National Quality Improvement Center for the Representation of Children in Child Welfare (QIC-ChildRep)

NDACAN Dataset Number 212 USER'S GUIDE

National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect

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NATIONAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT CENTER FOR THE REPRESENTATION OF CHILDREN IN CHILD WELFARE (QIC-CHILDREP)

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PREFACE

The data for *National Quality Improvement Center for the Representation of Children in Child Welfare (QIC-ChildRep)*, have been given to the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect for public distribution by Donald N. Duquette, Britany Orlebeke, Andrew Zinn, and Xiaomeng Zhou. Funding for the project was provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau (Award Number: 99-CO-1047).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SOURCE

Authors should acknowledge the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect and the original collector of the data when they publish manuscripts that use data provided by the Archive. Users of these data are urged to follow some adaptation of the statement below.

> The data used in this publication were made available by the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, and have been used with permission. Data from National Quality Improvement Center for the Representation of Children in Child Welfare (QIC-ChildRep) were originally collected by Britany Orlebeke, Andrew Zinn, and Xiaomeng Zhou. Funding for the project was provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau (Award Number: 99-CO-1047). The collector of the original data, the funder, NDACAN, Cornell University and their agents or employees bear no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations presented here.

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PUBLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENT

In accordance with the terms of the *Data License* for this dataset, users of these data are required to deposit a copy of any published work or report based wholly or in part on these data with the Archive. A copy of any completed manuscript, thesis abstract, or reprint should be sent to the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect, Cornell University, Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research, Beebe Hall, Ithaca, New York 14853. Such copies will be used to provide funding agencies with essential information about the use of NDACAN resources and to facilitate the exchange of information about research activities among data users and contributors.

ABSTRACT

In October 2009, the U.S. Children's Bureau named the University of Michigan Law School the National Quality Improvement Center on the Representation of Children in the Child Welfare System (QIC-ChildRep). With funding of six million dollars over six years, the QIC-ChildRep was charged with gathering, developing and communicating knowledge on child representation and also with promoting consensus on the role of the child's legal representative. These data were collected by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago as part of the evaluation of the QIC-ChildRep intervention.

The U.S. Children's Bureau identified that one of the barriers to successful outcomes for children who come to the attention of the court in child welfare cases is a lack of a trained and effective representative who can advocate for timeliness and effectiveness in the agency and court handling of the child's case. Assessments of America's child welfare system regularly identify inadequate representation of children as a chief obstacle to achieving a well-functioning child welfare system. One of the major challenges from the Children's Bureau was to provide the first ever random assignment experimental design research projects on the legal representation of children.

The QIC-ChildRep demonstration was based on the hypothesis that one of the barriers to permanency and stability for maltreated children was the lack of a trained and effective legal representative who was able to "enter the child's world" to learn the child's needs and wishes and effectively advocate for the child in and out of court.

In its first phase (2010), the QIC-ChildRep conducted a nation-wide assessment of the state of child representation, culminating in the drafting of the QIC-ChildRep Best Practice Model, a set of standards and expectations based on the 1996 American Bar Association Standards of Practice for Lawyers Who Represent Children in Abuse and Neglect Cases. In its second phase, the QIC-ChildRep demonstration project was designed to test the hypothesis of whether attorneys practicing according to the QIC-ChildRep Best Practice Model would improve safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children involved with the child welfare system, relative to attorneys whose practice may not accord with the model. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago was the evaluator.

Two states agreed to become demonstration sites for the project: The Georgia Supreme Court Committee on Justice for Children Court Improvement Program (GA-CIP), with 13 participating judicial districts representing 26% of Georgia's child population, and the Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ) and Washington Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA), on behalf of the Washington State Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care with 21 participating judicial districts representing 89% of Washington's child population.

In each of these sites, Chapin Hall's evaluation was designed to answer a set of questions about the intervention's impact on attorney behavior and a set of questions about treatment attorney impact on child welfare outcomes. In both sites, the goal was to answer these questions for a group of attorneys representing the typical range of ability, experience and motivation of attorneys practicing as child representatives. Each partner, as a result, was expected to include all attorneys practicing child representation in participating jurisdictions in the study.

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STUDY OVERVIEW

Study Identification

National Quality Improvement Center for the Representation of Children in Child Welfare (QIC-ChildRep)

Investigator(s):

Donald N. Duquette, J.D.- University of Michigan Law School, Principal Investigator for the entire QIC-ChildRep project

*Britany Orlebeke, M.P.P.- Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

*Andrew Zinn, M.S.W. Ph.D.- University of Kansas

*Xiaomeng Zhou, M.P.P.- Social Policy Officer, UNICEF-China

*denotes members of the evulation team who collected the data included in this dataset.

Funding Agencies:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau

Award Number(s): 99-CO-1047

Purpose of the Study

The goal The QIC-ChildRep demonstration project was designed to test the hypothesis of whether attorneys practicing according to the QIC-ChildRep Best Practice Model would improve safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children involved with the child welfare system, relative to attorneys whose practice may not accord with the model.

Study Design

All attorneys who were included in the QIC-ChildRep study participated in data collection regardless of treatment or control or control status. Thus, the utility of the data deposit goes beyond the purpose of the study. That being said, the design of the study was as follows: Using a randomized control design, the evaluation addressed the question of whether treatment group attorneys representing at-risk children, after being exposed to a certain set of skills embodied in the QIC-ChildRep Best Practice Model over a two and a half year period, would help their child clients have more stable placements and reach permanency faster than child clients represented by control group attorneys who practiced without the intervention in the same jurisdictions over the same period. Attorneys were randomly assigned within jurisdiction (to control for jurisdiction-level effects) and one group of attorneys participated in the treatment and one group did not. Because of restrictions on sharing specific dates and the need to obscure small jurisdictions, it would not be possible for other researchers to replicate the evaluation findings. However, two other articles have been published or accepted for publication using the survey

data regardless of treatment or control status. That is the expected use of the data: to explore descriptive questions about what attorneys do on behalf of their child clients and what factors are related to those activities.

That being said, information relating to treatment attorney participation in the QIC-Model training is included in the first dataset containing results of the baseline survey.

Date(s) of Data Collection

Data collection started in November 2011 and concluded March 31st, 2015.

Geographic Area

The data were collected from the following locations: 13 judicial jurisdictions in Georgia and 24 judicial jurisdictions in Washington state.

Unit of Observation

The unit of observation is an attorney.

Sample

To maximize external validity, the QIC-ChildRep study sought to include all practicing attorneys representing children throughout Washington State and in study counties in Georgia. The attorney recruitment process was somewhat different for Georgia and Washington State and was based on each partner organization's recommendation of the method that would maximize participation. Eligible attorneys were identified and recruited based on criteria and procedures that were specific to each state.

In Georgia, the partner organization for the study, Georgia Supreme Court Committee on Justice for Children Court Improvement Program (J4C), sought and received agreement from presiding juvenile court judges in 13 judicial circuits, covering 20 counties. These counties represented 26 percent of Georgia's general child population. These judges agreed to require all attorneys practicing in those jurisdictions to participate in the demonstration. As a result, all attorneys representing children at the start of the study or who began to represent children during the study were automatically enrolled (N = 146). Judges had provided written agreement to participate in the study to the J4C, and J4C provided official notification to the attorneys about the study and their judges' agreement to require their participation.

In Washington State, participation was based on a statewide recruitment and informed consent process conducted by the Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ) and the Washington Office of Civil and Legal Aid (OCLA), two of the QIC-ChildRep partner organizations in Washington State. In January 2012, staff from these partner organizations made initial contact with all attorneys known to be receiving dependency case referrals from county courts or government agencies. In early 2013, the end of the first year of the study, a second round of reaching out efforts occurred (N = 128). Based on the assessment of CCYJ staff members, several of whom had extensive contacts within the child welfare legal community in Washington State, nearly all of the attorneys known to have been actively serving as child representatives in the participating counties at the time of the sample were contacted by CCYJ or OCLA staff. Among the 128 attorneys that were contacted, 114 agreed to participate. Together, these 24

judicial jurisdictions represented 89 percent of Washington's child population.

Data Collection Procedures

Baseline surveys: Attorneys were emailed links to a web-based survey that they completed on-line. Attorneys who did not complete the survey received several reminders. Baseline surveys were completed over the period of November 2011 to March 2012. A few surveys were completed later at the time attorneys enrolled in the study. Survey month and year are included in the data file.

Attorney Activity Surveys: Each attorney had access to a dashboard where he or she would see surveys needing to be completed about specific, named children. Attorneys received monthly notifications of new surveys to complete. Each quarter, prior to receiving a payment, attorneys received several reminders to complete surveys. Many attorneys did not complete their surveys until the end of the quarter. However, attorneys were always asked to recollect activities from the date which they were completing the survey relative to a date that provided for them in the survey. Attorney surveys were completed by Georgia attorneys from October 2013 and May 2015. Attorney surveys were completed by WA attorneys from July 2012 to May 2015, more than a year longer than GA.

Surveys unfolded differently in the two states, though most of the elements were in common between the two states. Information about assignment of attorneys to specific children was obtained by researchers from the court agencies in WA and GA.

In the case of GA, where no statewide administrative database existed, information about assignment of attorneys to specific children was communicated monthly via password-protected spreadsheets. Information about new assignments was used to generate assignment surveys for the attorney's dashboard. Six months after assignment, the attorney would receive notification that a follow-up survey had been placed on the dashboard. At that time, if the attorney was still representing the child, he or she would complete the survey. If between surveys, the attorney had stopped representing the child, he or she would the activity parts of the survey up until the end of representation and then a series of closing questions.

In the case of WA, where a statewide administrative database existed, information was communicated monthly to researchers, including information about disposition and TPR hearings. Attorney notifications and surveys on the dashboard were generated at the time at the time of assignment, disposition hearing, review (six months from assignment), TPR and exit.

Attorney Activity Survey Comments: Attorneys, in both Georgia and Washington, were asked in one text field to leave any extenuating comments at the end of each survey. Georgia attorneys were asked "If there are any extenuating circumstances concerning this case, or additional details that were not addressed during the survey, please briefly describe those below". Similarly, at the end of the survey, attorneys in Washington were asked "If there are additional details that you want to provide concerning your survey responses or the circumstances of this child's case, please include them below".

Response Rates

Baseline survey: GA: 86% WA: 93%

Attorney Activity surveys: GA: 82% WA: 89%

Follow-up Baseline survey (selected questions) GA: 48% WA: 84%

Comments file: GA: 49% WA: 41%

Sources of Information

The data were collected from survey instruments developed by the study investigators.

Type of Data Collected

Survey data were collected.

Measures

Orlebeke, B., Zinn, A., & Zhou, X.(2011). QIC-ChildRep: Attorney survey [Instrument]. Available from: https://www.ndacan.acf.hhs.gov

Orlebeke, B., Zinn, A., & Zhou, X.(2011). QIC-ChildRep: Milestone survey [Instrument]. Available from: https://www.ndacan.acf.hhs.gov

Orlebeke, B., Zinn, A., & Zhou, X.(2011). QIC-ChildRep: Survey comments [Instrument]. Available from: https://www.ndacan.acf.hhs.gov

Related Publications & Reports

Users are strongly encouraged to obtain these references before doing analyses. To view a complete list of publications, go to https://www.ndacan.acf.hhs.gov**, navigate to the QIC-Childrep dataset page, and click on the publications link.**

Zinn, A., & Orlebeke, B.(2017) Juvenile court judicial expertise and children's permanency outcomes. *Children and Youth Services Review,* 77.

Zinn, A., & Orlebeke, B. (2017) The nature and determinants of child representation practice in child welfare cases. *Family Court Review, 55*(2).

Duquette, D., with Orlebeke, B., Zinn, A., Pott, R., Skyles, A., & Zhou, X. (2016) Children's Justice. *American Bar Association Publications*.

Orlebeke, B., Zhou, X., Skyles, A., & Zinn, A. (2016) *Evaluation of the QIC-ChildRep Best Practices Model Training for Attorneys Representing Children in the Child Welfare System*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

Orlebeke, B., Zinn, A., Duquette, D., & Zhou, X. (2015). Characteristics of Attorneys Representing Children in Child Welfare Cases. *Family Law Quarterly*, 49(3) 477.

Zinn, A., Orlebeke, B., Duquette, D., & Zhou, X. (2016). The Organizational Contexts of Child Representation Services in Child Welfare Cases. *Family Court Review, 54(3)*.

Analytic Considerations

There is a weight variable called "Sample_weight." Sample_weight refers to how much the response, at the child level, should be weighted in analysis. For attorneys that represented large numbers of attorneys, not every child was the subject of a survey. The weight is the inverse probability of being selected from the children that could have been surveyed. Specifically, it is, at the time of initial survey, (# of children that could have been selected for that attid)/(# of children selected for that attid).

Variables listed in the codebook which end in an underscore were asked of participants one time and that response is carried forward to subsequent surveys. Participants were not asked to review or correct responses after the first time the questions were administered. Underscores were removed from variable names in the data file in order to comply with variable naming conventions specific to the statistical software.

Records, in the att1_qic file, with a juris_id of "0" are attorneys who took the baseline survey but did not participate in the QIC program. One attorney dropped out, the others are attorneys who never got cases during the study period. There are 30 records with a value of "0" for juris_id.

The following variable can be used to link the data files: "attid."

Confidentiality Protection

Primary and secondary identifiers have been removed, and as a result, there will be instances where variables that appear in the data dictionaries are not available in the data files.

Eight juris_id's have been recoded to 99 in order to further protect the confidentiality of the participants.

All dates in the first_dt variable have been set to the 15th of the month, preserving month and year.

NDACAN recoded aty_bar_year from the DS212-att1-qic-v1 data file to be categorical for confidentiality reasons. The variable named "Survey_completed" was deleted from the DS21-att3-qic-v1 data file due to confidentiality reasons.

Extent of Collection

This collection consists of the User's Guide, three Data Dictionaries, text data files with import program files for SAS, SPSS, and Stata, tab-delimited data files, and files native to SPSS, Stata, and SAS.

Extent of Processing

NDACAN produced the User's Guide, created software specific import statements and native data files for SPSS, Stata, and SAS. Tab delimited and ASCII data files are also included. NDACAN added variable and value labels to the data files.

DATA FILE INFORMATION

File Specification:

There are three data files named DS212-att1-qic-v1, DS212-att2-qic-v1, and DS212-att3-qic-v1. Each data file name is followed by a "v" and a number indicating the current version of the data.

Data File Notes

Each data file represents data collected for one of the measures used in the study.

Technical support for this dataset is provided by NDACAN.

Please send your inquiries to NDACANSUPPORT@cornell.edu