
- experienced higher levels of strain attributed to parenting; and
- were less likely to be related to their child compared to families who said they ‘DEFINITELY WOULD.’

78% Definitely would
22% Uncertain or would not

RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Some families may benefit from additional follow-up with timely, adoption-competent and trauma-informed services. Services should assess and support the entire family (not just the child) and be offered to families throughout their journey.
2. Routine follow-up with families, particularly as children get older, may be helpful in preventing future discontinuity.
3. Caregivers may need additional training and support to help them talk to their children about healthy connections with their birth family members.
This research summary was designed by staff at the Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing at The University of Texas at Austin, Steve Hicks School of Social Work, in conjunction with the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University.

Evaluation questions? Please contact Nancy Rolock at nancy.rolock@case.edu or Rowena Fong at rfong@austin.utexas.edu.

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