

Understanding Post Adoption and Guardianship Instability for Children and Youth Who Exit Foster Care (PAGI): The NSCAW Adoption Study

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PREFACE

The data for *Understanding Post Adoption and Guardianship Instability for Children and Youth Who Exit Foster Care (PAGI): The NSCAW Adoption Study* have been given to the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) for public distribution by Heather Ringeisen. Funding for the project was provided by Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Award Number(s): HHSP233201500039I).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SOURCE

Authors should acknowledge the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) and the original collector(s) of the data when publishing 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 *Understanding Post Adoption and Guardianship Instability for Children and Youth Who Exit Foster Care (PAGI): The NSCAW Adoption Study* were originally collected by: Heather Ringeisen. Funding for the project was provided by Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Award Number(s): HHSP233201500039I). The collector(s) of the original data, the funder(s), 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 notify the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect of any published work or report based wholly or in part on these data. A copy of any completed manuscript, thesis abstract, or reprint should be emailed to NDACANsupport@cornell.edu. Such copies will be used to provide our funding agency 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

The purpose of the Understanding Post Adoption and Guardianship Instability for Children and Youth Who Exit Foster Care (or PAGI) project is to examine rates of instability, factors associated with instability, and the supports and resources that promote post-permanency stability. Ultimately, the project aims to support efforts to build the capacity of federal, state, and local agencies to get accurate information about instability for children who exit foster care to adoption or guardianship. In order to examine these issues, two separate studies were conducted 1.) The Contact After Adoption or Guardianship: Child Welfare Agency and Family Interactions Study and 2.) The Survey of National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW) Adopted Youth, Young Adults, Adults, and Adoptive Parents. This dataset contains data from The Survey of National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW) Adopted Youth, Young Adults, Adults, and Adoptive Parents.

The Survey of National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW) Adopted Youth, Young Adults, Adults, and Adoptive Parents (hereafter referred to as “The NSCAW Adoption Study”) seeks to understand the extent of post adoption instability events that occur in families who have adopted children who have exited the foster care system. Post adoption instability refers to situations in which children who exit foster care to adoptive homes no longer reside with their adoptive parents and includes formal events, such as a child’s reentry into the foster care system, or informal events, such as a child going to live with a grandparent or running away. A second objective is to understand risk and protective factors associated with post adoption instability. The study will conduct web or telephone surveys with adopted youth, young adults, and adults as well as their adoptive parents who were participants in the first or second cohort of the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW I, II; OMB #0970-0202).

STUDY OVERVIEW

Study Identification

Understanding Post Adoption and Guardianship Instability for Children and Youth Who Exit Foster Care (PAGI): The NSCAW Adoption Study

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Funded By:

Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S.
Department of Health and Human Services

Award Number(s):

HHSP233201500039I

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the Understanding Post Adoption and Guardianship Instability for Children and Youth Who Exit Foster Care (or PAGI) project is to examine rates of instability, factors associated with instability, and the supports and resources that promote post-permanency stability. Ultimately, the project aims to support efforts to build the capacity of federal, state, and local agencies to get accurate information about instability for children who exit foster care to adoption or guardianship.

Study Design

The NSCAW Adoption Study conducted new surveys with the families of children who were identified as adopted prior to the end of the original NSCAW I or II study period. The study team identified a sample of eligible NSCAW I and II adopted children, or adoptees. Then, the study team conducted tracing and locating efforts to identify updated contact information for the adoptees (who were now youth, young adults, or adults) and their adoptive parent. Those with valid contact information were offered an opportunity to complete either a web or telephone survey. Sometimes both the adoptee and the adoptive parent completed a survey and sometimes only one or the other participated.

The NSCAW Adoption Study surveys assessed the occurrence of both formal and informal instability events during childhood, risk and protective factors associated with instability, and perceptions of adoptive relationships. New survey responses were combined with existing secondary data available within the NSCAW I and II datasets to answer the proposed research questions.

Date(s) of Data Collection

06/16/2021 - 03/07/2022

Geographic Area

United States of America

Unit of Observation

Individual

Sample

The NSCAW Adoption Study conducted new surveys with the families of children who were identified as adopted prior to the end of the original NSCAW I or II study period. The study team identified a sample of eligible NSCAW I and II adopted children, or adoptees. Then, the study team conducted tracing and locating efforts to identify updated contact information for the adoptees (who were now youth, young adults, or adults) and their adoptive parent. Those with valid contact information were offered an opportunity to complete either a web or telephone survey. Sometimes both the adoptee and the adoptive parent completed a survey and sometimes only one or the other participated. The NSCAW Adoption Study surveys assessed the occurrence of both formal and informal instability events during childhood, risk and protective factors associated with instability, and perceptions of adoptive relationships. New survey responses were combined with existing secondary data available within the NSCAW I and II datasets to answer the proposed research questions.

The NSCAW Adoption Study team used an iterative process for sample selection and determining case eligibility. This process identified eligible cases both prior to and during data

collection. First, the study team identified NSCAW I and II participants who met preliminary eligibility criteria for inclusion in the NSCAW Adoption Study sample. Preliminary eligibility criteria included those who: -Had a history of foster care placement (prior to adoption),

- Achieved adoption status prior to the end of NSCAW I or II, and
- Were at least 15 years or older as of 4/1/2020.

Cases excluded from the NSCAW Adoption Study sample included:

- Child cases who had cognitive disabilities according to NSCAW I and II data collection efforts that would prevent the sampled youth/adult from having the capacity to consent for a new study survey. (For these cases, only adoptive parents were selected to be approached for a survey as part of the NSCAW Adoption Study.)
- Cases where the adoptee or adoptive parent during NSCAW I or II asked not to be re-contacted for future research.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection began with tracing and locating the former NSCAW I and II participants identified as eligible for the NSCAW Adoption Study. The study team conducted many tracing and locating strategies to gather contact information for eligible study participants. These included database searches; telephone, mail, and email outreach; outreach to the secondary contacts provided by the NSCAW I and II participants; and in-person visits to addresses identified through prior locating efforts.

In addition to the letter requesting participants to update their contact information, all eligible participants also received a lead letter mailing, which explained the purpose of the study and asked for eligible participants' cooperation. Letters to adoptive parents directly referenced the study's focus on adoption. Letters to adoptees did not reference adoption to avoid disclosing adoption status to adoptees who might not be aware of their adoption. Participants who refused to complete the survey by telephone were sent a "refusal" mailing asking if they would be willing to complete a web survey. Participants who did not respond to telephone call attempts or in-person home visits received an "unable to contact" mailing. In addition to information describing the study opportunity, these two mailings each included a web address to complete the survey along with a QR code containing the web survey link. Two of the nonresponse mailings were sent via FedEx rather than through the U.S. Postal Service as a strategy to increase response rates.

All eligible adult participants received an NSCAW Adoption Study consent statement by mail. This statement included assurances that the research team will protect the privacy of respondents that participation is voluntary, and that participants may withdraw their consent at any time without any negative consequences. Eligible adoptive parents and adoptee participants 18 years or older could complete the survey by web or by telephone. As requested by the Institutional Review Board, eligible adoptees between 15 and 17 years of age could only complete the survey

by telephone. Eligible parent participants provided consent for their child 15-17 years old to participate; the minor youth provided assent only after parent consent was given. Web survey participants read and signed the consent statement electronically, prior to completing the survey. Telephone survey participants had the consent or assent statement read to them prior to the administration of survey items.

Response Rates

Response rate for adoptive parent cases: 41.79%

Response rate for adoptee cases: 25.65%

Total response rate for either adoptee or adoptive parent survey: 44.90%

Sources of Information

Primary data collection and secondary data available through NSCAW along with data from these new NSCAW Adoption Study surveys of adoptees and their adoptive parents. This study uses/builds on NSCAW data.

Type of Data Collected

Survey and administrative records

Measures

Understanding Post Adoption and Guardianship Instability for Children and Youth Who exit Foster Care (PAGI) - The NSCAW Adoption Study: Survey of Adoptive Parents

The Survey of NSCAW Adoptive Parents (Adoptive Parent Instrument) primarily includes project-developed items. Many project-developed items were based on items used in the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (caregiver instruments used with cohorts I to III), the National Survey of Adoptive Parents, the Quality Improvement Center for Adoption & Guardianship Support and Preservation State Surveys for parents and guardians and the Beyond the Adoption Order study. Section A of the NSCAW Adoption Study Adoptive Parent Instrument includes items on both the parent and adopted child's demographic characteristics as well as the adopted child's current living situation. Section B includes items that gather information on the child's adoption history including age at adoption and current relationships with both adoptive and biological family members. Items in Section C assess the adopted child's history of post adoption instability including formal instability (termination of adoptive parent(s)' rights, foster care reentry), informal instability (running away, homelessness, time in transition living program, living temporarily with relatives or non-relatives, reasons for leaving home prior to 18 years of age), and other interruptions in care (residential treatment or group home; juvenile detention). In Section B, participants are first asked about the occurrence of these events. If a participant endorses "yes" to any of the post adoption instability experiences, the participant answers several follow-up questions. These questions asked participants to describe

the child's age at the time of the instability experience, whether contact continued between the adoptive family members and the adoptee after the instability experience, the family context during the time of the instability experience, whether services were received during this time, and whether the child ever returned to live with the adoptive family. Section D focuses on post adoption services and supports (both perceived as needed and received). Section E includes item to assess the quality of the adoptive parent-child current relationship as well as their relationship during childhood (closeness, frequency of contact). Section F focuses the adoptive parent's motivations to adopt, expectations for the adoption experience, preadoption training, and level of perceived preparedness for adoption. The questions within Section G assess the adoptive parent's perceptions of their family cohesion and functioning during childhood. Items within this module come from two subscales of the Protective Factors Scale (PFS): the Nurturing and Attachment subscale and the Family Functioning and Resiliency subscale (Counts et al., 2010). Section H includes items about the adopted child's current health and mental health status, as well as the adopted child's history of health and mental health problem during childhood. Section H also includes items about parenting stress and burden as well perceived impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the adoptive parent's well-being.

Understanding Post Adoption and Guardianship Instability for Children and Youth Who Exit Foster Care (PAGI) - The NSCAW Adoption Study: Survey of Adoptees

The Survey of NSCAW Adopted Youth, Young Adults, and Adults (Adoptee Instrument) primarily includes project-developed items. Many project-developed items were based upon items used in previous national or state surveys. The main sources of questions were the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (child instruments used with cohorts I to III), the Survey of Youth Transitioning from Foster Care, the Texas Youth Permanency Study, the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth, and the Quality Improvement Center for Adoption & Guardianship Support and Preservation State Surveys. Section A of the NSCAW Adoption Study Adoptee Instrument includes items on demographic characteristics and the participant's current living situation. Section B includes items that gather information on the participant's adoption history including age at adoption and current relationships with both adoptive and biological family members. Items in Section C assess adoptee experiences with post adoption instability including formal instability (termination of adoptive parent(s)' rights, foster care reentry), informal instability (running away, homelessness, time in transition living program, living temporarily with relatives or non-relatives, reasons for leaving home prior to 18 years of age), and other interruptions in care (residential treatment or group home; juvenile detention). In Section B, participants are first asked about the occurrence of these events. If a participant endorses "yes" to any of the post adoption instability experiences, the participant answers several follow-up questions. These questions asked participants to describe their age at the time of the instability experience, whether contact continued between the adoptive family members and the adoptee after the instability experience, the family context during the time of the instability experience, whether services were received during this time, and whether they ever returned to live with their adoptive family. Section D focuses on post adoption services and supports (both perceived as needed and received). Section E includes item to assess the quality of the adoptive parent-adoptee's current relationship as well as their relationship during childhood (closeness, sense of belonging). Section F focuses on adoptees feelings about their adoption experience and expectations around the adoptive relationship. The

questions within Section G assess adoptee perceptions of their adoptive family cohesion and functioning during childhood. Items within this module come from two subscales of the Protective Factors Scale (PFS): the Nurturing and Attachment subscale and the Family Functioning and Resiliency subscale (Counts et al., 2010). Section H includes items about the adoptee's current health and mental health status, including substance use and perceived impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the adoptee's well-being. The final instrument section, Section I, focuses on adoptee's perceptions of current social support.

Related Publications and Final Reports

Users are strongly encouraged to review published works, based upon these data, before doing analyses. To view a complete list of publications for this dataset, please visit our online citations collection called canDL (child abuse and neglect Digital Library): <https://www.ndacan.acf.hhs.gov/candl/candl.cfm>.

Analytic Considerations

Data users are advised to use all available study documentation (codebook, survey instruments, variable derivation documents) when examining the data. Each piece of documentation contains information that will contribute to a data users understanding of the data. Due to variable label limitations, the data file and codebook do NOT contain all skip and qualifying logic, full question text, or derivation algorithms for variables. Data users can source this information from a combination of the survey instrument documents and variable derivation documents.

The PAGI NSCAW Adoption Study contains select variables from the original NSCAW I and NSCAW II datasets. Summary information about these variables is contained within this dataset's documentation (Variables Originating from NSCAW I or II), however, for more in-depth information about the NSCAW variables, secondary analysts should pursue a restricted access data license for the NSCAW I and II datasets.

Confidentiality Protection

This dataset has been de-identified by the data contributor, in consultation with NDACAN, prior to archiving. All primary identifiers have been removed and secondary identifiers have also been deleted or recoded to significantly reduce or eliminate disclosure risk. Site identifiers have been removed from the dataset. Users of this dataset are prohibited from attempting to re-identify any site.

Verbatim open-ended text responses that were solicited from study participants are not included in the NDACAN version of the data due to the responses containing identifying information about the participants, their locations, other family members. Verbatim responses to adoption instability related variables where a participant provided a response to "other" were coded into numeric values and were incorporated into the archived version of the data.

Extent of Collection

This dataset contains a User's Guide, Codebook, survey instruments, supplemental documentation about derived variables, and onedataset named "DS270_PAGI_adopt" in file formats native to SPSS (.sav), Stata (.dta), and SAS (.sas7bdat). There are also import program files for SAS (.sas), SPSS (.sps), and Stata (.do) to read in the text (.dat) data file, and comma-delimited (.csv) data file for use with spreadsheet programs.

Extent of Processing

The data contributor conducted all data recodes and deletions prior to depositing the data with NDACAN. NDACAN created the User's Guide, Codebook, and data files formatted for SAS, SPSS, Stata, and a text and a tab-delimited data file.

DATA FILE INFORMATION

File Specifications

This data contain 882 variables and 383 observations.

Data File Notes

Users should use all available study documentation (codebook, survey instruments, variable derivation documents) when examining the data. Each piece of documentation contains information that will contribute to a data users understanding of the data. Due to variable label limitations, the data file and codebook do NOT contain all skip and qualifying logic, full question text, or derivation algorithms for variables. Data users will source this information from a combination of the survey instrument documents and variable derivation documents.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

PAGI – Post Adoption and Guardianship Instability

NSCAW - The National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being

Technical support for this dataset is provided by NDACAN.

Please send your inquiries to NDACANsupport@cornell.edu

**Visit the User Support page of the NDACAN website for help documents and videos
(<https://www.ndacan.acf.hhs.gov/user-support/user-support.cfm>).**