



VERMONT

UNIVERSAL OUTREACH SURVEY

OVERVIEW

The National Quality Improvement Center for Adoption and Guardianship Support and Preservation (QIC-AG) is a five-year project working with eight sites that will implement evidence-based interventions or develop and test promising practices which if proven effective can be replicated or adapted in other child welfare jurisdictions. Effective interventions are expected to achieve long-term, stable permanence in adoptive and guardianship homes for waiting children as well as children and after adoption or guardianship has been finalized.

SITE OVERVIEW

The Vermont Department for Children and Family Services, Family Services Division (DCF/FSD) is the lead agency for the QIC-AG project. Throughout the State of Vermont, DCF/FSD is the public child welfare and juvenile justice agency that is responsible for the delivery of child welfare services, which are provided uniformly through 12 district offices. FSD partners with private agencies to deliver both pre- and post-permanency services and supports to families formed through adoption and guardianship.

PROJECT GOAL

The Vermont QIC-AG project aims to determine if early outreach is done with all adoptive and guardianship families, will the system of care be able to identify families who are doing well along with families who are struggling. Specifically, the project hopes that the outreach will enable the system to understand the strengths and protective factors associated with families who are doing well, and develop a feasible and acceptable process for early identification of families who are struggling or facing elevated challenges post-permanence. In addition, the project aims to increase the FSD's understanding of the profiles of adoptive and guardianship families who respond to various levels of assertive outreach. FSD will use this information to shape the agency's system of care so that FSD and its partner agencies are better able to understand not only how to respond effectively and expeditiously to the needs of adoptive and guardianship families but also which services and supports help these families to be successful.

PERMANENCY CONTINUUM INTERVAL: **UNIVERSAL**

Vermont is implementing an intervention within the Universal Interval of the QIC-AG Permanency Continuum Framework. According to Springer and Phillips (2006), *universal prevention efforts* are strategies delivered to a broad population that do not consider individual levels of need or the extent of child-specific risk, such as programs designed to be implemented in all schools, or media campaigns aimed at the public. Universal intervention strategies are proactive and preventive in nature; that is, these strategies are intended to put supports in place so that challenges do not evolve into problems or crises. For the purpose of the Vermont QIC-AG project, these strategies include outreach efforts and plans to establish and maintain ongoing systematic contact and engagement with families whose adoption or guardianship has been finalized. The strategies included in the Vermont QIC-AG project are intended to reduce permanency discontinuity by connecting families to services and by educating parents and guardians about potential permanency-related issues that might arise over time as their child develops.

TARGET POPULATION

The Vermont QIC-AG project will include all families in the State of Vermont who have a finalized adoption or who have entered into guardianship through DCF/FSD and receive a subsidy. In addition, families who have adopted privately, either domestically or internationally, will be a subgroup in the study; a convenience sample of these families will be asked to complete the study survey.

INTERVENTION

Vermont will develop and implement a post-permanency survey. Using an assertive outreach approach, the survey will be embedded with anticipatory guidance (i.e., a proactive technique developed for use with adoptive and subsidized guardianship families that focuses on the needs of a child at each developmental stage of life). Through this intervention, Vermont seeks to accomplish the following goals:

- » identify and understand the strengths of families who are doing well post-permanence;
- » develop a better understanding of the profiles of the adoptive and guardianship families who respond to various levels of assertive outreach;
- » develop a feasible and acceptable process for the effective, valid early identification of families who are struggling post-permanence or facing increased risk of discontinuity;
- » determine, by district, the ongoing service, support, and training needs of adoptive and guardianship families in the post-permanence period;
- » provide feedback to improve the FSD system of care; and
- » determine methods to increase survey response rates.

Although the knowledge gained through this project will be important to improving services for Vermont's adoptive and guardianship families, the intervention is not considered evidence-based because Vermont is developing the survey instrument.

PROGRAM EVALUATION AND EXPECTED RESULTS

FSD will engage in a rigorous evaluation of assertive outreach levels to examine the effectiveness of these methods in obtaining responses to a post-permanency survey for adoptive and guardianship families. The expected long-term outcomes include increased post-permanency stability, improved behavioral health for children, and improved child and family well-being.

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

Short-term outcomes, unique to this site, include the following:

- » early identification of families who are struggling post permanency and/or may be at risk of discontinuity;
- » improved ability of the FSD to identify post-permanency service needs by region and provider;
- » improved ability to share information within the FSD system of care regarding families' post-permanency needs, risks, and protective factors;
- » improved capacity to deliver data-driven, relevant, and timely prevention and intervention services to adoptive and guardianship families; and
- » increased understanding of the profiles of families who respond to various levels of assertive outreach.



Funded through the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, Grant # 90CO1122-01-00. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the funders, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This information is in the public domain. Readers are encouraged to copy and share it, but please credit Spaulding for Children.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the QIC-AG visit www.qic-ag.org and

- » search our Intervention and Program Catalog
- » download information about the Permanency Continuum Framework
- » explore details about the eight Partner Sites

QIC•AG