

Virginia Department of Social Services, Division of Family Services, Preventing Post-Adoption Instability and Breakdown

What is the purpose of this project?

While adoption can bring much joy to a family, adoptive families can face unique challenges, which can threaten their ability to stay together. The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) is very concerned about the struggles that adoptive families face and would like to know how they can support families through these difficult times. Input from families and from staff who work with families is vital to understanding what supports are needed.

Why is this project important?

This project will help VDSS understand what works to strengthen all adoptive families, and especially those that may be experiencing family instability. Findings from the study will help guide VDSS' ongoing efforts to ensure that effective post-adoption supports and services are always available throughout the Commonwealth.

How can you participate?

Opportunities for participation include:

Adoptive parents and young people who were adopted:

- Research interviews for parents, young people, and service providers (*by invitation*)
- Online surveys for all adoptive parents

Local DSS and private agency staff:

- Research interviews with local DSS caseworkers and private agency social workers (*by invitation*)
- Online staff survey about their knowledge and experiences regarding adoption
- Training for service providers to improve supports and services

Do you have to participate?

No. We hope you will volunteer to participate. For the project to be successful, VDSS and the Division of Family Services needs to hear from all adoptive parents and youth, whether or not they have spent time living apart due to difficulties in the family, as well as from staff who work with these families and individuals. The researchers will not collect your name or identifying information on the surveys. The researchers will combine your answers with those of other respondents to minimize the chances that VDSS or anyone else who reads the study findings will be able to identify you.

Who is providing this study?

Child Trends—a trusted nonprofit leader in research about children, youth, and families—is the lead organization providing this consultation.

Key activities and study timeline – *be on the lookout for invitations:*

- Surveys will happen in October 2022.
- Interviews will happen from October 2022 to March 2023.
- Findings from the study will be reported in December 2023.

If you have any questions or would like more information about this work, please contact Berenice Rushovich at brushovich@childtrends.org or 240-223-9269.