

Illinois Permanence for Older Wards Waiver:

Final Evaluation Report

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FINAL EVALUATION REPORT
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**Illinois Permanence for Older Wards Waiver:
Final Evaluation Report**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Illinois Permanency for Older Wards Waiver (2005-2008) tested the effects of offering an enhanced set of transition and post-permanency services to youth who were considering subsidized guardianship or adoption. A previous Illinois subsidized guardianship waiver demonstration (1997-2002) found that the availability of subsidized guardianship boosted permanency rates, but more so for younger children than for teenagers. In response, the Older Wards Waiver was designed to determine whether the prospect of losing eligibility for some enhanced transition services after adoption or subsidized guardianship was the reason for the lower permanency rate for teens.

The Older Wards Waiver was evaluated by Westat, under contract to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The requirements for a youth to be assigned to the waiver included: youth had to have been in a foster home placement (with either a relative or a nonrelative) for at least 1 year, had to be at least 14 years old, and had to be eligible for subsidized guardianship. Youth were randomly assigned to either the demonstration group (eligible for enhanced services) or the control group (eligible only for a standard limited set of services). Both groups were eligible for adoption and subsidized guardianship. Evaluation of the waiver was based on (1) DCFS administrative data for all youth ever eligible for the waiver statewide, (2) interviews from a sample of eligible youth and their caregivers in the three study regions (Central Cook County region, East St. Louis sub-region, and Peoria sub-region), and (3) Administrative Case Reviews (ACRs) for a sample of youth in the three study regions. In addition, we held focus groups and interviews with agency and court staff for a process study.

Interim Report #1 (January 2008) presented the findings of the process study, limited preliminary outcome findings, and some early results from the initial youth and caregiver interviews.¹ The process study found that local agencies often did not take advantage of the training that DCFS provided across the state. Thus, some agency and court personnel were not well-informed about the waiver. There was some confusion about the difference in service

¹ Interviews were conducted at two points in time: (1) an initial interview within 6 months of becoming eligible for the waiver and (2) a follow-up interview at age 18, time of discharge, or end of the data collection period, whichever came first.

eligibility between youth in the demonstration group and those in the control group, as well as the difference between the Older Wards Waiver and the earlier Subsidized Guardianship Waiver. However, staff expressed strong support for subsidized guardianship and adoption for older youth, although many noted that permanency planning must take into consideration the services that are available as well as issues about managing some youth's behavior.

In Interim Report #1, our outcome findings based on DCFS administrative data were preliminary, as many of the youth had not been in the waiver very long. However, at that time there appeared to have been no positive or negative waiver effect. Comparing outcomes between youth in the demonstration group and those in the control group showed that eligibility for enhanced transition services led to no significant differences (either in the study regions or statewide) on:

- Occurrence of abuse and neglect between the time of assignment to the waiver and achievement of permanence;
- Level of restrictiveness of placements;
- Rates of permanence (subsidized guardianship, adoption, or reunification);
- How quickly permanence was achieved; or
- School achievement or status.

Interim Report #2 (June 2008) presented complete findings from the initial youth and caregiver interviews, as well as the analysis of the ACRs. They included:

- Subsidized guardianship and adoption had *not* been proposed to quite a few families: 36 percent according to caregiver interview data, 39 percent according to youth interview data, and 44 percent according to ACR data.
- There was far more of a focus on permanence (subsidized guardianship or adoption) for younger youth than older youth. The younger youth were significantly more likely (1) to have discussed permanence, (2) to have had permanence proposed to them, and (3) to want permanence with their caregivers.
- A large proportion of families were either undecided or had decided against permanence (subsidized guardianship or adoption): about 74 percent according to the youth, 60 percent according to the caregivers, and 58 percent according to the ACRs.
- According to the interviews, over half (53%) of the youth in the demonstration group reported that their caseworkers had not explained the enhanced transition services to them. Among the caregivers in the demonstration group, 35 percent reported that their

caseworkers had not explained the enhanced services to them. And when the services were explained, both youth and caregivers were more likely to want permanence (subsidized guardianship or adoption) with each other.

In the Final Evaluation Report, we present the final outcome findings and the analysis of the follow-up interviews. The outcomes analysis showed that the waiver had no observed impact. Overall, there were small and not statistically significant demonstration-control differences in exits to adoption, subsidized guardianship, or reunification; incidence and recurrence of abuse and neglect; restrictiveness of living arrangements; or educational experiences prior to permanence. The table below presents findings on exits to permanence for youth in the waiver statewide.

Table ES.1: Exit Status of Youth Statewide After Assignment to the Waiver and Before September 30, 2008

Exit Status	Demonstration Group (N=1,472) %	Control Group (N=1,468) %	Overall (N=2,940) %
No Permanence (still in foster care)	68.9	70.3	69.6
Reunification	6.4	8.2	7.3
Subsidized Guardianship	11.4	9.1	10.3
Adoption	7.5	7.1	7.3
Exited Care (aged out without permanence)	5.8	5.3	5.6
Total	100	100	100

$p=0.13$

This might indicate that the prospect of enhanced services had little effect on child safety, permanence, and well-being, and that losing access to services was not the barrier to permanence that might be expected. However, as found in the process study, there was considerable confusion about the waiver among agency and court staff, and as a result the intervention was not always delivered as designed. Thus it is difficult to draw conclusions about the effects of the intervention. In addition, the caregiver and youth interviews provided indications that services *were* important factors in decisionmaking about permanence. Regarding the enhanced transition services that were available to youth in the demonstration group who were adopted or achieved subsidized guardianship:

- Over half (58%) of the youth in the demonstration group were not aware of the enhanced services; those who did know were far more likely to *want* permanence (subsidized guardianship or adoption) with their caregivers (40% vs. 19%) and more

likely to have *chosen* permanence (43% vs. 27%). However, this did not translate into a significant difference in *achievement* of permanence (21% vs. 15%). The achievement of permanence is a lengthy process, and if the tracking of the youth had gone on longer, we might have found that additional youth achieved permanence.

- Over a quarter (28%) of caregivers in the demonstration group were not aware of the enhanced services. Caregivers in the demonstration group who knew about the enhanced services were more likely to choose permanence than caregivers who did not know about the services (52% vs. 24%) and were more likely to complete the permanency process (23% vs. 10%).

Another indication of the importance of services in general (beyond the enhanced transition services available only to the demonstration group) was that when caregivers in both demonstration and control groups were asked what issues were most important in their decisionmaking about permanence, issues related to services were the most frequently named. Among all caregivers, over half said that *agency help with medical assistance*, as well as *services for youth*, were the top considerations in their decisionmaking process about permanence. Two thirds of the caregivers who had decided on guardianship or adoption said that *services for youth* were the most important consideration.

In other findings, there was a decline in interest in permanence (subsidized guardianship or adoption) from the initial to the follow-up interview. Among youth who said at their initial interviews that they wanted permanence with their caregivers, only 30 percent had achieved it by the time of their follow-up interviews (19% had achieved guardianship and 11% had been adopted). Many of the youth had lost interest in permanence by the follow-up interview, saying that they were too old or had become more interested in living on their own or going into Independent Living. Average age of these youth at initial interview was 15.6 years and at follow-up interview was 17.3 years; thus, youth interest in permanence appears to fall off dramatically between ages 15 and 17, and it is important to discuss permanence with them as early as possible.

We also found some significant differences depending on whether youth were living with caregivers who were relatives. Youth with nonrelative caregivers were as interested in permanence as youth with relative caregivers, but youth with relatives were significantly more likely to have *achieved* permanence: youth with relatives were more likely to be adopted (9%) and much more likely to achieve guardianship (20%) than youth with nonrelatives (6% were

adopted, and 9% achieved guardianship). There were indications that many youth who had been placed with nonrelatives had more severe needs than youth who had been placed with relatives: they were more likely to have disabilities, to have spent more time in restrictive placements, and to have had more moves while in foster care. This might have influenced the permanency rate, if families with more severe needs were reluctant to forego agency involvement and oversight.

In summary, although we did not find a significant waiver impact, our interview findings support the perception that services are important considerations for caregivers in their decisionmaking. We also found that many teenagers in foster care do want permanence (subsidized guardianship or adoption) but it is important to move quickly because their interest often wanes as they get older. Finally, caseworkers need to communicate complete and up-to-date information on families' permanency options and service eligibility. Particularly given the new subsidized guardianship eligibility and reimbursement provisions under the *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008*, young people and their caregivers need fully to understand their options.

ILLINOIS PERMANENCY FOR OLDER WARDS WAIVER: Final Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

Placement into permanent homes is an urgent priority for children who have been taken into the custody of a child welfare agency. Since the implementation of the *Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA)*, child welfare policy and practice have been guided by *ASFA* principles that foster care should be temporary and that permanency planning should begin as soon as a child enters foster care. The goals are to place children into homes that are long-lasting (in addition to safe and nurturing) and to provide enduring family relationships. Policy increasingly has emphasized adoption, placement with relatives and kin, and guardianship.

Interest in improving permanence for children in foster care was one factor in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS's) establishment of waiver demonstration programs for states, in which HHS waived certain Federal requirements related to child welfare services. Several of these waiver demonstrations tested the impact of offering the option of subsidized guardianship to children in foster care. Under subsidized guardianship, legal responsibility for a child is transferred from the child welfare agency to a private caregiver or guardian who receives a monthly subsidy for the care and support of the child. There is no termination of parental rights (TPR), although reunification generally has been ruled out. The success of these demonstrations helped set the stage for a recent far-reaching law, the *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008*, which (among other significant provisions) authorizes Title IV-E reimbursements for children who exit foster care to live permanently with relatives who become their legal guardians.

Illinois was one of the early states to operate a waiver demonstration focused on subsidized guardianship. The Illinois Subsidized Guardianship Waiver (1997-2002) tested whether offering subsidized guardianship boosted children's permanency rate and found that it did. Illinois's second waiver involving subsidized guardianship, the Illinois Permanency for Older Wards Waiver (2005-2008), tested the effects of offering an enhanced transition and postpermanency services package to youth ages 14 and older who were considering adoption or subsidized guardianship. Both waivers were evaluated by Westat, under contract to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). This Final Evaluation Report covers the second waiver, the Illinois Permanency for Older Wards Waiver.

Interim Report #1, submitted January 8, 2008, discussed the background and implementation of the waiver, the status of the evaluation, and preliminary outcome findings. Data collection from youth and caregivers was still in process, so we included only preliminary summaries of some interview data. Interim Report #2, submitted June 20, 2008, presented detailed findings from the initial interviews with youth and caregivers, as well as the analysis of the Administrative Case Reviews (ACRs). This Final Evaluation Report presents our outcome findings based on DCFS administrative data, as well as findings from the follow-up interviews with youth and caregivers, and covers the waiver period June 30, 2005, through December 31, 2008.

1.1 Overview of the Older Wards Waiver

The Older Wards Waiver tested an enhanced services component that offered independent living and transitional services to wards age 14 and older who achieved permanence through adoption or guardianship. The target population of the waiver was youth ages 14 and older who had been in the legal custody of the state for at least 1 year, had resided with a foster parent for at least 12 consecutive months, were not already in a subsidized guardianship or adoption setting, and were eligible for the state's standard guardianship program. Youth living with relatives as well as those in nonrelative foster homes could participate, and they could participate without regard to Title IV-E eligibility.

The Older Wards Waiver was an extension of the Illinois Subsidized Guardianship Waiver Demonstration, which operated from May 1997 through March 2002 and tested whether offering subsidized guardianship boosted the permanency rate of children for whom reunification and adoption were not possible. The evaluation found that the availability of guardianship did boost the permanency rates. However, the rates for youth ages 14-17 were lower than for younger children, which led to an interest in testing whether service eligibility might make a difference in permanency decision-making for older wards, particularly if the lower permanency rates were due to losing access to independent living and other transition services once they achieved permanence. This was the basis for the Older Wards Waiver.

There were some important differences between the two waivers. First, the children in the Subsidized Guardianship Waiver were younger than those in the Older Wards Waiver. The average age at assignment to the Subsidized Guardianship Waiver was 10 and the median age was 9, while most youth were assigned to the Older Wards Waiver at age 14. Second, subsidized

guardianship is often thought of in connection with relative caregivers, as it provides a means for kin to assume parental authority and responsibility without permanently severing parental rights. Indeed, in the Subsidized Guardianship Waiver, about 66 percent of the children were with relatives (most of those with a grandmother).² However, in the interview sample for the Older Wards Waiver only about 33 percent of the youth were with relatives (most frequently with an aunt).

1.2 Evaluation of the Waiver

Evaluation Design. The evaluation used an experimental design in which youth were randomly assigned to either a demonstration or a control group. The treatment difference involved enhanced transition services: Youth in the demonstration group who were adopted or achieved subsidized guardianship were eligible for nearly all of the transition services that youth who aged out of care were eligible for. Youth in the control group who were adopted or went into subsidized guardianship lost their eligibility for most of the services, such as an employment incentive program, housing cash assistance, and a youth-in-college program.

Evaluation of the waiver was based on (1) DCFS administrative data for all youth ever eligible for the waiver statewide, (2) interviews from a sample of eligible youth and their caregivers in the three study regions (Central Cook County region, East St. Louis sub-region, and Peoria sub-region), and (3) Administrative Case Reviews (ACRs) for a sample of youth in the three study regions. In addition, we held focus groups and interviews with agency and court staff for a process study. And finally, data from other state administrative agencies help understand longer term youth outcomes on transition to adulthood.³

The study was designed to test hypotheses regarding the experience of older wards in response to the experimental treatment of being eligible to receive enhanced transition services after choosing subsidized guardianship or adoption.⁴ Youth assigned to the control group were eligible for limited transition services (and could enter into adoption or subsidized guardianship);

² The Subsidized Guardianship Waiver required that children under age 12 be with a relative in order to be eligible for subsidized guardianship. The Older Wards Waiver did not require that any youth be with relatives, but they had to be at least 14 to be in the waiver.

³ Obtaining data from the other Illinois agencies has been a lengthy process. Depending on data availability, those findings will be presented in a supplementary report during the fall of 2009.

⁴ All youth in the Older Wards Waiver, whether in the demonstration group or the control group, were eligible for subsidized guardianship and for adoption.

hence the evaluation tested the effects of offering enhanced services relative to *limited* services, not the effects relative to *no* services. We analyzed DCFS administrative data for information about subsequent abuse and neglect reports, permanence, and child well-being in the demonstration and control groups, while taking into account youth characteristics and foster care history.

Random Assignment Procedures. DCFS randomly assigned youth to the demonstration and control groups from July 1, 2005, through July 1, 2008. Youth had a 50-50 chance of being in either the demonstration or control group. The random assignment occurred in two phases. Phase 1 consisted of a large group of eligible youth who (1) were currently in foster care in the three study regions,⁵ (2) were eligible for subsidized guardianship under the Subsidized Guardianship Waiver, and (3) were on or past their 14th birthday at the start of the waiver (July 1, 2005). DCFS assigned these youth (there were 325) to either the demonstration group or the control group on June 28, 2005.⁶

Phase 2 began a month later, as youth who were not previously eligible for the waiver became eligible by meeting the waiver criteria. DCFS assigned youth to either the demonstration group or the control group on a monthly basis, as youth met the following criteria: (1) were eligible for subsidized guardianship under the Subsidized Guardianship Waiver, (2) reached their 14th birthday after July 1, 2005, and (3) had been in a placement for at least 1 year. The total number of youth who were eligible for the waiver and assigned to the waiver was 2,940 statewide (1,472 in the demonstration group and 1,468 in the control group) and 1,006 in the three study regions (497 in the demonstration group and 509 in the control group).

Youth and Caregiver Interviews. The youth and caregiver interviews were conducted at two points: (1) an initial interview conducted with a sample of youth and their caregivers in the study regions within 6 months of becoming eligible for the waiver and (2) a follow-up interview with the youth and caregivers at age 18, time of discharge, or end of the data collection period (December 31, 2008), whichever came first. These interviews provided the perspectives of the youth and caregivers on their decision-making processes regarding permanence, as well as other issues that might affect final outcomes (e.g., services used, relationship of caregiver and youth,

⁵ The waiver covered only the three study areas from June 30, 2005, through April 30, 2006, and then it went statewide.

⁶ In Phase 1, *caregivers* were randomly assigned, so that youth with the same provider, including siblings in the same home, would have the same assignment (demonstration or control). In Phase 2, *youth* were randomly assigned so that two youth with the same provider or in the same family might not have the same assignment.

child well-being, caregiver attitudes about the youth). They also collected information on demographics, health status, household composition, social support, services received, role of biological parents, attachment status, and decisionmaking about permanence. The same instrument was used for both the initial and follow-up interview. Appendix A includes the youth interview instrument, and Appendix B includes the caregiver interview instrument. Appendix C provides technical details on the response rate and nonresponse adjustment for the initial and follow-up interviews.

The interview sample was selected using monthly files of DCFS administrative data on youth assigned to the waiver. One result of the random assignment process was that some youth assigned to the waiver were not actually eligible for subsidized guardianship at the time we received their data. These included youth who had not been in their current caregiver's home for at least 1 year, youth who were institutionalized, and youth who had already turned age 18. When we received the monthly DCFS data, we selected into the interview sample only youth who met all the criteria—i.e., had been in their current caregiver's home at least 1 year, were not in a group home or institution, and had not yet turned 18. Youth who did not meet all the criteria were excluded from the interview sample. For the youth who met all criteria except that they had not yet been with their caregiver for 1 year, we selected them into the interview sample as soon as they met the 1-year requirement.

Administrative Case Reviews. Every 6 months, ACRs were conducted for each child in foster care to determine their progress toward permanence and to identify any factors that might impede that progress.⁷ We analyzed longitudinal ACR data from March 2006 through September 2007. For the ACR findings, see Interim Report #2 (summarized in Section 1.4).

Human Subjects Protection. All Westat research involving human subjects or confidential data must be reviewed by the Westat Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB reviewed the study and determined that it was exempt from IRB review, as it was an internal program evaluation and did not fall under the definition of "research." After IRB review, Westat had to obtain informed consent from the DCFS Office of the Guardian as well as from the youth's caregivers prior to conducting interviews with the youth. At times, the consent process from the Office of the Guardian was protracted, and youth turned 18, were adopted, were reunified, or

⁷ Participants at ACRs can include the administrative case reviewer, caseworker, child (when age 12 and older), foster parent, biological parent, attorney, Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), and others requested by the parent, although often only the reviewer and caseworker are present. The reviewer conducts the meeting and, during the waiver, completed an information packet that included questions that were part of the evaluation.

went into subsidized guardianship before Guardian consent was received. (See Appendix C for more information about survey response.)

1.3 Summary of Interim Report #1

Interim Report #1 presented the findings of the implementation study, limited preliminary outcome findings, and some early results from the initial youth and caregiver interviews. The implementation study found that local agencies often did not take advantage of the training that DCFS provided across the state. Thus, some agency and court personnel were not well-informed about the waiver. There seemed to be some confusion at times about (1) the difference in service eligibility between youth in the demonstration group and those in the control group and (2) the difference between the present Older Wards Waiver and the earlier Subsidized Guardianship Waiver. However, staff who understood the waiver felt strongly that having the enhanced services available made a big difference for the youth and caregivers, and they expected a positive impact from the waiver. Overall, staff expressed strong support for subsidized guardianship and adoption for older youth, although many noted that permanency planning must take into consideration the services that are available as well as issues about managing some youths' behavior.

Our outcome findings based on DCFS administrative data were preliminary, as many of the youth had not been in the waiver very long, but at the writing of Interim Report #1 there appeared to have been no positive or negative effect. Comparing outcomes between youth in the demonstration group and those in the control group showed that eligibility for enhanced transition services led to no significant differences (either in the study regions or statewide) on:

- Occurrence of abuse and neglect between the time of assignment to the waiver and achievement of permanence;
- Level of restrictiveness of placements;
- Rates of permanence;
- How quickly permanence was achieved; or
- School achievement or status.

Interim Report #1 also presented selected early results from the initial interviews with youth and caregivers. We do not summarize those here, as the detailed findings from the initial interviews presented in Interim Report #2 are summarized next.

1.4 Summary of Interim Report #2

The following findings were consistent across all three data sources (youth interviews, caregiver interviews, and ACRs). Although specific percentages vary, the general patterns are the same.

- Permanence had *not* been proposed to quite a few families: 36 percent according to caregiver interview data, 39 percent according to youth interview data, and 44 percent according to ACR data.
- There was far more of a focus on permanence for younger youth than older youth. The younger youth were significantly more likely to have (1) discussed permanence, (2) had permanence proposed to them, and (3) want permanence with their caregivers.
- A large proportion of families were either undecided or had decided against permanence: about 74 percent according to the youth, 60 percent according to the caregivers, and 58 percent according to the ACRs.⁸

The following pattern was found in the youth and caregiver interviews.

- Over half (53%) of the youth in the demonstration group reported that their caseworkers had not explained the enhanced transition services to them. Among the caregivers in the demonstration group, 35 percent reported that their caseworkers had not explained the enhanced services to them. And when the services were explained, both youth and caregivers were more likely to want permanence.

Youth interviews showed some demonstration/control differences.

- Youth in the control group whose caregivers were relatives were more likely to want permanence compared to youth in the control group whose caregivers were not relatives. For youth in the demonstration group, it appeared to make little difference whether their caregivers were relatives.
- Youth in the demonstration group were significantly more likely to have decided with their caregivers on subsidized guardianship (about 20 percent) and less likely to be

⁸ The percentage from the ACR data is the proportion of families who had decided against permanence from among all families for whom permanence was proposed by the caseworker rather than from among all families.

- undecided or unsure (about 50 percent) than youth in the control group (about 13 percent for subsidized guardianship and 60 percent undecided or unsure).⁹
- Youth in the control group were more likely to have had several of the independent living classes, compared to youth in the demonstration group.

Other patterns revealed by the youth interviews provide descriptive information.

- Most youth had at least moderate amounts of emotional, concrete, and relationship support. However, among males, low levels of support were more prevalent than among females.
- Youth whose caregivers were relatives were significantly more likely to report that they had contact with a biological parent.
- About 36 percent of youth wanted their caregivers to become their legal guardians; 27 percent wanted to be adopted by their caregivers; 24 percent did not want either option; and 31 percent were unsure. Overall, 45 percent of the youth said that they wanted permanence (adoption, subsidized guardianship, or either) with their caregivers.
- Youth who had contact with a biological parent were less likely to want to be adopted by their caregivers compared to youth who had no contact, but there was no significant difference on subsidized guardianship.
- Youth who had experienced many moves (four or more) in their lives had received significantly more counseling, compared to youth with fewer moves.

The following findings about demonstration/control differences are based on the caregiver interviews.

- Caregivers in the demonstration group were significantly more likely to have discussed subsidized guardianship with their caseworkers, compared to caregivers in the control group: 63 percent compared to 55 percent. There was not a significant difference on discussing adoption.

⁹ Although the difference was not quite statistically significant ($p=.053$), caregivers in the demonstration group also had chosen subsidized guardianship more often (about 31%) and were undecided less often (about 35%) than caregivers in the control group (about 22% for subsidized guardianship and 41% undecided). The demonstration-control differences in the ACR data were not even close to being statistically significant, but for the sake of comparison, the ACRs showed that among families to whom permanence was proposed, about 25 percent chose subsidized guardianship, and 58 percent rejected permanence.

- Among caregivers who had chosen adoption or legal guardianship, those in the demonstration group were significantly less likely to have completed the permanency process and more likely not to have started the process, compared to those in the control group.

Caregiver interviews (and the evaluation of the previous waiver) provided other descriptive information.

- In the Older Wards Waiver, only about a third of the youth lived with relative caregivers. In the previous waiver (Subsidized Guardianship Waiver), about two-thirds of the children lived with relative caregivers.
- In the Older Wards Waiver, relative caregivers were most often aunts. In the Subsidized Guardianship Waiver, relative caregivers were usually grandmothers.
- Overall, about half of caregivers reported that the youth in their care had disabilities, most frequently learning disabilities and emotional disturbance.
- Youth with disabilities were significantly less likely to be living with relatives, compared to youth without disabilities.
- Relative caregivers were significantly more likely to report low income and financial difficulties, and less likely to report home ownership.
- Overall, about 91 percent of youth service requests/referrals resulted in receipt of services, compared to about 60 percent of caregiver requests/referrals. Services for youth most often consisted of medical cards, individual counseling, and health care services. Services for caregivers most often consisted of respite care, family counseling, and help getting public assistance.

The analysis of ACR data showed the following.

- Caseworkers were more likely to propose subsidized guardianship when the caregiver was a relative, compared to when the caregiver was a non relative. Caseworkers were more likely not to propose either option when the caregiver was a nonrelative. There was little difference on proposing adoption.
- Among families for whom permanence was proposed, about 17 percent accepted adoption; 25 percent accepted subsidized guardianship; and 58 percent accepted neither option.
- Permanency outcomes differed significantly when examined by youth's age, relative status of caregiver, and youth's gender. Among younger youth, about 23 percent were

discharged to permanence (reunification, subsidized guardianship, or adoption), compared to only 3 percent of older youth. Among youth whose caregivers were relatives, 21 percent were discharged to permanence, compared to 12 percent of youth whose caregivers were nonrelatives. And among the younger youth, females were more likely to be discharged to permanence than were males, and those with relatives were more likely to be discharged to permanence than those with nonrelatives.

1.5 Highlights of Final Evaluation Report

The hypothesis testing on child safety, permanence, and well-being for the Illinois Older Wards Waiver showed that the waiver had no observed impact. Overall, there were no statistically significant demonstration-control differences in exits to permanence (adoption, subsidized guardianship, or reunification), incidence and recurrence of abuse and neglect, restrictiveness of living arrangements, or educational experiences prior to permanence. This analysis could indicate that loss of transition services is not the barrier to permanence that some thought it might be.

However, other evaluation findings provide a somewhat different perspective. The intervention was implemented inconsistently, with considerable confusion among agency and court staff about what it involved, and this might have diluted or prevented any potential waiver impact. And the caregiver and youth interviews provided indications that services were important factors in decisionmaking about permanence. For example:

- Over half (58%) of the youth in the demonstration group were not aware of the enhanced services; those who did know were far more likely to *want* permanence with their caregivers (40% vs. 19%) and more likely to have *chosen* permanence (43% vs. 27%). However, this did not translate into a significant difference in *achievement* of permanence (21% vs. 15%). The achievement of permanence is a lengthy process, and if the tracking of the youth had gone on longer, we might have found that additional youth achieved permanence.
- Over a quarter (28%) of caregivers in the demonstration group were not aware of the enhanced services. Caregivers in the demonstration group who knew about the services were more likely to choose permanence than caregivers who did not know about the services (52% vs. 24%) and were more likely to complete the permanency process (23% vs. 10%).

- When caregivers were asked what issues were most important in their decision-making about permanence, issues related to services were the most frequently named. Among all caregivers, over half said that *agency help with medical assistance*, as well as *services for youth*, were the top considerations in their decision-making process about permanence. Two thirds of the caregivers who had decided on guardianship or adoption said that *services for youth* were the most important consideration.

The top reason that youth wanted either adoption or guardianship was that they had a strong bond with their caregiver. The top reason that youth did not want either option was that they felt they were too old. And youth preference was important to the caregivers: the top reason that caregivers did not choose guardianship was that the youth did not want it. The top reason that caregivers did not choose adoption was that the youth was already related by blood (however, note that many related caregivers did choose to adopt). And over half of the caregivers did not choose adoption because the youth did not want to be adopted.

Among youth who said at their initial interviews that they wanted permanence with their caregivers, only 30 percent had achieved it by the time of their follow-up interviews (19% had achieved guardianship and 11% had been adopted). Among caregivers who said at their initial interview that they had chosen permanence, only 43 percent had achieved it by their follow-up interview. Many of the youth had lost interest in permanence by the follow-up interview, saying that they were too old or had become more interested in living on their own or going into Independent Living. Average age of these youth at initial interview was 15.6 years and at follow-up interview was 17.3 years; thus, youth interest in permanence appears to fall off dramatically between ages 15 and 17, and it is important to discuss permanence with them as early as possible.

In a descriptive analysis of the subset of 730 youth who achieved permanence, we found that youth assigned to the control group were more likely to be reunified (34% of the control group vs. 25% of the demonstration group) and less likely to go into subsidized guardianship (37% of the control group vs. 45% of the demonstration group) than youth assigned to the demonstration group. The proportions of youth who were adopted were nearly equal (around 29%) for demonstration and control groups. Note that this finding is not necessarily indicative of a waiver impact, because it looks only at youth who achieved permanence rather than at all youth.

2. Outcomes

The Older Wards Waiver was designed to test specific hypotheses regarding the effect of the waiver on youth's safety, permanence, and well-being. The primary hypothesis of interest focused on permanence: *What was the impact of the waiver on youth's achievement of permanence, especially subsidized guardianship?* In addition, we assessed the waiver's impact on the restrictiveness of youth's placements, recurrence of abuse and neglect, and health and education status. We also present descriptive findings concerning the youth who did achieve permanence.

The hypotheses were tested using administrative data through September 2008. The administrative data cover 2,940 youth statewide (1,006 in the study regions) who were assigned to the demonstration or control group and were eligible for the waiver (i.e., were at least 14 years old, had been in a living arrangement for 1 year, and the living arrangement was a foster home or home of relative). The analysis covers only youth ages 14 through 17 at the time of assignment.

The hypothesis testing showed that, in most of the analyses, there were only small differences between the demonstration and control groups, whether examined for the study regions or statewide. Statistical techniques were used to assess whether the differences were statistically significant.¹⁰ The *p*-values for testing significance are shown below the tables. *P*-values less than .05 indicate significant differences. Tables and figures in this chapter include demonstration-control differences even when not statistically significant because these outcomes are of central importance to the waiver and, when examined together, might suggest a pattern.

It is important to keep in mind that the intervention was implemented inconsistently and, overall, quite weakly. Our process study found that there was confusion at times about (1) the difference in service eligibility between youth in the demonstration group and those in the control group, and (2) the difference between the present Older Wards Waiver and the earlier Subsidized Guardianship Waiver. Both court and agency staff often were unaware of or confused about the waiver. Many were under the impression that youth in the control group were ineligible for subsidized guardianship—likely a holdover from the previous Subsidized Guardianship

¹⁰ Youth were assigned to the demonstration and control groups monthly. The assignments were clustered by the provider ID in the first month of assignment such that all youth with the same provider got the same assignment. In subsequent months, the youth were assigned independently. The statistical tests (chi-square tests for testing independence in tables and *F*-tests for testing for differences in means) were adjusted to account for the effect of clustering in the first assignment month.

Waiver, under which only youth assigned to the demonstration group were eligible for subsidized guardianship. Thus any “treatment effect” from being eligible for enhanced services would have been diluted if caseworkers were not aware that some youth were eligible for these services, or did not know what services youth would be eligible for, and did not communicate that information to the youth.

2.1 Permanence

The permanency outcomes of primary interest were subsidized guardianship and adoption. However, for this analysis, we investigated reunification as well, to determine whether there was an effect on that permanency option. We defined “permanence” as being reunified, placed in subsidized guardianship, or adopted after becoming eligible for the waiver and before age 18 or before September 30, 2008. In a few cases in this dataset, the youth achieved permanence but later came back into the foster care system; such cases are still counted as “permanence.”

2.1.1 Waiver Impact on Permanency Exits

Hypothesis: Youth in the demonstration group are more likely to achieve permanence than youth in the control group.

Did the waiver result in more youth achieving permanence? Did subsidized guardianship supplant adoption, as was found under the original Subsidized Guardianship Waiver? The lack of significant demonstration-control differences, as discussed below, means that the waiver did not result in more youth achieving permanence, and adoption was not supplanted by subsidized guardianship

Table 2.1 shows that as of September 30, 2008, 71.4 percent of the youth in the study regions had not achieved permanence—they were still in foster care (63.8%) or had aged out (7.6%). A slightly higher percentage of youth in the demonstration group were in subsidized guardianship compared to the control group, while a slightly lower percentage had been reunified or adopted. However, since these differences were not significant, we should be cautious in interpreting them. It is possible that the differences indicate some confusion about the waiver—perhaps some caseworkers mistakenly believed that youth in the control group were not eligible for subsidized guardianship (which would have been the situation under the previous waiver),

and therefore they were more likely to suggest reunification or adoption, rather than subsidized guardianship, to those families. However, no definite conclusions may be drawn.

Table 2.1: Exit Status of Youth in Study Regions After Assignment to the Waiver and Before September 30, 2008

Exit Status	Demonstration Group (N=497) %	Control Group (N=509) %	Overall (N=1,006) %
No permanence (still in foster care)	62.8	64.9	63.8
Reunification	8.0	9.6	8.8
Subsidized guardianship	13.3	9.2	11.2
Adoption	7.4	9.2	8.3
Exited care (aged out without permanence)	8.5	7.1	7.6
Total	100	100	100

$p=.23$

Note: Youth who achieved permanence might have later re-entered foster care, but they are still counted in the type of permanence they achieved before re-entering care.

As shown in Table 2.2, a somewhat higher percentage of youth statewide (75.2%) was still in care or had aged out as of September 30, 2008, regardless of the assignment group. Note that the youth in the study regions were eligible for the waiver starting in June 2005, while the youth from other regions in the state were eligible beginning in April 2006. Thus the statistics for youth statewide are for a shorter period than in the study regions. This difference may explain the lower proportion of youth in foster care in the study regions. Again, no significant differences were found between demonstration and control groups.

Table 2.2: Exit Status of Youth Statewide After Assignment to the Waiver and Before September 30, 2008

Exit Status	Demonstration Group (N=1,472) %	Control Group (N=1,468) %	Overall (N=2,940) %
No permanence (still in foster care)	68.9	70.3	69.6
Reunification	6.4	8.2	7.3
Subsidized guardianship	11.4	9.1	10.3
Adoption	7.5	7.1	7.3
Exited care (aged out without permanence)	5.8	5.3	5.6
Total	100	100	100

$p=.13$

Note: Youth who achieved permanence might have later re-entered foster care, but they are still counted in the type of permanence they achieved before re-entering care.

Another measure related to achievement of permanence is the time in foster care since the date of assignment to the waiver. Did the waiver lead to shorter stays in foster care? Table 2.3 shows the average number of years that youth in the demonstration and control groups in the study regions were in foster care after assignment until either achieving permanence, aging out, or September 30, 2008, whichever came first. The average number of years is essentially the same for the demonstration and the control group. Because the permanency rates were so similar (as shown in Table 2.1), we did not expect to find differences in time in foster care, but we wanted to check whether permanence was happening more quickly for one group than the other. We did not find that; thus, the waiver did not lead to shorter stays in foster care (or faster permanence).

Table 2.3: Time in Foster Care Following Assignment for Youth in Study Regions

Time in Foster Care	Demonstration Group	Control Group	Overall
Mean years in care	1.68	1.67	1.68
Number of youth	497	509	1,006

$p=.91$

Table 2.4 presents the average numbers of years in foster care for youth in the waiver statewide. Those averages are somewhat lower than for the youth in the study regions. Again, these findings are influenced by the later statewide implementation date, compared to implementation in the study regions, meaning that there was less time for youth statewide to accumulate years in care.

Table 2.4: Time in Foster Care Following Assignment for Youth Statewide

Time in Foster Care	Demonstration Group	Control Group	Overall
Mean years in care	1.52	1.53	1.52
Number of youth	1,472	1,468	2,940

$p=.77$

2.1.2 Predictors of Permanence

In another analytic approach to help understand the outcomes, we assessed factors that predicted time until permanence—i.e., the time from assignment to the Older Ward Waiver until a youth achieved permanence through adoption, subsidized guardianship, or reunification. What factors (including demonstration-control status) were significant predictors of achieving permanence? The analysis showed that demonstration-control status was not a significant

predictor, but several other factors were (race of youth, relative caregiver, age of youth, and years in foster care).

Many youth did not achieve permanence before reaching age 18 or before the end of the study. Because the time until permanence was unknown or undefined for these youth, survival analysis was used to assess factors that predicted the time to permanence. In the terminology of survival analysis, the time to permanence for the youth who did not achieve permanence before reaching age 18 or before the end of the study was treated as censored.¹¹

Variables that were available from the administrative data at the time of assignment to the Older Wards Waiver were used as candidate predictors of time until permanence. Those variables were:

- Control or demonstration assignment;
- Age at assignment (rounded down to 14, 15, 16, or 17);
- Years in the foster care system prior to assignment to the Older Wards Waiver (1 to 2 years, 2 to 3 years, 3 to 7 years, 7 to 13 years, and 13 to 18 years¹²);
- Race (as black, white, and other);
- Whether the youth was in the home of relative or nonrelative at assignment;
- Assignment date (June 28, 2005; July 2005 through June 2006; July 2006 through June 2007; and July 2007 through September 2008);
- Gender; and
- Region at assignment (either in the study regions or not).

A stepwise procedure was used to identify significant main effects. All of the candidate variables were statistically significant except gender and region, which were dropped from further consideration. Interactions of the significant main effects were considered. No interactions were significant except that the interaction of age at assignment, and year of assignment was marginally significant. The significance depended on what other terms were in the model and if the continuous or categorical variables were used. In the models considered, the

¹¹ The analysis ignored the clustering associated with the clustering of assignments at the first assignment time. Ignoring the clustering was expected to make little difference in the outcomes because (1) in other analyses the effect of clustering on the precision estimates and *p*-values is small, and (2) the assignments were not clustered for most of the youth.

¹² The actual maximum number of years was 17.7, which was rounded to 18.

p -value for the interaction was always greater than .0261. The interaction was dropped from the final model.

Table 2.5 shows p -values for evaluating the significance of each term. All terms except the assignment group were highly significant.

Table 2.5: P -values for Assessing Significance of Main Effects in the Survival Model Predicting Time From Assignment to Permanence

Factor	Wald Chi-Square	Degrees of Freedom	Pr > ChiSq
Assignment group	0.21	1	0.5942
Race	46.58	2	<.0001
Living arrangement at assignment	39.92	2	<.0001
Age at assignment	137.65	3	<.0001
Prior years in foster care	35.54	4	<.0001
Assignment year	15.37	3	0.0015

The table shows that even after adjusting for the effect of other factors, the assignment group was not a significant predictor of achieving permanence. However, the results for the other parameters in the model provide some insight into factors that predicted the rate of achieving permanence for those youth who were eligible for the Older Wards Waiver. On average, youth classified as white achieved permanence sooner than youth classified as black. Youth in a relative’s home at the time of assignment achieved permanence sooner than youth in a nonrelative’s home. Based on age at the time of assignment, younger youth (age 14 or 15 at the time of assignment) achieved permanence sooner than older youth. Youth who had been in the foster care system for 2 to 3 years were more likely to achieve permanence by age 18 (or to achieve permanence sooner) than those in the system for 1 to 2 years and those in the system for more than 3 years. Youth in the foster care system less than 1 year were not included in this analysis because they were not eligible for the Older Wards Waiver. There were some differences by assignment year, but those differences are relatively small compared to other factors.

Due to the complexity of the model, presenting the results is somewhat complicated. To summarize the results, Figures 2.1 to 2.6 show the proportion of youth still in foster care (on the vertical axis) versus time since assignment to the Older Wards Waiver (on the horizontal axis), with lines on each plot showing the survival curves for subsets of youth. The proportion of youth who achieved permanence is one minus the proportion who had not achieved permanence. The

lower lines on the plots are for youth who achieved permanence sooner than the youth represented by the upper lines.

Figure 2.1: Overall Transition to Permanence

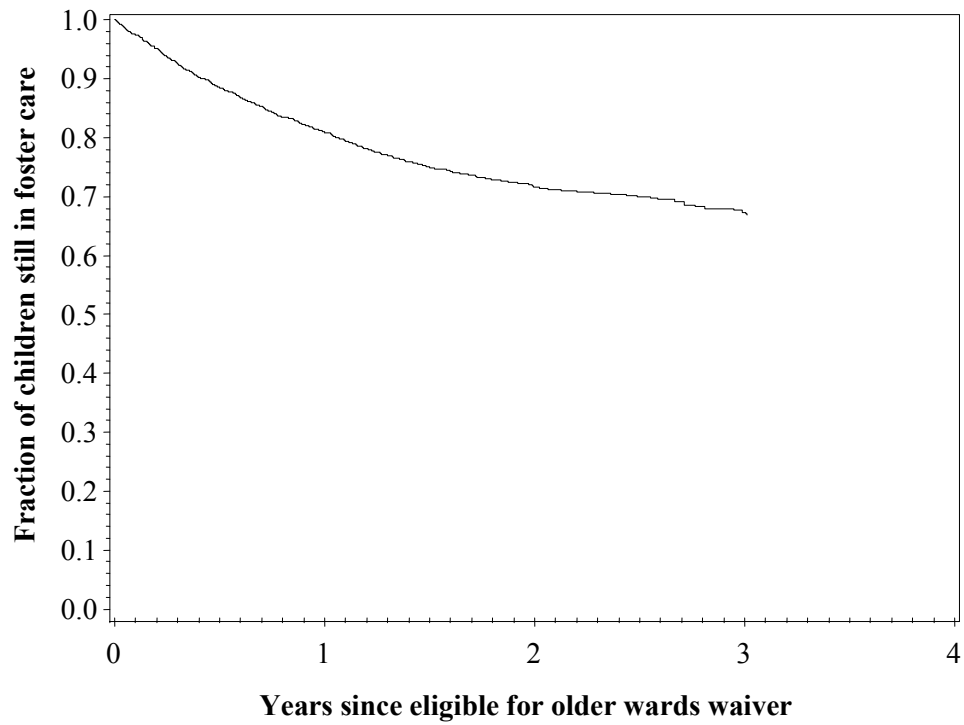


Figure 2.2: Transition to Permanence by Age at Assignment

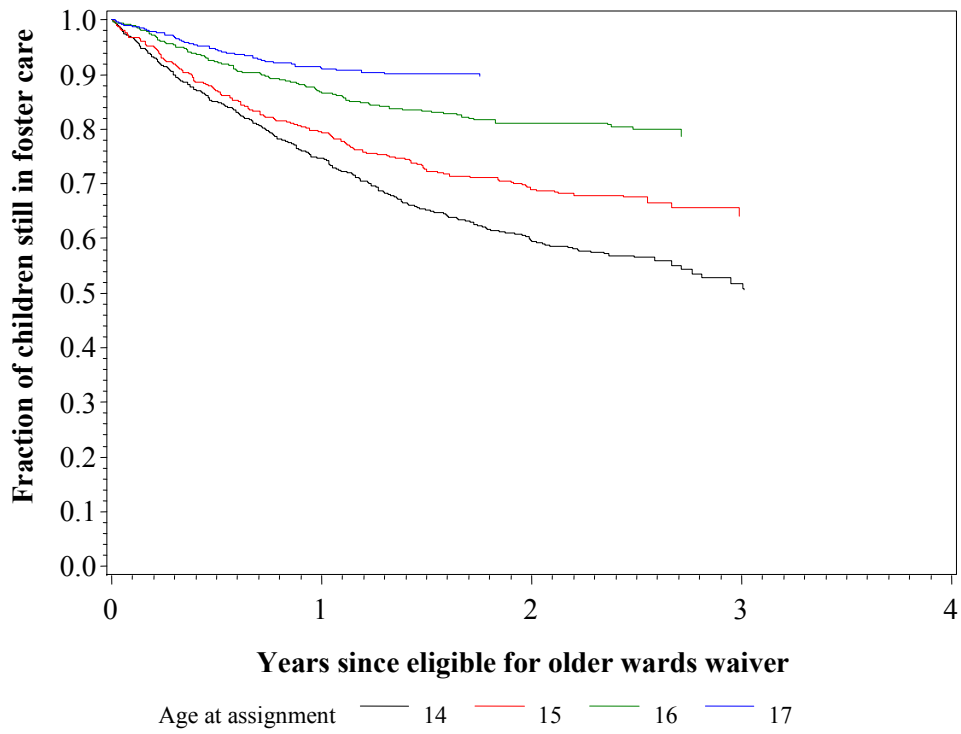


Figure 2.3: Transition to Permanence by Race

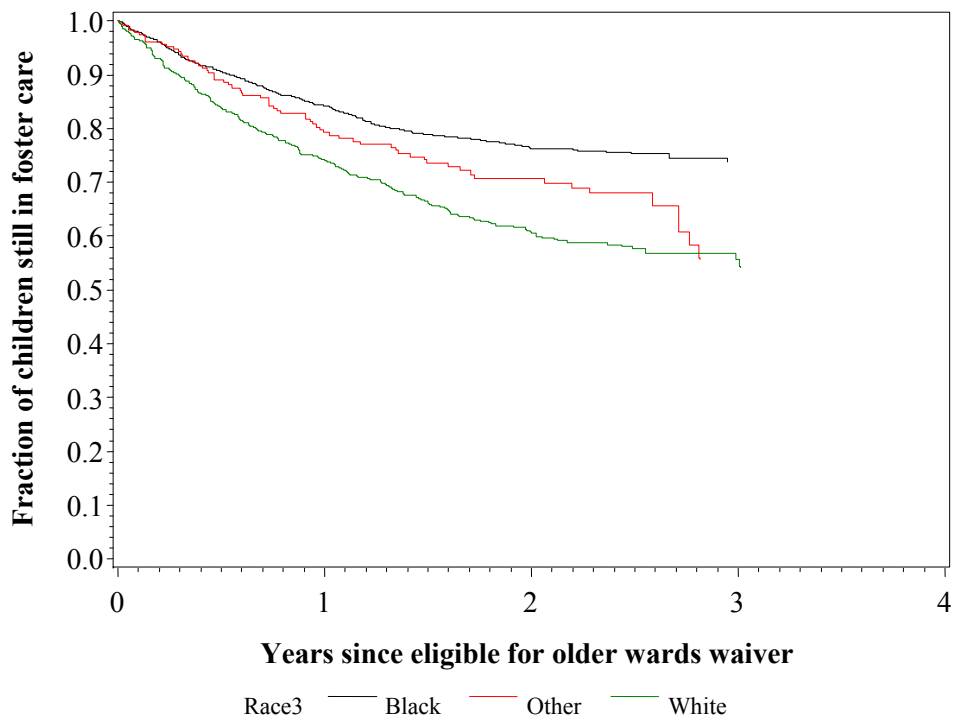


Figure 2.4: Transition to Permanence by Living Arrangement at Assignment (HMR = home of relative, FH_ = foster home)

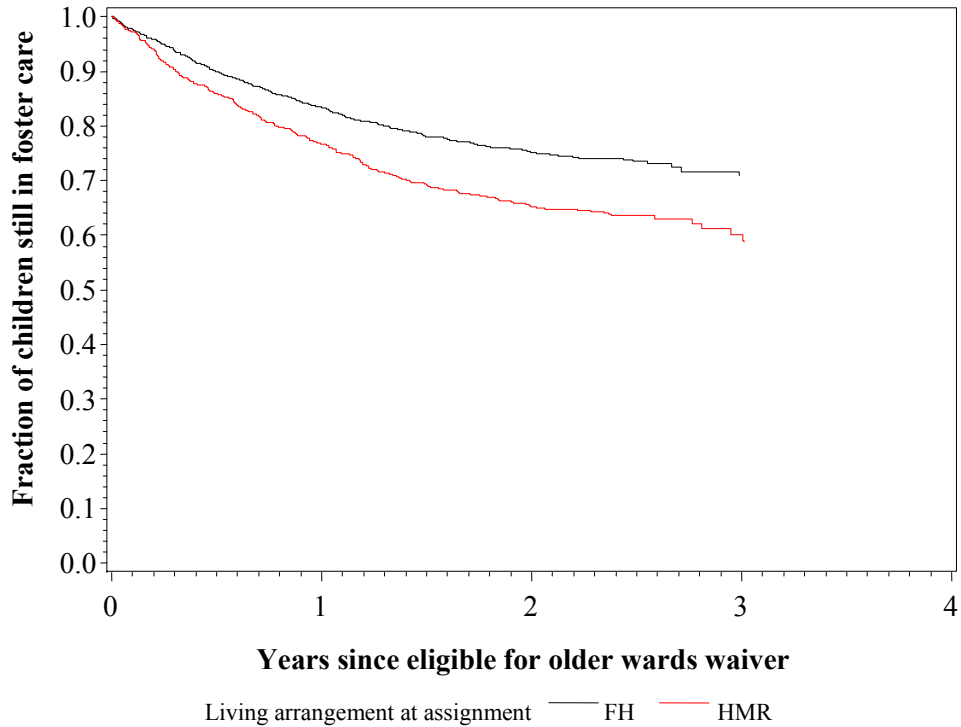


Figure 2.5: Transition to Permanence by Years in the Foster Care System Prior to Assignment

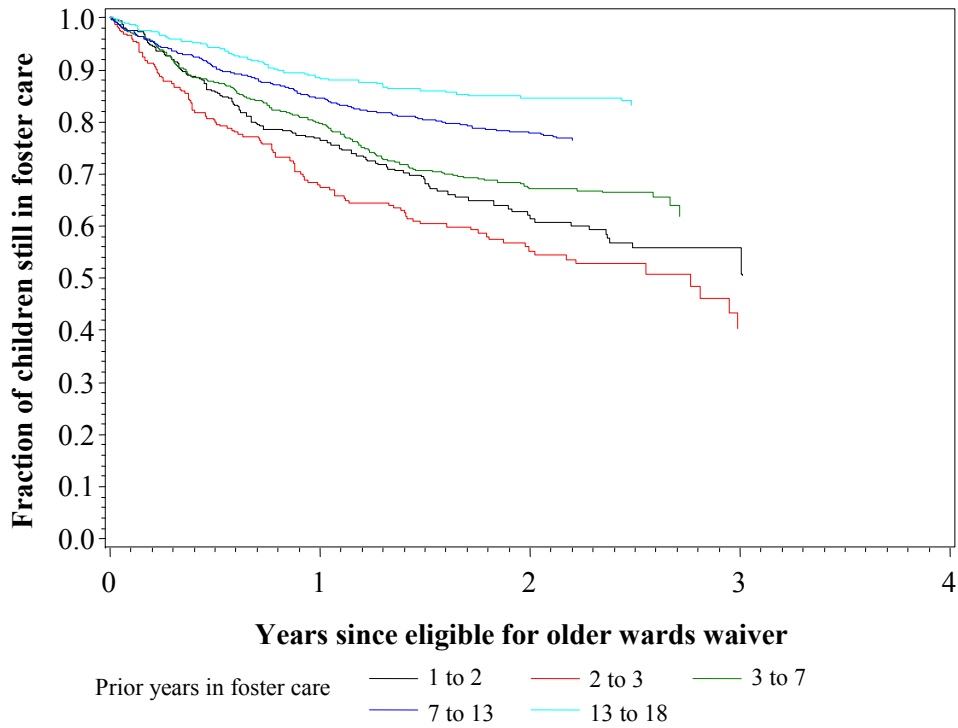
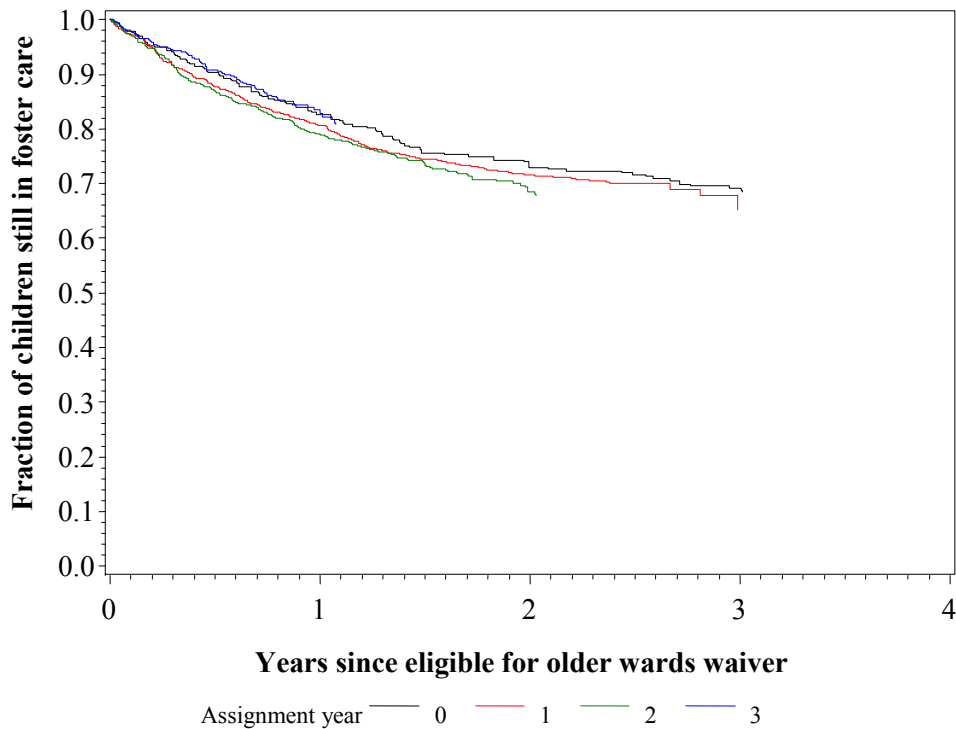


Figure 2.6: Transition to Permanence by Assignment Year (in the legend, 0 is the first assignment (June 28, 2005), 1 and 2 are for assignments in the following 2 years, and 3 is for the remainder of the assignments)



2.1.3 Analysis of Youth Who Achieved Permanence

For the 730 youth who achieved permanence, a separate analysis predicted the probability of a youth’s going into subsidized guardianship, being adopted, or returning home. Thus, this analysis takes a closer look at only the youth who achieved permanence. The youth’s assignment (demonstration or control group) was not a significant predictor of the time to permanence, and as presented in Tables 2.1 and 2.2, we did not find a significant waiver impact on achievement of permanence. However, interestingly, there were significant differences among the youth who achieved permanence, based on assignment group and other characteristics.

The model was fit using the SAS CatMod procedure. The candidate-independent factors were those used for survival analysis, with the exception that for the prior time in foster care, the categories for 3 to 7 years and 7 to 18 years were combined due to small sample sizes. The significant main effects were identified using a manual stepwise procedure. Then, all possible interactions of the significant main effects were added to the main effects one at a time to

identify candidate interactions. Three of the five candidate interactions were significant when all candidate interactions were included in the model. The factors in the model predicting the probabilities of the three permanency outcomes are shown in Table 2.6 along with *p*-values. If interactions were significant, the main effects that were part of the interaction were kept in the model.

Table 2.6: Significant Factors Predicting the Probability of Each Permanency Outcome, for Youth Who Achieved Permanence

Source	Pr > ChiSq
OWW assignment	0.0177
Living arrangement	0.0561
Age	0.0901
Prior years in foster care (FC)	<.0001
Eligibility year	<.0001
Gender	0.1586
Living arrangement * prior years in FC	0.0011
Prior years in FC * gender	0.0037
Age * gender	0.0229

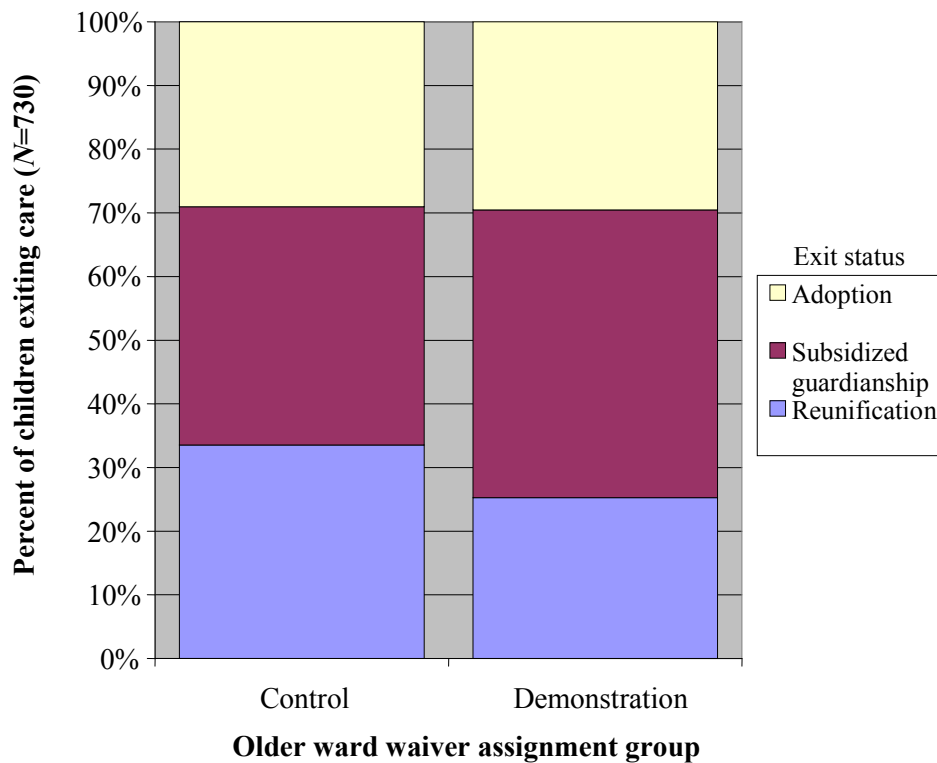
The descriptive differences modeled by the various terms above are illustrated in Tables 2.7 to 2.11 and Figures 2.7 to 2.11. In this analysis, there was a significant difference associated with the assignment group. As shown in Table 2.7 and Figure 2.7, youth assigned to the control group were more likely to be reunified and less likely to go into subsidized guardianship than youth assigned to the demonstration group – a rather unexpected finding because, as was shown in Tables 2.1 and 2.2, the overall demonstration-control differences regarding permanency exit were not statistically significant, indicating no waiver impact on achievement of permanence. However, the current analysis is different because it focuses on the subset of youth who achieved permanence and because the model adjusts for the effects of other factors. Given the lack of waiver impact in the earlier analyses and the weak implementation of the waiver, this difference might be due to chance. On the other hand, this difference might correspond to an impact of the waiver assignment for those who were aware of the service options associated with the waiver. In addition, it is interesting to note that the proportions of youth who were adopted, as shown in Table 2.7, were nearly equal between demonstration and control groups. Figure 2.7 presents these findings in bar charts.

Table 2.7: Permanence by Assignment Group, for Youth Who Achieved Permanence

Assignment Group	Reunification %	Subsidized Guardianship %	Adoption %	Total %
Demonstration (N=372)	25.3	45.2	29.6	100
Control (N=358)	33.5	37.4	29.1	100

p=.0177

Figure 2.7: Permanence by Assignment Group, for Youth Who Achieved Permanence



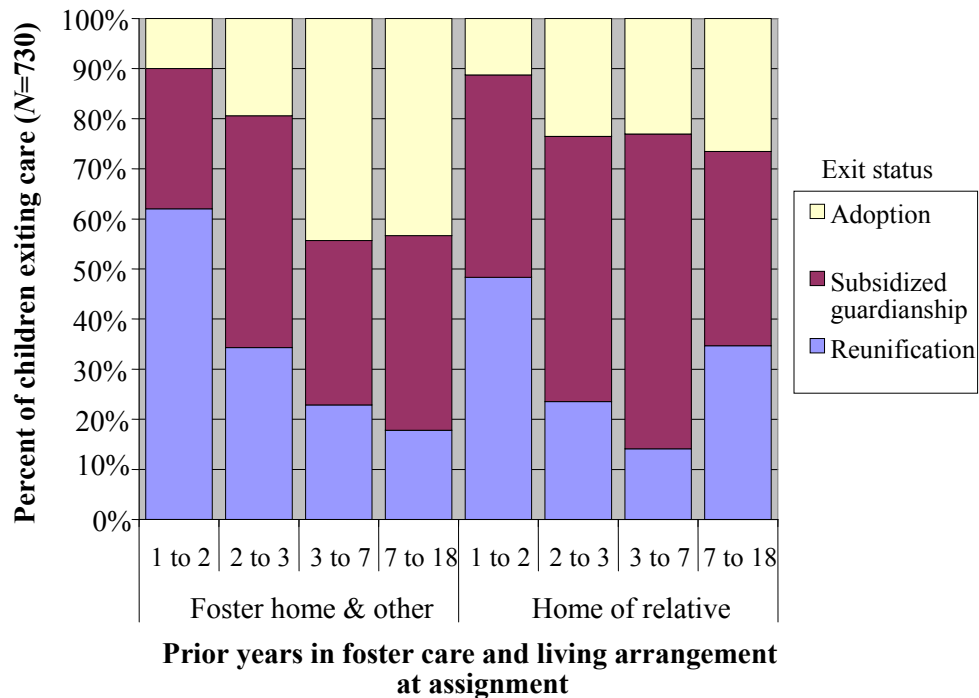
The interaction of living arrangement and prior years in foster care was significant. As shown in Table 2.8 and Figure 2.8, youth with more years in the foster care system were more likely to be adopted than those with fewer years and, for those living in foster homes, less likely to be reunified. However, youth living with relatives who had been in the foster care system for over 7 years were more likely to be reunified than those with 2 to 7 years in the foster care system.

Table 2.8: Permanence by Interaction of Relative Status at Assignment and Prior Years in Foster Care, for Youth Who Achieved Permanence

Foster Home Relative Status at Assignment	Prior Years in Foster Care	Reunification %	Subsidized Guardianship %	Adoption %	Total %
Nonrelative	1 to 2 (N=50)	62.0	28.0	10.0	100
	2 to 3 (N=67)	34.3	46.3	19.4	100
	3 to 7 (N=140)	22.9	32.9	44.3	100
	7 to 18 (N=157)	17.8	38.9	43.3	100
Relative	1 to 2 (N=89)	48.3	40.4	11.2	100
	2 to 3 (N=51)	23.5	52.9	23.5	100
	3 to 7 (N=78)	14.1	62.8	23.1	100
	7 to 18 (N=98)	34.7	38.8	26.5	100

p=.0011

Figure 2.8: Permanence by Interaction of Relative Status and Prior Years in Foster Care, for Youth Who Achieved Permanence



The interaction of gender and prior years in foster care was significant. As shown in Table 2.9 and Figure 2.9, males were slightly less likely to be adopted. Also males who had been

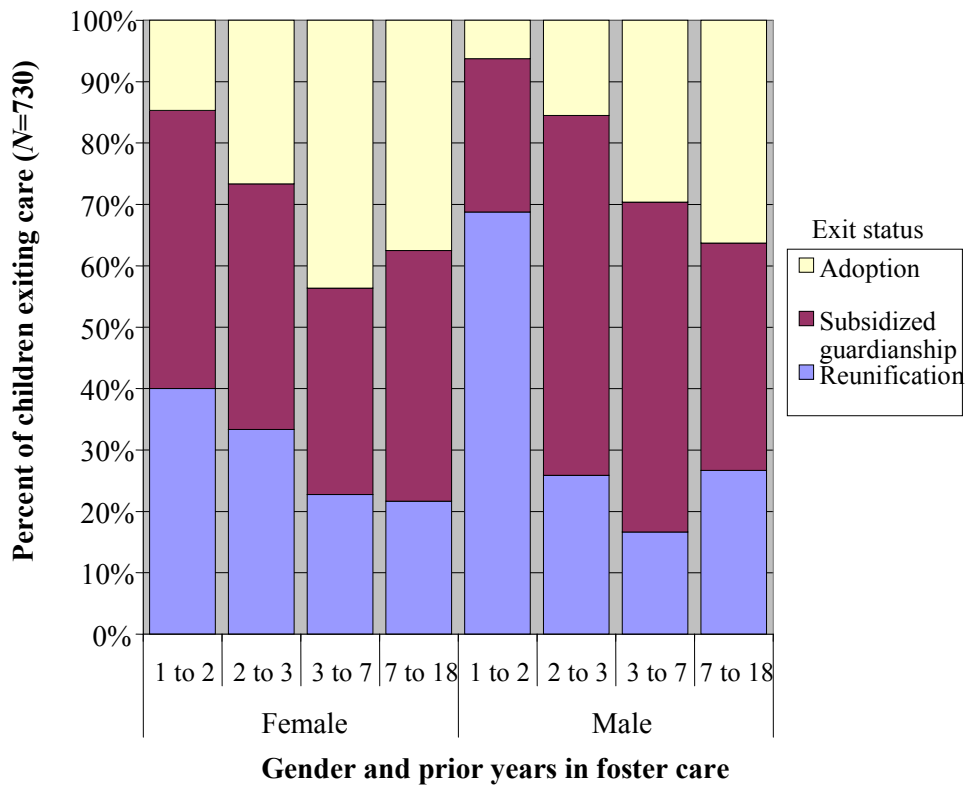
in the foster care for less than 2 years were more likely to be reunified than females in the same circumstances.

Table 2.9: Permanence by Interaction of Gender and Prior Years in Foster Care, for Youth Who Achieved Permanence

Gender	Prior Years in Foster Care	Reunification %	Subsidized Guardianship %	Adoption %	Total %
Female	1 to 2 (<i>N</i> = 75)	40.0	45.3	14.7	100
	2 to 3 (<i>N</i> = 60)	33.3	40.0	26.7	100
	3 to 7 (<i>N</i> = 110)	22.7	33.6	43.6	100
	7 to 18 (<i>N</i> = 120)	21.7	40.8	37.5	100
Male	1 to 2 (<i>N</i> = 64)	68.8	25.0	6.3	100
	2 to 3 (<i>N</i> = 58)	25.9	58.6	15.5	100
	3 to 7 (<i>N</i> = 108)	16.7	53.7	29.6	100
	7 to 18 (<i>N</i> = 135)	26.7	37.0	36.3	100

p = .0037

Figure 2.9: Permanence by Interaction of Gender and Prior Years in Foster Care, for Youth Who Achieved Permanence



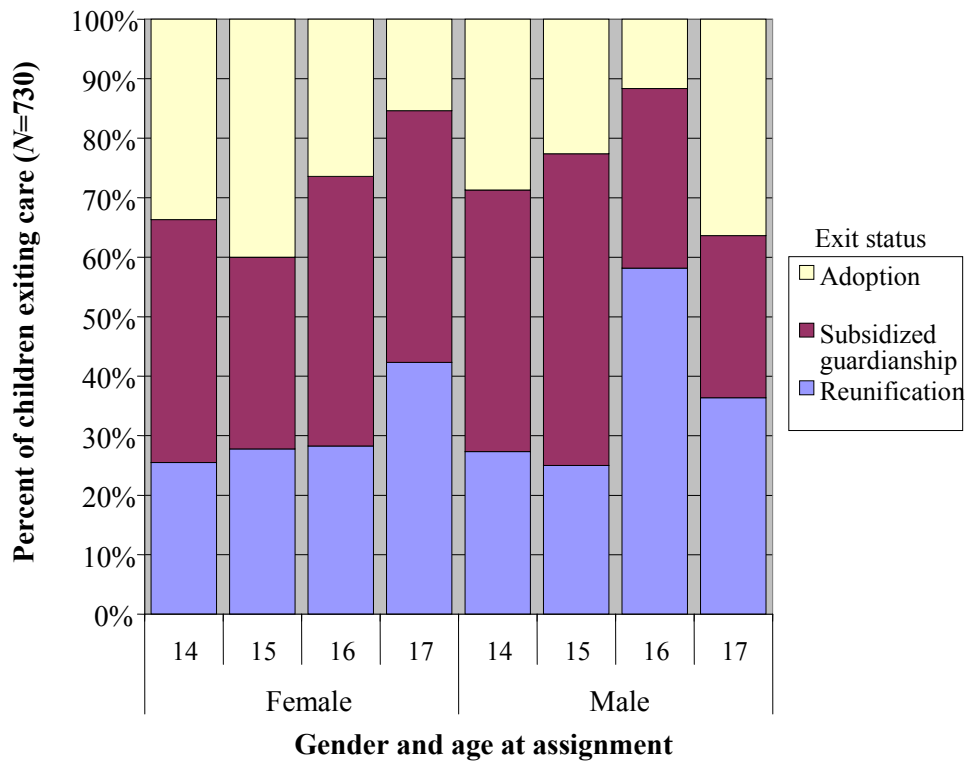
The interaction of gender and age when eligible for the waiver was significant. As shown in Table 2.10 and Figure 2.10, the relative distribution among adoption, subsidized guardianship, and reunification differs between males and females for 16- and 17-year-olds.

Table 2.10: Permanence by Interaction of Gender and Age When Eligible, for Youth Who Achieved Permanence

Gender	Age at Assignment	Reunification %	Subsidized Guardianship %	Adoption %	Total %
Female	14 (N= 96)	25.5	40.8	33.7	100
	15 (N=90)	27.8	32.2	40.0	100
	16 (N=53)	28.3	45.3	26.4	100
	17 (N=26)	42.3	42.3	15.4	100
Male	14 (N=216)	27.3	44.0	28.7	100
	15 (N=84)	25.0	52.4	22.6	100
	16 (N=43)	58.1	30.2	11.6	100
	17 (N=22)	36.4	27.3	36.4	100

$p=.0229$

Figure 2.10: Permanence by Interaction of Gender and Age When Eligible, for Youth Who Achieved Permanence



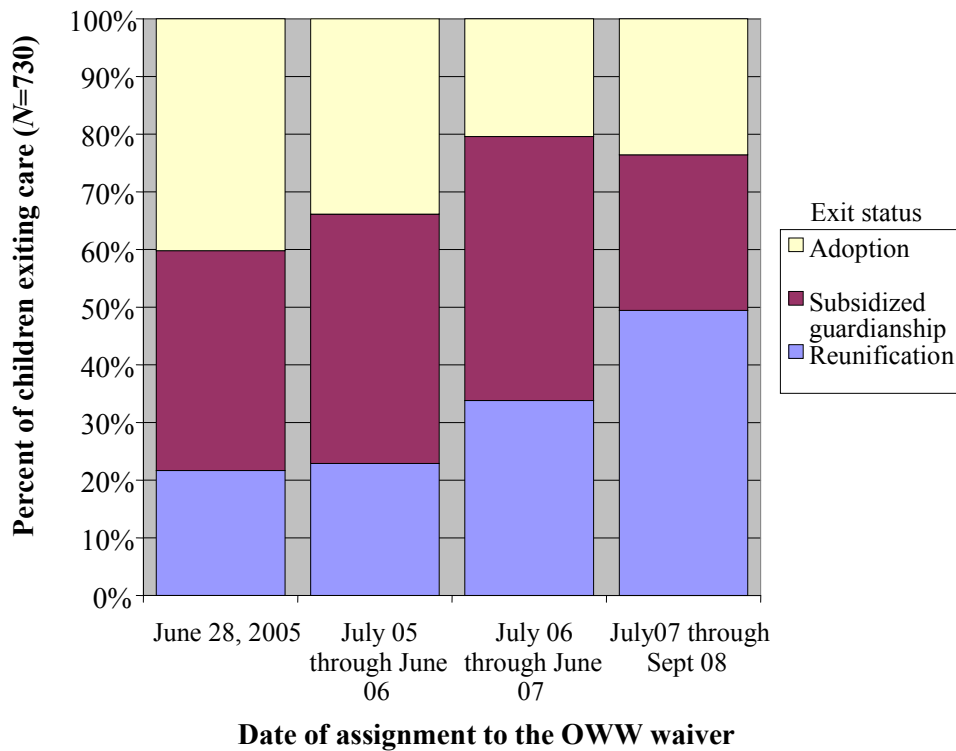
The date of assignment to the Older Wards Waiver was a highly significant predictor of the exit type. As shown in Table 2.11 and Figure 2.11, adoption was more likely and reunification was less likely among those who were assigned earlier compared to those assigned later. This may reflect the time required to explore and implement the various options.

Table 2.11: Permanence by Date of Assignment to the Older Wards Waiver, for Youth Who Achieved Permanence

Assignment Date	Reunification %	Subsidized Guardianship %	Adoption %	Total %
June 28, 2005 (N=97)	21.6	38.1	40.2	100
July 05 through June 06 (N=319)	22.9	43.3	33.9	100
July 06 through June 07 (N=225)	33.8	45.8	20.4	100
July 07 through Sept. 08 (N=89)	49.4	27.0	23.6	100

$p < .0001$

Figure 2.11: Permanence by Date of Assignment to the Older Wards Waiver, for Youth Who Achieved Permanence



In other descriptive analyses of the 730 youth who achieved permanence, demonstration-control differences were not statistically significant for the following: length of time in care after assignment to the waiver (mean = 0.75 years), age at assignment to the waiver (mean = 15.1 years), age at achieving permanence (mean = 15.8 years), years in care prior to assignment to the waiver (mean = 5.9 years), whether with relative or nonrelative caregiver (43.3% with relatives and 56.7% with nonrelatives), and gender (50% of each). There was a slightly significant difference in youth’s race, as shown in Table 2.12, with more white youth in the demonstration group and more black and other youth in the control group. Since youth’s race distribution for demonstration and control groups was not significantly different at the time of random assignment to the waiver, it is not clear why it is different after achieving permanence; with such a marginally significant *p* value, it could be due to chance.

Table 2.12: Race by Assignment Group, for Youth Who Achieved Permanence

Assignment Group	Youth’s Race %			
	Black	White	Other	Total
Demonstration	50.3	41.9	7.8	100
Control	55.9	33.5	10.6	100

p=.04

2.1.4 Placement Restrictiveness

The next measure of permanence that we address is the restrictiveness of living arrangements.¹³ Over a child’s history in the foster care system, he or she can be in many different living arrangements with varying levels of restrictiveness, some for only brief periods of time. This issue is important both because restrictive placements are more expensive and because children who experience more time in restrictive placements (which can indicate more difficult behavior and a higher level of service needs) might be less likely to achieve permanence through reunification, adoption, or subsidized guardianship. And usually a restrictive placement is assumed to be temporary, and the child would move into a different living arrangement as soon as the purpose of the restrictive placement is achieved—thus requiring yet another move for the child.

¹³ More restrictive living arrangements include placements in institutions and group homes; less restrictive placements are in foster care (either relative or nonrelative).

Hypothesis: Youth in the demonstration group will experience fewer and less restrictive placements than youth in the control group.

Might eligibility for enhanced transition services help maintain less restrictive placements in foster and relative homes and lead to fewer restrictive placements such as in institutions or group homes? The lack of significant demonstration-control differences shows that the waiver did not have an impact on restrictiveness of placements.

The following analysis is based on the total time that youth in the demonstration and control groups spent in living arrangements with different levels of restrictiveness.¹⁴ We show both more and less restrictive placements to provide a full picture of the youth's living arrangements throughout the waiver period to date. Note that eligibility for the waiver required that a youth had been in a foster or relative home for at least 1 year, so youth in other types of placements would not have been eligible. That requirement likely influenced the findings by increasing the overall amount of time that youth in the waiver spent in a foster or relative home.

Figure 2.12 shows, for the three study regions, the total time (across all eligible youth) in each type of living arrangement as a percentage of the total time in foster care between assignment to the waiver and either permanence or September 30, 2008. Across the living arrangements (including the most restrictive placements—institutions and group homes), the percentages were quite similar for each assignment group; differences were not statistically significant. For both groups, far more time had been spent in less restrictive arrangements (foster and relative homes) than in the most restrictive arrangements. Thus youth in the demonstration group do not have significantly less restrictive or more restrictive placements than youth in the control group. If we had found significant differences in the living arrangements, we would have investigated the restrictiveness of those arrangements; since there were no significant differences, there is no reason to analyze these patterns further at this time.

¹⁴ For this analysis, several types of foster home (typecode = FHA, FHB, FHP, FHS, or FHI), institutional arrangements (typecode = ICF, IDC, IMH, IOP, IPA, IRS, HHF, or NCF), runaway categories (typecode = RNY, WCC, WUK, UAP, or UAH), transitional placements (typecode = YIC, CUS, ILO, or TLP), and other living arrangements (typecode = ASD, DEC, OTH, PND, UNK, JTP, CIL, ABD, YES, or MIS) were combined to create a smaller number of categories.

Figure 2.12: Total Time in Each Living Arrangement in Study Regions After Assignment to the Waiver and Before Permanence or September 30, 2008

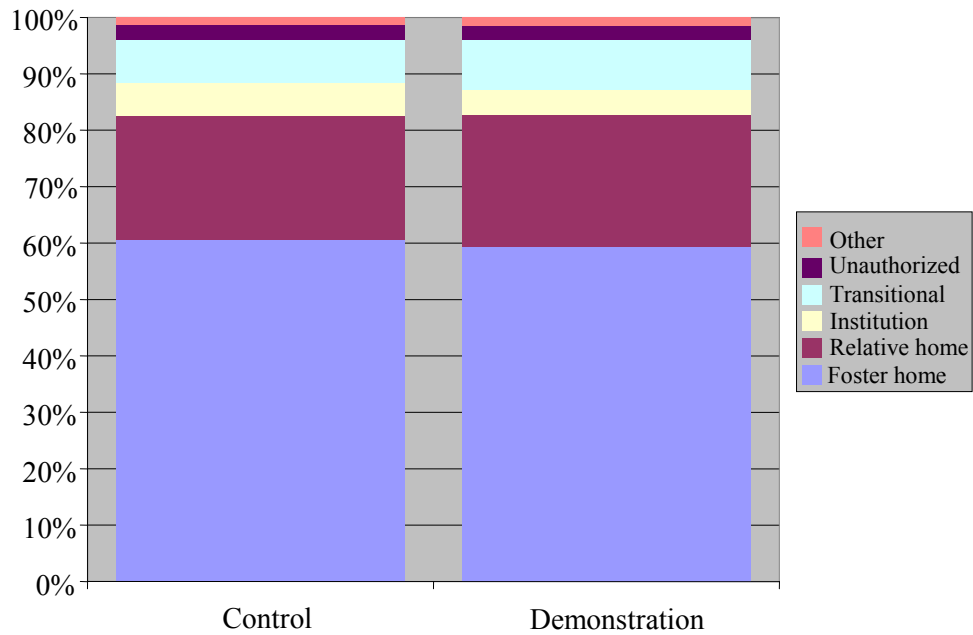


Figure 2.13 presents the same analysis for youth statewide.¹⁵ Again, the percentages in this figure are quite similar for the assignment groups.

¹⁵ There are some caveats with the state data that did not apply to the study-region data. Across the state, youth were occasionally placed in a permanent placement, but the case was not closed until months later. Also youth occasionally had a living arrangement in the home of a parent before the placement type categorization was changed. Time in a living arrangement with a code of HMP, HAP, or SGH is not included in the figure; none of the youth in the study regions, presented in the previous figure, had those living arrangements.

Figure 2.13: Total Time in Each Living Arrangement Statewide After Assignment to the Waiver and Before Permanence or September 30, 2008

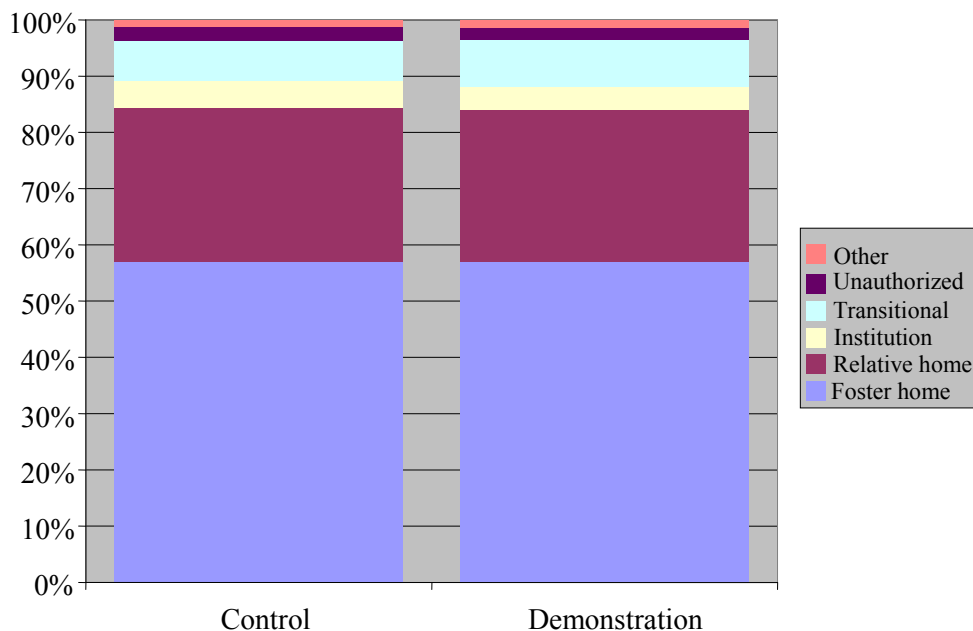


Table 2.13 shows the percentage of eligible youth in the study regions that ever spent time in each of the different living arrangements during the time period beginning at assignment to the waiver through either permanence or September 30, 2008. As with the time in different living arrangements, the differences between the demonstration and control groups were small and not statistically significant. The percentages in Table 2.13 and 2.14 (youth statewide) do not add to 100 percent since children can have several different living arrangements over time.

Table 2.13: Percentage of Youth in Study Regions Who Ever Spent Time in Living Arrangements After Assignment to the Waiver and Before September 30, 2008

Ever Spent Time In:	Demonstration Group (N=350) %	Control Group (N=358) %	Overall (N=708) %	Chi-square <i>p</i> -value
Foster home	73.0	74.9	74.0	0.52
Relative home	40.0	35.6	37.8	0.15
Institution	18.7	17.0	17.9	0.48
Other	9.1	9.0	9.0	0.99
Transitional living/college	16.3	15.9	16.1	0.87
Unauthorized place	17.5	19.1	18.3	0.52

Table 2.14 shows the same analysis for youth statewide. Again, the differences between the demonstration and control groups were small and not statistically significant.

Table 2.14: Percentage of Youth Statewide Who Ever Spent Time in Living Arrangements After Assignment to the Waiver and Before September 30, 2008

Ever Spent Time In:	Demonstration Group (N=932) %	Control Group (N=925) %	Overall (N=1,857) %	Chi-square <i>p</i> -value
Foster home	68.3	66.8	67.6	0.48
Relative home	44.0	44.3	44.2	0.89
Institution	14.8	13.2	14.0	0.31
Other	8.9	8.8	8.8	0.90
Transitional living/college	15.4	15.1	15.3	0.87
Unauthorized place	13.7	14.5	14.1	0.57

2.2 Safety

The concern about youth's safety arises because when children are adopted or enter subsidized guardianship, the state withdraws administrative oversight. This might lead to some children being placed at greater risk of maltreatment by their guardians or adoptive parents (increasing the *incidence* of abuse and neglect) or greater vulnerability to more maltreatment by abusive or neglectful biological parents (increasing the *recurrence* of abuse and neglect). The

concern under the Subsidized Guardianship Waiver was that subsidized guardianship might lead to higher rates of maltreatment among children in the demonstration group because of the withdrawal of administrative oversight.¹⁶ This hypothesis has been carried over into the Older Wards Waiver to make sure that the waiver did not lead to greater risk of maltreatment.

Hypothesis: Youth in the demonstration group will have a lower incidence and recurrence of abuse and neglect than youth in the control group.

Did the waiver increase or reduce the risk of subsequent maltreatment for any youth? We did not find any evidence that it did. Examining CPS allegation findings after assignment to the waiver and before permanency up to September 30, 2008, showed very few indicated allegations and no significant demonstration-control differences. Among the youth in the waiver study regions, only 1.8 percent experienced indicated allegations prior to permanency, and the proportion among youth in the waiver statewide was 2.1 percent (data not shown in a table). The analysis showed that assignment to the waiver did not lead to youth in the demonstration group experiencing more or less abuse and neglect than youth in the control group.

Next, we examined allegations for the youth who did achieve permanency before the end of the study or before age 18. The purpose was to assess whether there were differences in subsequent maltreatment depending on the type of permanency.¹⁷ Tables 2.15-2.18 below show the number of children in the study regions and statewide associated with allegations and with indicated allegations. Logistic regression was used to assess the significance of differences by permanency option, waiver assignment, and the interaction of permanency option and assignment. Table 2.15 shows the number and percentage of children in the study regions associated with allegations (whether or not they were indicated). Differences by assignment (demonstration-control) were not significant. However, differences by permanency exit were significant, with a higher proportion of youth who were reunified being associated with an abuse or neglect allegation. Table 2.16 presents the same findings for youth statewide.

¹⁶ The evaluation of the Subsidized Guardianship Waiver did not find a higher rate of maltreatment among children who were adopted or went into subsidized guardianship. In fact, it found that safety risks were higher for children who remained in foster care or were reunified with their birth parents.

¹⁷ For children who were adopted, we looked for allegations linked to both the DCFS child ID before adoption and the child ID after adoption (the adoption ID). The adoption IDs came from a file provided by DCFS that linked the DCFS child ID from before adoption to the DCFS child ID after adoption. Since the adoption IDs linked with only 148 of the 214 children who were adopted statewide, the number of allegations may be underestimated.

Table 2.15: Youth in the Study Regions with Abuse and Neglect Allegations, by Permanency Exit and Waiver Assignment

Permanency Exit	Demonstration		Control		All	
	<i>N</i>	Percent with an allegation	<i>N</i>	Percent with an allegation	<i>N</i>	Percent with an allegation
Reunification	40	2	49	22	89	22
Subsidized guardianship	66	8	47	11	113	9
Adoption	37	3	47	4	84	4
All	143	10	143	13	286	12

Differences by permanency exit are significant ($p < .0012$).

Table 2.16: Youth Statewide with Abuse and Neglect Allegations, by Permanency Exit and Waiver Assignment

Permanency Exit	Demonstration		Control		All	
	<i>N</i>	Percent with an allegation	<i>N</i>	Percent with an allegation	<i>N</i>	Percent with an allegation
Reunification	94	16	120	23	214	20
Subsidized guardianship	168	5	134	8	302	7
Adoption	110	2	104	3	214	2
All	372	7	358	12	730	9

Differences by permanency exit are significant ($p < .0001$).

Tables 2.17 and 2.18 show the number of youth in the study regions and statewide associated with allegations that were found to be indicated. The number of cases with indicated abuse and neglect was very small, 1 among 286 youth in the study regions and 8 among 730 youth statewide. Significance testing was not possible due to the number of zeros in table cells.

Table 2.17: Youth in the Study Regions with Indicated Allegations, by Permanency Exit and Waiver Assignment*

Permanency Exit	Demonstration		Control		All	
	<i>N</i>	Percent with an indicated allegation	<i>N</i>	Percent with an indicated allegation	<i>N</i>	Percent with an indicated allegation
Reunification	40	3	49	2	89	2
Subsidized guardianship	66	0	47	0	113	0
Adoption	37	0	47	0	84	0
All	143	1	143	1	286	1

*Significance could not be determined due to the number of zeroes.

Table 2.18: Youth Statewide with Indicated Allegations, by Permanency Exit and Waiver Assignment*

Permanency Exit	Demonstration		Control		All	
	N	Percent with an indicated allegation	N	Percent with an indicated allegation	N	Percent with an indicated allegation
Reunification	94	4	120	3	214	3
Subsidized guardianship	168	1	134	0	302	0
Adoption	110	0	104	0	214	0
All	372	1	358	1	730	1

*Significance could not be determined due to the number of zeroes.

2.3 Well-Being

Hypothesis: Youth in the demonstration group will register better health and education status than youth in the control group.

Did eligibility for enhanced transition services affect youth’s health status and educational experiences, critical indicators of their well-being? Information about youth’s health status is not available in the DCFS administrative data, although some limited information about education is available.¹⁸ In this section, we summarize that information. The detailed tables are presented in Appendix D. None of the demonstration-control differences were statistically significant, so eligibility for enhanced services did not appear to affect youth’s educational experiences, at least as measured by the administrative data.

Two variables in the administrative data relate to success in school: school status and number of years of education completed. Both variables have relatively high rates of missing, unknown, and not applicable values, and so their usefulness is very limited, and they should be used cautiously.

- Overall, more than 75 percent of the youth were attending school or had completed high school—but nearly 23 percent of the youth were missing information on school status.

¹⁸ The youth interviews asked about both health status and educational experiences. See Chapter 3.

- Among youth age 18 and older in the study regions, 62 percent were still attending school and 9 percent had completed school; comparable proportions statewide were 62 percent and 8 percent (but more than a quarter of the youth were missing the information).
- Youth age 18 and older with nonmissing data had completed 11 years of school, on average, both in the study regions and statewide. Over 20 percent of the youth were missing the information.

3. Youth and Caregiver Characteristics

This chapter discusses the characteristics of the youth and caregiver, primarily at the time of the latest interview. The purposes of examining youth and caregiver characteristics are both to gain a picture of the population being analyzed and to ensure that there were no systematic underlying differences between the demonstration and control groups and, thus, randomization was successful in producing statistically equivalent groups.

Latest Interview Dataset. As described in Section 1.2, the evaluation design called for an initial and a follow-up interview. However, a number of the youth and caregivers had only one interview because the initial interview occurred after permanence had been achieved, the youth turned 18 before or shortly after the initial interview, or the youth had been reunified after the initial interview. In these cases, the initial interview was the only interview conducted (note that the same instrument was used for both interviews). In a few other cases, the caregiver refused the follow-up interview. There were no significant differences in response rates between demonstration and control groups.¹⁹ Given the number of cases for which only one interview was obtained, a dataset was constructed of the “latest” interview for the caregiver or youth, whether it was close to time of assignment or at the end of the data collection period. These datasets for the caregiver and youth provide the most current interview information available regarding the youth’s characteristics, well-being, and permanency decisionmaking.

The latest youth interview dataset contains 678 records, 245 from cases with only one youth interview and 433 from cases where there are two interviews, where only the latest interview is included. It is important to note that youth who were reunified after their initial interview were only interviewed once, as the instrument was focused on decisionmaking about permanency options other than reunification. For these youth, their latest interview occurred while they were still in foster care and reflected their permanency decisionmaking at that time. Youth were interviewed for a second time when they achieved permanence through adoption or subsidized guardianship, exited care through aging out, or at the end of the study in December 2008. More youth would have undoubtedly achieved permanence had the study continued until all youth in the waiver had turned 18. The latest interview, therefore, reflects youths’ status at one point in time and is not necessarily their final permanency status. The latest interview dataset for the caregivers contains 749 records; there are more caregiver than youth records because youth were excluded from an interview if they were too severely disabled to participate or if they

¹⁹ Additional information on survey response can be found in Appendix C.

had moved too far from the study area to be interviewed in person. Caregivers could be interviewed over the telephone, but this was not an appropriate method of data collection for the youth interview.

3.1 Youth Characteristics

Table 3.1 shows the age of the youth at the time of the latest interview. While there was no significant difference between the demonstration and control groups in the mean age of the youth at the time of the latest interview (16.4 years for the demonstration group and 16.3 years for the control group), the youth in the control group had a larger proportion of youth who were age 14 (16.2%) than did the demonstration group (8.8%). The demonstration group had a larger proportion of youth who were age 15 (22.7%) than did the control group (16.5%). However, the percentage of youth in other age categories was very similar between the demonstration and control groups.

Table 3.1: Age of Youth Interviewed (latest interview)

Age at Interview	Demonstration Group (N=332)	Control Group (N=346)	Overall (N=678)
Average ($p=.497$)	16.4 years	16.3 years	16.3 years
Age ($p=.026$):	%	%	%
14	8.8	16.2	12.6
15	22.7	16.5	19.5
16	19.0	17.7	18.3
17	23.8	22.9	23.3
18 or 19*	25.8	26.7	26.3
Total	100	100	100

*Note: Three youth, all in the control group, were age 19.

About half the youth interview sample was male and half female (see Table 3.2). Nearly 65 percent of the youth identified themselves as African-American, and about one-quarter was white. Eleven percent of the sample was Hispanic. There were no significant demonstration-control differences in gender or ethnicity.

Table 3.2: Youth's Gender and Race/Ethnicity (latest interview)

Characteristic	Overall Percentage
Youth's gender:	
Male	49.7
Female	50.3
Total (N=678)	100
Youth's race/ethnicity:	
Hispanic	11.2
African American	64.7
White	25.7
Native American	0.6
Asian	0.2
Other race or ethnicity	0.4
(N=678)*	

*Percentages do not sum to 100% as youth could identify multiple race/ethnicity categories.

As shown in Table 3.3, the large majority of youth reported that they were in excellent or good health. About 6 percent had given birth to or fathered children. Quite a few of the youth reported that they had friends who smoked cigarettes, drank alcohol, or used drugs to get high. Nearly half of the youth were reported by their caregivers as having a disability, most often a learning disability. Demonstration-control differences were not statistically significant (except in having a learning disability, as noted below).

Table 3.3: Youth's Health Indicators (latest interview)

Indicator	Overall Percentage of Youth
In excellent or good health	92.8
Has given birth to or fathered any children	5.9
Friends smoke cigarettes	60.4
Friends drink alcohol	53.8
Friends use drugs to get high	46.3
Caregiver reports youth has disability	46.2
Type of disability among youth with disability:	
Learning disability	57.2*
Emotional disturbance	50.0
Developmental delay	28.9
Some other disabling condition	16.0
Hearing, speech, or sight impairment	11.6

*Youth in the control group were somewhat more likely to have a learning disability than were youth in the demonstration group: 57.6% vs. 42.4%, $p=.008$.

Ninety-one percent of the youth reported that they were currently in school, with close to 20 percent each in 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade (see Table 3.4). About 3 percent of the youth in school were enrolled in college. Four percent of the youth said they had graduated from high school, 2 percent had dropped out, and 2 percent gave some other reason for not being enrolled in school (data not shown in a table). There were no significant differences in school status between the demonstration and control youth.

Table 3.4: Youth’s Grade in School (latest interview)

Current Grade in School*	Percentage
7 th	1.3
8 th	9.9
9 th	21.5
10 th	22.8
11 th	21.3
12 th	19.8
College	3.4
Total, youth currently attending school (N=619)	100

*Youth who reported that they were not currently attending school because they were on summer vacation were counted as being in the grade they were in before summer vacation started.

Youth were asked how far they planned to go in school, and youth’s educational plans were identified by DCFS as a topic of particular interest. Table 3.5 shows that over three-quarters of the youth planned to go to college, graduate from college, or get a postgraduate degree. Demonstration-control differences approached statistical significance and are shown in the table. Youth in the demonstration group aspired to postgraduate degrees more than did youth in the control group, although similar proportions planned to graduate from college.

Table 3.5: Youth’s Education Plans, by Treatment Group (latest interview)

How far do you think you will go in school?	Percentage by Treatment Group		Overall Percentage (N=678)
	Demonstration (N=332)	Control (N=346)	
High school/GED	16.6	20.2	18.5
Vocational	5.4	3.2	4.3
Go to college	19.3	26.3	22.9
Graduate from college	46.1	42.2	44.1
Get a postgraduate degree	12.6	8.1	10.3
Total	100	100	100

p=.062

Table 3.6 shows that there were significant differences in youth’s educational plans according to whether they wanted permanence with their caregiver. The significance was largely driven by the undecided youth, who were far more likely to plan on getting a high school diploma or GED and not going further with their education and far less likely to plan on graduating from college.

Table 3.6: Youth’s Education Plans, by Whether Youth Wants Permanence with Caregiver (latest interview)

How far do you think you will go in school?	Youth Wants Permanence:		
	Yes (N=157) %	No (N=214) %	Undecided (N=157) %
High school/GED	11.5	15.0	35.7
Vocational	2.6	5.5	3.8
Go to college	26.2	21.0	22.9
Graduate from college	51.5	45.9	26.8
Get a postgraduate degree	8.3	12.6	10.8
Total	100	100	100

p<.001

3.2 Youth Well-Being

Having networks of social support likely affects youth well-being and might be related to their interest in permanence and eventual permanency outcomes. Strong social networks can prevent isolation and provide a range of benefits, including practical assistance such as transportation or help with chores; sympathy or encouragement if a youth needs to discuss a problem or celebrate an achievement; social interaction; and help in understanding feelings and dealing with difficult situations.

To obtain an understanding of the type and quality of relationships in the youth’s lives, a set of “social network” questions were administered in the youth interview (see pp. 4-5 in the youth interview instrument in Appendix A). Youth were asked to describe up to five people who had been important to them in the past month. They were then asked a series of questions about these relationships: they were asked to identify whether these people lived in their home; were family members outside the home; were friends or neighbors; attended school, work, or support groups with the youth; or were professionals such as teachers, counselors, or caseworkers.

For each person named, youth were asked questions such as whether the person would help them out, provide emotional support, give advice, and be critical of them, whether the help went both directions, and how close they were to the person. Based on youth's answers to these questions, three scales of supportiveness were developed to answer the following questions:²⁰

Emotional support scale: Did youth have people to rely on for emotional help? This scale is defined as having people to talk with about feelings. It took into account the youth's closeness to the individual and whether the individual was critical of the youth.

Concrete support scale: Did youth have people to rely on for concrete help? This scale is defined as having people available upon whom the youth could rely for help (e.g., occasional transportation and advice). It took into account whether help and advice went in both directions—that is, did the youth provide concrete help as well as receive it?

Relationship support scale: Did youth have people with whom they had close relationships? This scale was the number of people with whom the youth had an intense relationship. In order for a person to be classified as having an intense relationship with the youth, he/she had to be considered “very close” and have had contact at least weekly.

Youths' scores on the support scales compared to their reported health status are presented in Table 3.7, which shows the percentage of youth whose scores were relatively low (few people or none), medium (moderate number of people), and high (many people) on each of the three scales, by health status. There were no significant differences by demonstration-control status, gender, or relative/nonrelative caregiver, and those differences are not shown. Overall, most of the youth reported having at least moderate support on all of the scales regardless of their health status, although youth in excellent health also tended to have high support as measured by the support scales. On the relationship support scale, significantly more of the youth in excellent health had high support, meaning they had several people in their lives with whom they were close and could talk about feelings. However, more youth in fair or poor health had medium levels of relationship support.

²⁰ The questions and the scales followed the methodology in Westat 1991, *A National Evaluation of Title IV-E Foster Care Independent Living Programs for Youth*, Phase 2 Final Report, Vol. 1. Rockville, MD: Westat.

Table 3.7: Youth’s Support Scale Scores, by Youth’s Health Status (latest interview)

Range on Support Scale	Youth’s Health Status		
	Excellent (N=373) %	Good (N=234) %	Fair/Poor (N=50) %
Concrete Support Scale (having people to rely on for help): ($p=.214$)			
Low support	16.1	24.4	25.0
Medium support	60.9	58.6	54.2
High support	23.1	17.1	20.8
Total	100	100	100
Emotional Support Scale (having people to talk with about feelings): ($p=.068$)			
Low support (<2)	7.5	11.1	8.3
Medium support (2-3.9)	39.1	50.4	50.0
High support (4-5)	53.4	38.5	36.9
Total	100	100	100
Relationship Support Scale (having close relationships with people): ($p=.001$)			
Low support	18.8	26.5	14.6
Medium support	38.6	47.9	60.4
High support	42.6	25.6	25.0
Total	100	100	100

Table 3.8 shows youths’ support scale scores by their permanency status (in which “permanence” refers to subsidized guardianship or adoption) in the latest interview.²¹ On the emotional support scale (the extent to which the youth had people with whom he/she could talk about feelings), youth who had been adopted were significantly more likely to report high support, and none of the youth who had been adopted or gone into guardianship reported low support.

²¹ Note that although the youth and caregiver interviews usually agreed on permanency status, there were a few discrepancies. There was one case where the youth said adoption had occurred when the youth was actually still in foster care, 14 cases where youth said that they had gone into subsidized guardianship when they actually were still in foster care, and one case where the youth had gone into subsidized guardianship but thought he was still in foster care. For these cases, we used the permanency status that was reported by the caregiver and confirmed with DCFS records.

Table 3.8: Youth’s Support Scale Scores, by Permanency Status (latest interview)

Range on Support Scale	Percentage by Youth’s Permanency Status		
	Adoption (N=21) %	Subsidized Guardianship (N=20) %	Foster Care* (N=611) %
Concrete Support Scale (having people to rely on for help): ($p=.579$)			
Low support	19.1	30.0	20.1
Medium support	52.4	60.0	59.9
High support	28.6	13.4	20.0
Total	100	100	100
Emotional Support Scale (having people to talk with about feelings): ($p=.025$)			
Low support	0.0	0.0	9.5
Medium support	33.3	50.0	44.4
High support	66.7	50.0	46.2
Total	100	100	100
Relationship Support Scale (having close relationships with people): ($p=.254$)			
Low support	19.1	15.0	21.6
Medium support	23.8	45.0	44.2
High support	57.1	40.0	34.2
Total	100	100	100

*Youth who were reunified after their first interview did not receive a follow-up interview and are counted in the “foster care” group.

As discussed at the beginning of Chapter 3, up to this point the tables in this chapter were based on the latest interview dataset (which included only one interview per youth). However, we have interview data at two points in time for a subset of 418 youth. Examining this subpopulation at these two points in time may give us some insights into how youth changed over time. This sample is referred to as the T1/T2 subsample. Tables 3.9 and 3.10 differ from the other tables in this chapter in that they are based on the T1/T2 subsample (rather than the latest interview dataset) and compare interview responses at the initial interview to those at the follow-up interview. Tables 3.9 and 3.10 address an important indication of youth well-being: youth’s feelings about living with his/her caregiver. We addressed the question of whether the degree to which the youth liked living with the caregiver or felt a part of the family at the initial interview was related to whether the youth achieved permanence at the follow-up interview. Table 3.9 shows that the more youth liked living with their caregivers at the initial interview, the less likely they were to still be in foster care at the follow-up. These differences were statistically

significant. Note that there were only two youth who reported that they hardly ever or never liked living with the caregiver at the initial interview.

Table 3.9: Whether Youth Liked Living With Caregiver at Initial Interview, by Permanency Status at Follow-Up Interview (T1/T2 subsample)

Permanency Status at Follow-Up Interview	Youth Liked Living with Caregiver at Initial Interview:			
	All the Time (N=283) %	Most of the Time (N=101) %	Sometimes (N=32) %	Hardly Ever/Never (N=2) %
Adoption	6.7	4.0	6.3	0.0
Subsidized guardianship	16.7	7.9	0.0	0.0
Foster care	76.6	88.1	93.7	100.0
Total	100	100	100	100

$p=.001$

A similar pattern is shown in Table 3.10. Youth who always felt a part of the family at the initial interview were the most likely to have achieved permanence at the follow-up interview. Note that there were only three youth who hardly ever or never felt a part of the family at the initial interview.

Table 3.10: Whether Youth Felt Like Part of Family at Initial Interview, by Permanency Status at Follow-Up Interview (T1/T2 subsample)

Permanency Status at Follow-Up Interview	Youth Felt a Part of the Family at Initial Interview			
	All the time (N=315)	Most of the time (N=74)	Sometimes (N=25)	Hardly ever/never (N=3)
Adoption	7.0	1.4	8.1	0.0
Subsidized guardianship	15.6	6.8	4.0	0.0
Foster care	77.4	91.9	87.9	100.0
Total	100	100	100	100

$p=.001$

3.3 Caregiver Characteristics

Caregiver characteristics presented below are based on the latest interview, as described at the beginning of Chapter 3. Information in this section includes general demographics describing age, sex, race/ethnicity, and relative status, as well as family and household

characteristics. Key among the findings is that relative caregivers reported lower household incomes, less home ownership, and more financial difficulties maintaining their households than did nonrelative caregivers.

Table 3.11 summarizes a variety of caregivers' characteristics. Overall, 80 percent of caregivers reported that they were the youth's foster parents, with 20 percent having achieved permanence with youth either through subsidized guardianship (12.7%) or adoption (7.3%). This represents a more than doubling in the overall proportion of caregivers achieving permanence since the initial interviews reported in the Interim Report #2, when only 9.3 percent were legal guardians or adoptive parents of the youth. Demonstration-control differences were not significant.

Table 3.11: Characteristics of the Caregivers (latest interview)

Caregiver Characteristics	Percent
Type of caregiver	
Adoptive parent	7.3
Legal guardian	12.7
Foster parent	80.0
Total (N=749)	100
Caregiver gender	
Female	88.0
Male	12.0
Total (N=749)	100
Average age of caregiver (N=749)	50.2
Relative or nonrelative caregiver	
Nonrelative	67.7
Relative	32.3
Total (N=741)	100
Relative relationship to youth	
Aunt/Uncle	15.0
Grandparent	10.3
Sibling	3.4
Other relative	3.6
Nonrelative	67.7
Total (N=741)	100

Caregiver Characteristics	Percent
Race/ethnicity of caregiver	
African-American	65.2
White	27.2
Hispanic/Latino	6.9
Asian	0.1
Native American	0.0
Some other race/multiracial	0.5
Total (N=749)	100
Caregiver marital status	
Married	38.2
Never married	23.2
Separated	20.3
Widowed	13.6
Divorced	4.7
Total (N=749)	100
Caregiver married or with a partner	
Yes	42.6
No	57.4
Total (N=748)	100
Caregiver work status	
Working full-time	46.1
Working part-time	10.8
Homemaker	21.4
Retired	15.1
Looking for work/laid off from work	3.9
In school or training and not working	1.5
Unable to work due to disability	1.1
Something else	0.1
Total (N=748)	100
Caregiver rating of physical health	
Excellent	22.5
Good	60.7
Fair	16.0
Poor	0.8
Total (N=748)	100
Caregiver has physical or emotional disability	
Yes	8.4
No	91.6
Total (N=749)	100
Caregiver's disability makes it difficult to care for children	
Yes	3.3
No	96.7
Total (N=61)	100

As shown in Table 3.11, the caregiver population was primarily female, with the average caregiver age being 50.2 years old. About one-third of the caregivers were relatives. The relative caregivers were most frequently aunts/uncles (15.0%) followed by grandparents (10.3%). Nearly two-thirds of caregivers were African-American, 27.2 percent white, and 6.9 percent Hispanic/Latino. Caregivers were asked about their marital status; 42.6 percent were married or lived with a partner in the home (38.2% reported they were married). The majority of caregivers worked either full-time or part-time (56.9%), while 21.4 percent were homemakers, 15.1 percent were retired, and 1.1 percent were unable to work due to disability. Most caregivers reported they were in good or excellent health. Less than 9 percent reported a physical or emotional disability, and a very small proportion of caregivers with a disability said their condition made it difficult to care for the children in their home. There were no statistically significant differences between demonstration group and control group caregivers on any of these characteristics.

Table 3.12 presents caregivers' financial and household characteristics, including household size, household income, home ownership, and financial indicators. Information on household size shows that very few of caregivers' households consisted of only the caregiver and youth (only 6.7%). Most households had at least three persons, and nearly one-third included siblings of the youth. There were no statistically significant differences between demonstration group and control group caregivers on any of these characteristics.

Table 3.12: Caregivers' Household Characteristics and Financial Indicators (latest interview)

Characteristic	Percentage
Household size	
Two-person household	6.7
Three-person household	18.4
Four-person household	22.7
Five-person household	20.7
Six-person household	15.8
Seven or more persons in the household	15.7
Total (N=749)	100
Youth's sibling lives in household	
Yes	30.8
No	69.2
Total (N=749)	100

Characteristic	Percentage
Total annual household income from the previous calendar year	
Less than \$20,000	24.1
\$20,000 – \$39,999	40.5
\$40,000 - \$59,999	24.8
\$60,000 or more	10.7
Total (N=749)	100
Caregiver owns or rents residence	
Owns residence	73.6
Rents residence	26.4
Total (N=749)	100
Caregiver had enough money to maintain household in the last 30 days (N=747)	88.5
Caregiver had difficulty paying the electric or heating bills in the last 30 days (N=746)	13.0
Caregiver had difficulty paying the rent or mortgage in the last 30 days (N=748)	8.7
Caregiver had difficulty buying enough food for your family in the last 30 days (N=746)	2.5

Table 3.12 also shows that 24.1 percent of households had an income of less than \$20,000.²² Despite nearly a quarter reporting such low incomes, few caregivers reported financial difficulties in paying their mortgage or rent, utilities, or buying food for their families. About three-quarters of caregivers reported owning their own home, and a high percentage (88.5%) said they had enough money to maintain their households in the past 30 days. No significant differences were found between the demonstration and control groups.

Examining these same financial indicators separately for relative and nonrelative caregivers reveals some significant differences. Table 3.13 shows that nonrelative households tended to be more financially secure. Relative households were significantly more likely to report lower household incomes, rent their residences rather than own, and report financial difficulties in maintaining their households and paying essential bills. Note that we found several statistically significant relative/nonrelative differences in the decisionmaking processes, described in Chapter 4; although this study was not designed to assess the extent or impact of the differences between families where the caregiver and youth were related and families in which they were not related, we explore some of those differences in more detail in Appendix E.

²² The 2008 poverty threshold was \$21,200 for a four-person household. Source: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/08fedreg.htm>.

Table 3.13: Financial Indicators by Relative and Nonrelative Caregivers (latest interview)

Financial Indicator	Percentage by Relative Status	
	Relative	Nonrelative
Annual household income ($p<.001$)		
Less than \$20,000	38.1	17.3
\$20,000 – \$39,999	36.3	42.5
\$40,000 - \$59,999	18.1	28.0
\$60,000 or more	7.5	12.2
Total	100 ($N=226$)	100 ($N=468$)
Very low income ($p<.001$)		
Income below \$20,000	38.1	17.3
Income above \$20,000	61.9	82.7
Total	100 ($N=226$)	100 ($N=468$)
Caregiver owns or rents residence ($p<.001$)		
Owns residence	56.9	81.1
Rents residence	43.1	18.9
Total	100 ($N=239$)	100 ($N=502$)
Enough money to maintain household in the past 30 days ($p=.006$)		
Yes	83.3	90.8
No	16.7	9.2
Total	100 ($N=239$)	100 ($N=500$)
Difficulty paying the rent or mortgage in the last 30 days ($p=.001$) (Number of caregivers)	14.6 ($N=239$)	6.0 ($N=501$)
Difficulty paying the electric or heating bills in the last 30 days ($p=.001$) (Number of caregivers)	20.1 ($N=239$)	9.8 ($N=499$)
Difficulty buying enough food for your family in the last 30 days ($p=.002$) (Number of caregivers)	5.9 ($N=239$)	1.0 ($N=499$)

4. Youth's Decisionmaking Process

The purpose of the waiver was to determine whether eligibility for enhanced transition services for youth who were adopted or went into subsidized guardianship resulted in increased permanence. Chapter 2 presented outcome findings based on DCFS data, which showed no significant differences overall between the demonstration and control groups in the percentage of youth who had been adopted, had gone into subsidized guardianship, were reunified, had exited care without permanence, or were still in care (Tables 2.1 and 2.2). Investigating youth's decisionmaking process can help understand these findings, although we must keep in mind the cautionary note at the beginning of Chapter 2 about the inconsistent implementation of the waiver and the confusion among agency and court staff about the meaning of assignment to demonstration or control group.

Chapter 4 uses data from the youth interviews to examine youth's decisionmaking process as they and their caregivers considered whether to move to permanence or remain in foster care. Most of our analyses of the decisionmaking process are based on data from the latest youth interview dataset, as was described at the beginning of Chapter 3. In the interview, youth were asked about the permanency options of adoption or subsidized guardianship; no other permanency options were discussed. Therefore, "permanence" in this chapter refers only to adoption and subsidized guardianship. We first examine the effect of the availability of enhanced transition services on the decisionmaking of youth in the demonstration group. Then we look at the decisionmaking of all youth, and finally, we look at changes in decisionmaking over time for youth with two interviews.

We found that many teens in foster care were interested in obtaining permanence, particularly those younger than age 16. However, more than 40 percent of youth said that their caseworker had *not* talked to them about adoption or subsidized guardianship. Youth who were aware of the enhanced services were more likely to want permanence. However, only about 60 percent of youth in the demonstration group said that their caseworker had told them about the enhanced services, and caseworkers were more likely to tell older youth about enhanced services rather than younger youth. As youth get older, their interest in permanence tends to wane because they become more focused on living on their own, and permanence seems more improbable.

4.1 Awareness of Enhanced Services Among Youth in the Demonstration Group

All of the youth in the demonstration group were eligible to receive enhanced transition services if they exited care through adoption or subsidized guardianship. However, the availability of these services could affect youth’s and caregiver’s decisionmaking *only if* they were aware that the waiver had made these services available. Youth in the demonstration group who had not already achieved permanence at the time of the latest interview were asked whether their caseworker had told them that they were eligible for enhanced transition services if their caregiver became their legal guardian or adoptive parent. We found that awareness of the services was significantly related to these youth’s interest in and decision to choose subsidized guardianship, though it was not related to adoption. Awareness of the enhanced services was not significantly related to the achievement of permanence by the time of the latest interview.

Table 4.1 shows that a little more than half (57.5%) of the youth in the demonstration group said that they had been told about the availability of enhanced transition services after permanence. Note that Tables 4.1 through 4.6 include only youth in the demonstration group, as youth in the control group were not eligible for the enhanced services and were not asked questions about them.

Table 4.1: Whether Caseworker Told Youth About Enhanced Services, for Demonstration Youth in Care (latest interview)

Youth Reported That Caseworker Told of Enhanced Services:	Percentage of Demonstration Group in Care (N=242)
Only regarding adoption	1.6
Only regarding guardianship	13.7
Regarding both adoption and guardianship	42.2
Regarding neither adoption nor guardianship	42.5
Total, demonstration group in care	100

Older youth in care were significantly more likely than younger youth to report that they had been told about the availability of the enhanced services (see Table 4.2). More than half of youth ages 14-15 did not know about the availability of the services, compared to 38.3 percent of youth ages 16 and older. Caseworkers might have felt that the services were less relevant to

younger youth who still had several years before they would qualify for them. Whether the youth had contact with a biological parent and whether the caregiver was a relative were not related to whether the caseworker had told the youth about the services.

Table 4.2: Whether Caseworker Told Youth about Enhanced Services by Youth Age, for Demonstration Youth in Care (latest interview)

Youth Reported That Caseworker Told of Enhanced Services:	Youth Age	
	14-15 (N=65) %	16-19 (N=177) %
Only regarding adoption.	4.6	0.5
Only regarding guardianship.	9.2	15.3
Regarding both adoption and guardianship.	32.3	45.8
Regarding neither adoption nor guardianship.	53.8	38.3
Total, demonstration group in care	100	100

$p=.050$

Awareness of Enhanced Services and Interest in Permanence. There was a significant relationship between knowing about the enhanced services and wanting permanence.²³ Nearly 40 percent of demonstration youth who knew about the availability of the enhanced services said that they wanted permanence, while only 18.6 percent of youth who did not know about the services wanted permanence (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Interest in Permanence by Awareness of Enhanced Services, for Demonstration Youth in Care (latest interview)

Youth Wanted Permanence	Awareness of Enhanced Services		Overall (N=247) %
	Youth Was Aware (N=139) %	Youth Was Not Aware (N=108) %	
Yes	39.6	18.6	30.4
No	31.6	53.5	41.2
Not sure/don't know	28.8	27.9	28.4
Total, demonstration group in care	100	100	100

$p<.001$

²³ Youth's interest in permanence was measured by asking if they wanted to be adopted or go into guardianship with their current caregiver.

It is possible that caseworkers told youth about the availability of enhanced services only if they thought that the youth was a good candidate for adoption or subsidized guardianship, and this is the reason for the pattern shown in Table 4.3. However, it is also possible that awareness of the services influenced youth's decisionmaking, as was the intent of the waiver. To investigate whether awareness of the services might have influenced youth's permanency choices, we examine the decisionmaking of those demonstration youth who *did* achieve permanence by the time of the latest interview.

Awareness of Enhanced Services and Achievement of Permanence. Youth in the demonstration group who had been adopted or gone into subsidized guardianship were asked whether they were told about the availability of enhanced services before being adopted or going into subsidized guardianship. Of the 42 youth who had gone into subsidized guardianship at the time of the latest interview, more than half (59.5%) said that the caseworker had told them about the services; 23.8 percent said that their caseworker had not told them; and 16.7 percent did not know whether the caseworker had told them or did not answer the question (data not presented in a table). For the 20 youth who had been adopted at the time of the latest interview, half said that their caseworkers had told them about the enhanced services, while 45.2 percent said they had not, and 4.8 percent were unsure or did not answer the question.

While the number of youth in the demonstration group who had achieved permanence and knew about the enhanced services was very small (only 35 cases), youth who had been adopted and had heard about the enhanced services ($N=10$) said that knowledge of these services played either no role or a small role in their decision to be adopted (see Table 4.4). In contrast, about half of the 25 youth (48%) who had achieved subsidized guardianship and said that they knew about the services reported that the availability of these services had a great deal of influence on their permanence decision, as illustrated in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Influence of Awareness of Enhanced Services on Youth’s Permanency Decision, for Demonstration Youth in Permanence (latest interview)

Influence of Awareness of Enhanced Services on Youth’s Permanency Decision	Youth Who Were Adopted (N=10) %	Youth Who Were in Subsidized Guardianship (N=25) %
A great deal	0	48.0
Somewhat	20.1	8.0
Not at all	79.9	36.0
Don’t know	0	8.0
Total, demonstration youth who were aware of services and achieved permanence	100	100

p=.013

These results suggest that awareness of the enhanced services might have influenced the decision to go into subsidized guardianship. However, the number of demonstration youth who had achieved permanence at the time of the latest interview through adoption or subsidized guardianship is very small. Therefore, it is instructive to look at the influence of the availability of enhanced services on the decisionmaking processes of all demonstration youth to answer the question: Did awareness of the enhanced services influence permanency decisionmaking?

Awareness of Enhanced Services and Permanency Decisionmaking. We combined the responses of youth who either had gone into adoption or subsidized guardianship with the youth still in care. Awareness of the services did not appear to be related to choosing adoption, but did appear to be related to choosing subsidized guardianship over remaining in foster care. As shown in Table 4.5, about a third (32.5%) of youth who were aware of the enhanced services said that they chose subsidized guardianship, while just 18.5 percent of youth who did not know about the services chose subsidized guardianship. Just 20.4 percent of youth who were aware of the services said that they had decided against both adoption and guardianship, while 31.4 percent of those who did not know about the services had decided against these types of permanent relationships.

Table 4.5: Awareness of Enhanced Services by Demonstration Youth’s Permanency Decision (latest interview)

Youth’s Permanency Decision	Awareness of Enhanced Services		Overall (N=312) %
	Youth Was Aware (N=176) %	Youth Was Not Aware (N=136) %	
Adoption	10.8	8.9	10.0
Subsidized guardianship	32.5	18.5	26.4
Neither adoption nor guardianship	20.4	31.4	25.2
Undecided/unsure/don’t know	36.3	41.2	38.4
Total, demonstration group	100	100	100

$p=.015$

Although awareness of the enhanced services was related to permanency *decision*, it was not related to permanency *status* (see Table 4.6). It is important to note that the permanency process takes time, and since varying periods of time elapsed between the date that youth became eligible for the waiver and the date that they were interviewed, some youth likely achieved permanence after the end of the study.

Table 4.6: Awareness of Enhanced Services by Demonstration Youth’s Permanency Status (latest interview)

Youth’s Permanency Status	Awareness of Enhanced Services		Overall (N=312) %
	Youth Was Aware (N=176) %	Youth Was Not Aware (N=136) %	
Adoption	5.8	6.6	6.1
Subsidized guardianship	14.8	8.1	11.9
Foster care or emancipated*	79.5	85.2	82.0
Total, demonstration group	100	100	100

$p=.178$

*Youth who were reunified after their first interview did not receive a follow-up interview and are counted in the “foster care” group.

4.2 Differences in Permanency Decisionmaking by Demonstration and Control Groups

The interview data indicated that there were no significant differences between the demonstration and control groups in the percentage of youth still in care at the time of the latest

interview who had discussed adoption or subsidized guardianship with their caseworker. Overall, 58.3 percent of youth still in care at the latest interview had discussed these permanency options with their caseworkers, as shown in Table 4.7, with more discussing subsidized guardianship (54.8%) than adoption (44.5%). One may assume that 100 percent of the youth who had been adopted or gone into subsidized guardianship at the time of the latest interview had discussed these options with their caseworker. Youth’s age, whether the youth was in contact with a biological parent, and whether the caregiver was a relative were not related to whether the youth and caseworker discussed permanence for those youth still in care at the time of the latest interview.

Table 4.7: Discussions of Permanence, for Youth Still in Care (latest interview)

Youth talked with caseworker about:	Overall %
Adoption or subsidized guardianship	
Yes	58.3
No	41.7
Total, youth in care (N=527)	100
Adoption	
Yes	44.5
No	55.5
Total, youth in care (N=529)	100
Subsidized guardianship	
Yes	54.8
No	45.2
Total, youth in care (N=528)	100

Interest in Permanence of Youth Still in Care. About 30 percent of youth who were still in care at the time of the latest interview said that they wanted permanence with their caregiver (see Table 4.8). There were no significant differences between the demonstration and control groups. More youth wanted permanence through subsidized guardianship than adoption. An important finding is that 30 percent of youth said that they were not sure if they wanted adoption or subsidized guardianship with their caregiver, indicating that they were at least somewhat open to considering these permanency options.

Table 4.8: Interest in Permanence, for Youth Still in Care (latest interview)

Permanency Interest	Overall %
Youth wants adoption only.	4.4
Youth wants subsidized guardianship only.	16.3
Youth wants either adoption or subsidized guardianship.	9.1
Youth wants neither adoption nor subsidized guardianship.	40.5
Youth is not sure if wants adoption or subsidized guardianship.	29.7
Total, youth in care (N=529)	100

Youth’s age did make a difference in whether they wanted permanence with their caregivers (see Table 4.9). Nearly half (46.9%) of youth ages 14 and 15 said that they were interested in permanence through adoption or subsidized guardianship, while less than one-quarter (23.0%) of older youth said that they wanted permanence. A large number of youth in both age groups said that they were unsure if they wanted adoption or subsidized guardianship but older youth were more definitive in saying that they did not want to be either adopted or to go into subsidized guardianship (49.1%) than were the younger youth (18.8%).

Table 4.9: Interest in Permanence by Age, for Youth Still in Care (latest interview)

Permanency Interest	Ages 14-15 (N=149) %	Ages 16-19 (N=380) %	Overall (N=529) %
Youth wants adoption only.	6.0	3.7	4.4
Youth wants subsidized guardianship only.	25.5	12.7	16.3
Youth wants either adoption or subsidized guardianship.	15.4	6.6	9.1
Youth wants neither adoption nor subsidized guardianship.	18.8	49.1	40.5
Youth is not sure if wants either adoption or subsidized guardianship.	34.2	28.0	29.7
Total, youth in care	100	100	100

$p < .001$

Whether youth still had contact with one or both of their biological parents also made a difference in the type of permanence the youth wanted, as shown in Table 4.10.²⁴ Youth who had contact with a biological parent were more likely to say that they did not want either adoption or

²⁴ Contact with parent was broadly defined as whether youth ever saw or talked to their biological mother or father.

subsidized guardianship, while those who did not have contact were more likely to be interested in adoption.

Table 4.10: Interest in Permanence by Contact with Biological Parent, for Youth Still in Care (latest interview)

Permanency Interest	Youth Has Contact with Parent (N=327) %	Youth Does Not Have Contact with Parent (N=202) %	Overall (N=529) %
Youth wants adoption only.	2.2	7.9	4.4
Youth wants subsidized guardianship only.	17.8	13.9	16.3
Youth wants either adoption or subsidized guardianship.	8.3	10.3	9.1
Youth wants neither adoption nor subsidized guardianship.	44.2	34.6	40.5
Youth is not sure if wants either adoption or subsidized guardianship.	27.6	33.2	29.7
Total, youth in care	100	100	100

p=.007

Whether youth’s caregiver was a relative did not make a difference in their permanency interest. However, as we discuss later in the chapter, relative status did make a difference in the percentage of youth who achieved permanence.

Permanency Decisionmaking. The next step after wanting permanence is making a permanence decision.²⁵ Youth who were in permanence at the time of the latest interview had clearly made a decision and so could be combined with youth still in care who were asked what their permanence decision was. Again, there were no significant differences between the demonstration and control groups in their permanence decisionmaking. About two-thirds of youth said that they were either undecided about permanence or had decided against either option (see Table 4.11).

²⁵ Decisionmaking was measured by asking the youth if they and their caregiver had made a decision about adoption or guardianship and whether the decision was for adoption, guardianship, or neither.

Table 4.11: Permanency Decision, for All Youth (latest interview)

Permanency Decision	Overall (N=677) %
Adoption	11.0
Subsidized guardianship	24.4
Neither adoption nor guardianship	25.2
Undecided/unsure/don't know	39.4
Total	100

Youth age, whether youth had contact with a parent, and whether the caregiver was a relative all had an impact on youth's decisionmaking. Younger youth were more likely to say that they had made a decision for adoption or subsidized guardianship, while older youth were more likely to say they had decided against either option (see Table 4.12).

Table 4.12: Permanency Decision by Age, for All Youth (latest interview)

Permanency Decision	Ages 14-15 (N=217) %	Ages 16-19 (N=460) %
Adoption	18.9	7.2
Subsidized guardianship	35.9	19.0
Neither adoption nor guardianship	8.3	33.2
Undecided/unsure/don't know	36.9	40.6
Total	100	100

$p < .001$

As shown in Table 4.13, youth who did not have contact with a parent were more likely to say that they and their caregivers had decided on adoption (18.0%) than were those who still had contact (6.4%). The percentage of youth who decided on subsidized guardianship was similar for those who did and did not have contact with a parent.

Table 4.13: Permanency Decision by Contact with Parent, for All Youth (latest interview)

Permanency Decision	Youth Has Contact With Parent (N=410) %	Youth Does Not Have Contact With Parent (N=267) %	Overall (N=677) %
Adoption	6.4	18.0	11.0
Subsidized guardianship	25.4	22.9	24.4
Neither adoption nor guardianship	27.5	21.7	25.2
Undecided/unsure/don't know	40.7	37.5	39.4
Total	100	100	100

$p < .001$

Youth whose caregiver was a relative were also more likely to choose permanence through adoption or subsidized guardianship than youth who were living with nonrelatives (see Table 4.14). There were several statistically significant differences between youth who were living with relatives vs. youth who were living with nonrelatives; see Appendix E for details. Overall, the data suggest that youth living with relatives might have had less severe needs than youth living with nonrelatives, which could have influenced their decisionmaking process. Families with youth who had more severe needs might have been reluctant to forego needed services and supports that might not have been available if the youth were adopted or achieved guardianship. However, the evaluation was not designed to answer this question definitively, so the findings are suggestive only.

Table 4.14: Permanency Decision by Caregiver Relative Status, for All Youth (latest interview)

Permanency Decision	Caregiver is a Relative (N=213) %	Caregiver is a Nonrelative (N=461) %	Overall (N=674) %
Adoption	13.6	9.8	11.0
Subsidized guardianship	30.1	22.0	24.4
Neither adoption nor guardianship	19.2	27.5	25.2
Undecided/unsure/don't know	37.0	40.8	39.4
Total	100	100	100

$p = .024$

Factors Influencing Achievement of Permanence. There were no significant differences between the demonstration and control groups in the percentage of youth who were adopted or went into subsidized guardianship; however, youth age, contact with a biological parent, or whether the caregiver was a relative all were related to achieving permanence. Younger youth were more likely to be adopted or go into guardianship, while older youth were more likely to not go into permanence (see Table 4.15).

Table 4.15: Permanency Status by Age, for All Youth (latest interview)

Permanency Status	Ages 14-15 (N=217) %	Ages 16-19 (N=456) %	Overall (N=673) %
Adoption	12.4	4.4	7.0
Subsidized Guardianship	17.5	9.7	12.2
Foster care or emancipated*	70.0	85.9	80.8
Total	100	100	100

$p < .001$

*Youth who were reunified after their first interview did not receive a follow-up interview and are counted in the “foster care” group.

Those who did not have contact with a parent were more likely to be adopted than those youth who did have contact (see Table 4.16).

Table 4.16: Permanency Status by Contact with Parent, for All Youth (latest interview)

Permanency Status	Youth Has Contact With Parent (N=408) %	Youth Does Not Have Contact With Parent (N=265) %	Overall (N=673) %
Adoption	4.4	11.0	6.9
Subsidized Guardianship	13.3	10.6	12.2
Foster care or emancipated*	82.3	78.5	80.8
Total	100	100	100

$p = .007$

*Youth who were reunified after their first interview did not receive a follow-up interview and are counted in the “foster care” group.

Youth who lived with relative caregivers were somewhat more likely to be adopted and much more likely to go into subsidized guardianship than youth who were with nonrelative

caregivers (see Table 4.17). As noted previously, youth with nonrelatives might have had more severe needs than youth with relatives or they might have had other differences that influenced their decisionmaking process; see Appendix E for more information on differences between relative and nonrelative caregiver families.

Table 4.17: Permanency Status by Caregiver Relative Status, for All Youth (latest interview)

Permanency Status	Caregiver is a Relative (N=212) %	Caregiver is a Nonrelative (N=459) %	Overall (N=671) %
Adoption	9.4	5.9	7.0
Subsidized Guardianship	20.3	8.5	12.2
Foster care or emancipated*	70.2	85.6	80.7
Total	100	100	100

p<.001

*Youth who were reunified after their first interview did not receive a follow-up interview and are counted in the “foster care” group.

Model of Permanence. We developed a model of permanence to see what factors in part or together are related to whether youth went into permanence, regardless of whether it was adoption or subsidized guardianship. When permanence is measured as a bivariate variable, there ceases to be a significant relationship between whether youth still had contact with a parent and whether they achieved permanence. This is because youth who have contact with a parent are much less likely to be adopted than youth who do not, but when subsidized guardianship is included, the overall permanency rate is similar for those who have contact with parents and those who do not. Using logistic regression, we did find that there were significant main effects for age and caregiver relationship and for the interaction between age and caregiver relationship in predicting whether youth went into permanence. Table 4.18 shows the significant interaction between caregiver relationship and youth age in achieving permanence (subsidized guardianship or adoption). There is not a statistically significant difference in permanence by age when a youth is with a relative caregiver (35.1% of youth ages 14-15 are in permanence versus 26.5% of youth ages 16-19), but older youth living with nonrelatives are much less likely to be in permanence (8.5%) than are younger youth living with nonrelatives (27.5%). Age of youth therefore makes a difference when youth are living with nonrelatives but less of a difference with relatives.

Table 4.18: Permanence by Caregiver Relative Status and Youth Age, for All Youth (latest interview)

Youth Achieved Permanence with Caregiver	Percentage by Caregiver Relative Status and Age			
	Caregiver Is a Relative		Caregiver Is a Nonrelative	
	Youth Age		Youth Age	
	Ages 14-15 (N=74) %	Ages 16-19 (N=140) %	Ages 14-15 (N=143) %	Ages 16-19 (N=318) %
Yes	35.1	26.5	27.3	8.5
No	64.9	73.5	72.7	91.5
Total	100	100	100	100

$p = .015$

4.3 Reasons for Choosing Permanence and Staying in Care

Reasons Why Youth Wanted Permanence. The interview included open-ended questions that asked the youth why they did or did not want to be adopted or have their caregiver become their legal guardian. As shown in Table 4.19, the main reason that youth wanted to be adopted was that they had a strong bond with their caregiver (64.8%), and more than one-third (38.0%) said that they wanted to be adopted by their caregiver because they felt it would be a more permanent relationship. And the top reason for youth who wanted guardianship was the same as for adoption. The majority said they wanted it because they had a strong, positive relationship with their caregiver. Somewhat fewer youth (7.5%) said that they wanted to go into subsidized guardianship because they felt it was more permanent than being in foster care. A number of youth (7.4%) also said that they wanted to do subsidized guardianship because they had been with their caregivers their whole lives.

Table 4.19: Youth Report of Reasons for Wanting Permanence with Caregiver (latest interview)

Top Reasons for Wanting Permanence	Percentage
Reason youth wants to be adopted by caregiver:	
Youth likes/has a good relationship with caregiver.	64.8
Youth believes it would be more permanent.	38.0
Total, youth wanting adoption (N=71)	
Reason youth wants caregiver to become legal guardian:	
Youth likes/has a good relationship with caregiver.	70.9
Youth believes it would be more permanent.	7.5
Youth has been with caregiver most of his/her life.	7.4
Total, youth wanting guardianship (N=134)	

Reasons Youth Did Not Want Permanence. Youth could state multiple reasons for not wanting to be adopted and for not wanting to go into subsidized guardianship. Table 4.20 shows the top five reasons youth gave for not wanting permanence with their current caregiver. The largest percentage of youth who rejected either permanence option indicated that they felt they were too old to be adopted or go into guardianship (43.4% of those rejecting adoption and 44.2% of those rejecting subsidized guardianships). About one-quarter of the youth did not want to be adopted or go into guardianship because they wanted independence—saying either they wanted to live on their own (13.1% of youth rejecting adoption, 17.9% of youth rejecting guardianship) or they wanted Independent Living²⁶ (10.1% for adoption rejecters, 10.5% for guardianship rejecters). About equal numbers of youth in the demonstration and control group said that they did not want adoption or subsidized guardianship because they wanted to go into Independent Living. About 14 percent of youth said that they did not want their caregiver to become their legal guardian because they wanted to be reunified with their parents. This was not a top reason cited by youth for not wanting adoption. Just 6 percent of youth cited a desire to return home as a reason for not wanting to be adopted.

²⁶ When reunification, adoption, and guardianship have been ruled out for a youth, Independence becomes the goal for the case plan. This is not affected by the youth’s waiver assignment (demonstration or control group). The worker then prepares the youth for Independent Living, which is a program that offers supervised living in an apartment. According to DCFS policy, before youth can move into Independent Living, they have to demonstrate that they have life skills such as money management and meal preparation. Youth can move into an Independent Living program starting at age 16, and while in the program they continue to attend life skills classes. Independent Living is available only to youth who remain in foster care and who have a permanency goal of Independence, but the life skills classes are available to older youth with other permanency goals.

Table 4.20: Youth Report of Reasons for Not Wanting Permanence with Caregiver (latest interview)

Top Reason for Not Wanting Permanence	Percentage
Reason youth does not want to be adopted by caregiver:	
Youth feels he/she is too old to be adopted.	43.4
Youth wants to live on own.	13.1
Youth believes adoption would disrupt family ties.	12.3
Youth wants Independent Living.	10.1
Youth and caregiver are already related.	9.2
Total, youth not wanting adoption (N=327)	
Reason youth does not want caregiver to become legal guardian:	
Youth feels he/she is too old to go into guardianship.	44.2
Youth wants to live on own.	17.9
Youth wants to return home to parent(s).	13.9
Youth wants Independent Living.	10.5
Youth and caregiver are already related.	7.3
Total, youth not wanting guardianship (N=230)	

4.4 Movement Into Permanence Over Time

We obtained interview data at both initial and follow-up data points for a subset of 418 youth, referred to as the T1/T2 subsample. Overall, 49.6 percent of youth in the T1/T2 subsample said they wanted to be adopted or go into subsidized guardianship at the time of the initial interview.²⁷ But did these youth achieve permanence by the time of the follow-up interview?

As Table 4.21 illustrates, only 30 percent of the youth who said they wanted permanence at the time of the initial interview had achieved it by the time of the follow-up interview. This is, however, higher than for youth who had permanence at the time of the follow-up interview and who had said that they either were not sure or did not want permanence at the initial interview (only about 6% of those youth had achieved permanence). There were no significant differences between the demonstration and control groups.

²⁷ Included in these numbers are 14 youth who said they were in subsidized guardianship at the time of the initial interview and one who reported being adopted. However, as these youth had not actually obtained permanence at the time of the first interview, their answers either indicate some confusion as to what subsidized guardianship meant or a desire to move into permanence though it had not yet occurred. We include these cases among the youth who wanted to be adopted or go into guardianship.

Table 4.21: Youth Permanence (T1/T2 subsample)

Youth Obtained Permanence with Caregiver at Follow-Up Interview	Wanted Permanence at Initial Interview (N=197) %	Not Sure/Did Not Want Permanence at Initial Interview (N=201) %	Overall (N=398) %
Yes, adoption	11.2	1.0	6.1
Yes, subsidized guardianship	18.8	5.4	12.1
No	70.0	93.5	81.9
Total	100	100	100

$p < .001$

For the youth who said that they wanted permanence at the time of the initial interview, what factors were related to whether youth actually obtained permanence? Neither age nor contact with biological parent was related to the attainment of permanence for those who wanted it at the time of the initial interview. However, youth living with relatives who expressed interest in permanence were significantly more likely to be adopted or go into subsidized guardianship than those who lived with a nonrelated caregiver (see Table 4.22). Still, more than half of the youth who were living with relatives and said they wanted permanence at the time of the initial interview were still in care or had exited care without a permanent, legal relationship by the time of the follow-up interview.

Table 4.22: Youth Who Wanted Permanence at Initial Interview and Whether Achieved Permanence at Follow-Up Interview, by Caregiver Relationship (T1/T2 subsample)

Youth Achieved Permanence with Caregiver at Follow-Up Interview	Caregiver Is a Relative (N=75) %	Caregiver Is a Nonrelative (N=121) %	Overall (N=196) %
Yes, adoption	16.0	8.3	11.2
Yes, subsidized guardianship	26.7	14.1	18.9
No	57.3	77.6	69.8
Total, youth who wanted permanence at initial interview	100	100	100

$p = .026$

Youth's interest in permanence was not always the same at both interviews; 42.4 percent of youth who said that they wanted permanence at the time of the initial interview had changed

their mind by the time of the follow-up interview and said they either did not want to be adopted or go into subsidized guardianship (27.4%) or they were unsure (15.0%) (not shown in a table).

Some insight into youth's decisionmaking processes may be gained by looking at the reasons given by youth who said that they were interested in permanence at the time of the initial interview but were not interested in permanence at the time of the follow-up interview. In the majority of cases (75.3% of those not interested in adoption and 77.2% of those not interested in subsidized guardianship), youth who indicated an interest in permanence at the time of the initial interview said that they were too old at the time of the follow-up interview and/or they were now more interested in living on their own or going into Independent Living. On average, these youth who changed their mind about wanting permanence were age 15.6 at the initial interview and age 17.3 at the follow-up interview. In most cases, then, it was not something about the youth's living situation or relationship with their caregiver that changed; rather, with time and older age, youth felt that the window for obtaining permanence was closing, and they set their sights on moving into independence from foster care. In two cases, youth said that they planned to join the military after high school and therefore felt no need to formalize their relationship with their caregiver through subsidized guardianship.

5. Caregivers' Decisionmaking Process

This chapter presents details of the permanency decisionmaking process by caregivers and resulting permanency outcomes (i.e., subsidized guardianship and adoption). Using data from the latest caregiver interview dataset, the chapter examines information caregivers obtained about permanency options, decisions that caregivers made about permanence, the status of those decisions, and the reasons why caregivers made their decisions. In the interview, caregivers were asked about the permanency options of adoption or subsidized guardianship; no other permanency options were discussed. Therefore, “permanence” in this chapter refers only to adoption and subsidized guardianship.

5.1 Discussions About Permanence

Caregivers were asked whether family meetings were held with their caseworker to discuss issues regarding youth's permanency plans. Overall, 68.2 percent of caregivers attended a family meeting with their caseworker to discuss plans (see Table 5.1). About 66 percent of caregivers reported that they had discussed some type of permanence (subsidized guardianship, adoption, or both) with their caseworker in the last year, leaving nearly 35 percent of caregivers who had not discuss *any* permanency options with their caseworker in the last year. Differences between evaluation groups were not statistically significant.

Table 5.1: Caregivers' Discussions of Permanence with Caseworker, by Evaluation Group (latest interview)

Discussions About Permanence	Percentage by Evaluation Group		
	Demonstration Group (N=367) %	Control Group (N=382) %	Overall (N=749) %
Attended a family meeting to discuss permanence for youth ($p=0.234$):			
Yes	70.3	66.2	68.2
No	29.7	33.8	31.8
Total	100	100	100
Discussion with caseworker about subsidized guardianship or adopting youth ($p=0.354$):			
Caseworker and caregiver discussed adoption but not subsidized guardianship.	6.8	8.6	7.7
Caseworker and caregiver discussed subsidized guardianship but not adoption.	18.0	15.2	16.6

	Percentage by Evaluation Group		
	Demonstration Group (N=367) %	Control Group (N=382) %	Overall (N=749) %
Discussions About Permanence			
Caseworker and caregiver discussed both subsidized guardianship and adoption.	43.3	39.5	41.4
Caseworker and caregiver did not discuss adoption or subsidized guardianship.	31.9	36.6	34.3
Total	100	100	100

5.2 Decisionmaking and Permanence for Caregivers in the Demonstration Group

Caregivers and youth in the demonstration group had to have been aware of the enhanced transition services that were available in order for the service eligibility to influence their decisionmaking. Table 5.2 shows that 72.2 percent of caregivers in the demonstration group had been told about the enhanced transition services. While this is an increase of 7.3 percent from caregiver initial interview data, still more than a quarter of demonstration group caregivers were not told about the services.

Table 5.2: Awareness of Enhanced Services by Caregivers in the Demonstration Group (latest interview)

Caregiver was told by caseworker that youth was eligible for enhanced transition services	Overall %
Yes	72.2
No	27.8
Total, demonstration group (N=335)	100

Was awareness of the enhanced services related to whether caregivers pursued permanence through adoption or subsidized guardianship? Table 5.3 shows that more than half (51.9%) of caregivers who knew about the enhanced services chose either adoption or subsidized guardianship. By contrast, only 23.7 percent of caregivers who did not know about the enhanced services decided to pursue adoption or subsidized guardianship. Moreover, awareness of the services was even more strongly related to percentage of caregivers entering subsidized

guardianship. While the percentage of adoption between the caregiver groups was the same (12.9%), caregivers who knew about the services were significantly more likely to entered subsidized guardianship (39.0%), compared to caregivers who did not know about the services (10.8%). These data indicate that caregivers who knew about the enhanced services were significantly more likely to pursue permanence through subsidized guardianship. It is possible that caseworkers told caregivers about the availability of enhanced services only if they thought that the youth was a good candidate for adoption or subsidized guardianship. However, it is also possible that knowledge of this information influenced youth and caregivers' decisionmaking, as was the intent of the waiver.

Table 5.3: Permanency Decision, by Whether Caregiver in Demonstration Group Was Told About Enhanced Services (latest interview)

Demonstration Group Caregiver Decisions	Caregiver Was Told About Enhanced Services Available to Youth %		
	Yes (N=241)	No (N=93)	Overall (N=334)
Adopt	12.9	12.9	12.9
Enter subsidized guardianship	39.0	10.8	31.1
Chose neither adoption nor subsidized guardianship or had made no permanency decision made	48.1	76.4	56.0
Total, demonstration group	100	100	100

$p < .001$

Table 5.4 shows rates of permanence achieved by caregivers in the demonstration group, both for those who were told about the enhanced services and those who were not.²⁸ Less than 20 percent of caregivers in the demonstration group had completed permanence with youth. However, caregivers who were aware of the enhanced services were significantly more likely to achieve permanence than caregivers who were not aware of the services. There were small differences between the caregiver groups for completed adoptions, but the caregivers who were aware of the services were much more likely to have entered subsidized guardianship (16.1%) compared to caregivers not aware of the services (4.3%).²⁹ Thus, caregivers who were aware of

²⁸ Unlike Chapter 2, but like Chapters 3 and 4, in this chapter “permanence” refers to adoption and subsidized guardianship and does not include reunification.

²⁹ This caregiver finding differs from the findings for youth; however, the difference may primarily be because far fewer youth were told about transition services overall.

the enhanced transition services were more likely to chose permanence, particularly subsidized guardianship, and more likely to achieve permanence.

Table 5.4: Permanency Process Completed, by Whether Caregiver in Demonstration Group Was Told about Enhanced Services (latest interview)

Permanency Process Completed	Caregiver Was Told of Enhanced Services by Caseworker %		
	Yes (N=242)	No (N=93)	Overall (N=335)
Adopted	6.6	5.4	6.3
Achieved subsidized guardianship	16.1	4.3	12.8
Still in foster care	77.3	90.3	80.9
Total, demonstration group	100	100	100

p=.003

5.3 Comparing Permanence for Demonstration and Control Groups

We now examine decisionmaking and permanence for caregivers in the demonstration and control groups to determine whether there were any differences between the groups. Overall, there were no statistically significant differences across permanency issues between the two groups. Table 5.1 showed that demonstration group caregivers attended family meetings at a slightly higher rate than control group caregivers, but that the difference was not statistically significant. Similarly, the table showed no demonstration-control differences in discussions caregivers had with their caseworkers on specific permanency options.

Now we look at differences between the demonstration and control groups in caregivers’ permanency decisions (see Table 5.5). The key finding is that overall, 60.6 percent of caregivers had not chosen permanence with the youth during the study period; combining responses for “neither become legal guardian nor adopt” and “no permanency decision made,” 57.2 percent of the demonstration group caregivers and 63.9 percent of the control group caregivers had not decided on permanence, but the difference was not statistically significant.

Table 5.5: Caregivers’ Permanency Decisions, by Evaluation Group (latest interview)

Permanency Decision	Evaluation Group %		
	Demonstration (N=367)	Control (N=382)	Overall (N=749)
Adopt	12.0	13.4	12.7
Enter the subsidized guardianship program	30.8	22.8	26.7
Neither become legal guardian or adopt	25.9	29.1	27.5
No permanency decision made	31.3	34.8	33.1
Total	100	100	100

p=.157

Caregivers who decided to adopt or become legal guardians were asked about the status of their permanency process (see Table 5.6). Once again we see no statistically significant demonstration-control group differences in permanency status.

Table 5.6: Caregivers’ Permanency Completion Status, by Evaluation Group (latest interview)

Permanency Completion Status	Evaluation Group %		
	Demonstration (N=151)	Control (N=135)	Overall (N=286)
Permanence is completed.	49.0	60.0	54.2
Permanence is started.	34.4	27.4	31.1
Not started the permanency process.	16.6	12.6	14.7
Total, caregivers who had decided to adopt or become legal guardians	100	100	100

p=.185

Table 5.7 presents data on the permanency achieved by caregivers. There are similarities to Table 5.5—there is a slightly higher percentage of caregivers in the control group who had achieved adoption with youth and a slightly higher percentage of caregivers in the demonstration group who had achieved legal guardianship. However, once again there were no statistically significant differences between the demonstration and control groups.

Table 5.7: Caregivers’ Permanency Process Completed, by Evaluation Group (latest interview)

Permanency Process Completed	Evaluation Group %		
	Demonstration Group (N=367)	Control Group (N=382)	Overall (N=749)
Adoption	6.0	8.6	7.3
Subsidized guardianship	13.4	12.0	12.7
Youth still in foster care*	80.7	79.3	80.8
Total	100	100	100

p=.415

*Youth who were reunified after the initial interview (and thus they and their caregivers did not have a follow-up interview) would be counted in this row.

5.4 Other Factors that Might Influence Permanence

As with the previous analyses, the interview closest to the time of a permanency decision (latest interview dataset) was reviewed to examine a number of factors to understand more details about caregivers’ permanency decisions.

Relative Status. Relatives, whenever available and appropriate, are the home of first choice when a child is in need of a foster care placement. Despite their household size or income limitations, relatives are often firmly committed to family members in need. About one-third of the caregivers in the study were relatives, with aunts being the largest proportion of kin caregivers (as was shown in Table 3.8). There were no significant demonstration-control group differences in the proportion of relative caregivers in the study. However, as presented in Table 5.8, relatives were significantly more likely to have decided on permanence with the youth and also more likely to have achieved permanence during the study period. Nearly half of the relatives had decided to adopt or enter subsidized guardianship compared to 35.1 percent of nonrelative caregivers. The largest difference was seen for caregivers who decided on subsidized guardianship, with a more than 10-percent difference between the relative and nonrelative caregivers. Also shown in Table 5.8 are the proportions of relative and nonrelative caregivers who had achieved permanence with youth. A much larger proportion of relative caregivers had achieved subsidized guardianship than nonrelative caregivers (19.7% compared to 9.2%).

Table 5.8: Caregivers’ Permanency Decisions and Permanence Completed, by Relative Status (latest interview)

Permanency Issue	Caregiver Relative Status %		
	Relative (N=239)	Nonrelative (N=502)	Overall (N=741)
Caregivers’ Permanency Decision ($p=0.005$):			
Adoption	14.6	11.8	12.7
Subsidized guardianship	33.5	23.3	26.6
Neither adoption nor subsidized guardianship	21.3	30.5	27.5
No permanency decision	30.5	34.5	33.2
Total	100	100	100
Permanence Completed ($p<0.001$):			
Adoption	9.2	6.4	7.3
Subsidized guardianship	19.7	9.2	12.6
Still in foster care*	71.1	84.5	80.2
Total	100	100	100

*This group includes caregivers who said they had decided to adopt or enter subsidized guardianship, but they had not yet completed the process.

Caregiver Age. Age can be a factor that influences a caregiver’s permanency decision. For example, an older relative caregiver may believe he/she is too old to permanently care for and meet the needs of a teenager, while a younger caregiver may feel he/she lacks the income or stability of lifestyle to offer a permanent home. For our analyses, caregivers in the study were categorized into three age levels: 21 to 39 years old, 40 to 59 years old, and 60 years or older. The analyses show that caregiver age had little influence in permanence. As seen in Table 5.9, despite a statistically significant difference in the data overall, the percentage of youth adopted and entering subsidized guardianship appear very similar across age categories. The significant differences were primarily driven by the nonpermanency categories (“neither adoption nor subsidized guardianship” or “no permanency decision made”). When the analyses were conducted collapsing the categories (i.e., for permanence vs. no permanence), we find the statistical significance between caregiver age groups disappears ($p=.819$).

Table 5.9: Caregivers' Permanency Decisions, by Age of Caregiver (latest interview)

Permanency Decision	Age of Caregiver %			
	21-39 years (N=152)	40-59 years (N=423)	60 years or older (N=171)	Overall (N=746)
Adoption	10.5	14.4	10.5	12.7
Subsidized guardianship	30.9	24.1	28.7	26.5
Neither adoption nor subsidized guardianship	17.8	29.6	31.6	27.6
No permanency decision	40.8	31.9	29.2	33.1
Total	100	100	100	100

$p=.016$

Household Income. Does household income influence whether a caregiver is able and willing to provide permanence for a youth? We examined permanence for various levels of household income to see if income influenced permanence for youth. Caregivers' annual household incomes were divided into four levels: lowest incomes (less than \$20,000), low income (\$20,000-\$39,999), moderate income (\$40,000-\$59,999), and high incomes (\$60,000 or more). There were statistically significant differences in caregivers' permanency decisions among the income categories (see Table 5.10). The proportion of caregivers who had chosen permanence increased as household income increased; caregivers reporting higher household incomes were more likely to choose adoption or enter subsidized guardianship compared to caregivers with lower household incomes. However, an examination of household income by permanence *achieved* (as opposed to permanence *chosen*) showed no statistically significant differences (data not presented in a table).

Table 5.10: Caregivers' Permanency Decisions, by Annual Household Income (latest interview)

Permanency Decision	Caregiver's Annual Household Income %				
	Less than \$20,000 (N=169)	\$20,000- \$39,999 (N=281)	\$40,000- \$59,999 (N=176)	\$60,000 or more (N=76)	Overall (N=702)
Adoption	11.8	9.6	15.3	19.7	12.7
Subsidized guardianship	21.9	25.6	33.0	31.6	27.2
Neither adoption nor subsidized guardianship	37.9	27.4	22.2	25.0	28.3
No permanency decision	28.4	37.4	29.5	23.7	31.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100

$p=.006$

Table 5.11 presents household income data for all caregivers, and separately for relative and nonrelative caregivers. Overall, the majority of caregivers in the study (64.6%) reported annual household incomes less than \$40,000. Moreover, relative households were more likely to have lower household incomes than nonrelative households.

Table 5.11: Annual Household Income, by Relative and Nonrelative Caregivers (latest interview)

Household Annual Income	Relative Caregiver (N=226) %	Nonrelative Caregiver (N=468) %	Overall (N=694) %
Less than \$20,000	38.1	17.3	24.1
\$20,000-\$39,999	36.3	42.5	40.5
\$40,000 - \$59,999	18.1	28.0	24.8
\$60,000 or more	7.5	12.2	10.7
Total	100	100	100

p<.001

Caregivers Married or Living With a Partner. Over half of the caregivers who participated in the interviews (57%) were single parents. Caregivers who have a spouse or partner may count on that additional support in caring for a youth. However, does that support make a difference in whether caregivers choose and complete permanence with a foster youth? Table 5.12 shows that caregivers living with a spouse or a partner were more likely to choose permanence with youth than caregivers without a spouse or partner. Likewise, caregivers were more likely to complete the adoption or subsidized guardianship process when married or living with a partner.

Table 5.12: Caregivers' Permanency Decisions and Permanency Status, by Marital/ Partner Status (latest interview)

Permanency Issue	Caregiver's Marital/Partner Status %		
	Caregiver Is Married or Living With a Partner (N=319)	Caregiver Is Not Married or Living With a Partner (N=429)	Overall (N=748)
Permanency Decision ($p<.001$)			
Adoption	17.6	9.1	12.7
Subsidized guardianship	31.3	23.3	26.7
Neither adoption nor subsidized guardianship	22.6	31.0	27.4
No permanency decision made	28.5	36.6	33.2
Total	100	100	100
Whether permanence completed ($p<.001$):			
Adoption	11.0	4.7	7.4
Subsidized guardianship	16.3	10.0	12.7
Youth still in foster care	72.7	85.3	79.9
Total	100	100	100

The analyses presented in this section indicate that relative status, annual household income, and having a spouse or partner in the household all were related to whether a caregiver chooses permanence for the youth. Other factors were tested and were found to have weak or no relationship, including caregiver's employment status, caregiver's disability status, and whether youth was diagnosed with a disability.

Model of Permanence. A regression model was developed to more clearly explain the influences of relative status, income, caregiver age, and the presence of a spouse or partner on predicting permanence. Using logistic regression, a stepwise process was used to build a logistic model, adding each of the independent variables and testing the strength of the influence that each factor has to predict permanence. The model found that there were significant main effects for relative status and spouse/partner in household, in predicting permanence.

Table 5.13 illustrates the relationship of the data in the model. The analysis indicates that caregivers with a spouse or partner were more likely to choose permanence for youth. This was particularly pronounced for relative caregivers compared to nonrelative caregivers. Relative

caregivers with a spouse or partner were more likely to choose permanence than nonrelative caregivers with a spouse or partner.

Table 5.13: Permanency Choice by Whether Have Spouse or Partner, for Relative and Nonrelative Caregivers (latest interview)

Permanency Choice	Relative ($p=.009$) %		Nonrelative ($p=.001$) %	
	Partner/ Spouse ($N=100$)	No Partner/ Spouse ($N=139$)	Partner/ Spouse ($N=213$)	No Partner/ Spouse ($N=288$)
Caregiver chose adoption or subsidized guardianship.	40.0	20.9	21.1	11.5
Caregiver did not choose permanence.	60.0	79.1	78.9	88.5
Total	100	100	100	100

5.5 The Most Important Issues Reported By Caregivers in Deciding Permanence

Issues Caregivers Considered in Deciding on Permanence. Given that only about 4 in 10 caregivers chose permanence for the youth during the demonstration period, it is important to understand why caregivers did and did not choose a permanency option to learn more about their needs. Table 5.14 presents the most common issues considered by caregivers in deciding whether to choose permanence with the youth. Service issues were given the strongest consideration, and medical service concerns topped the list. Over one-half of the caregivers cited *help from DCFS with medical services* (55.7%) as a consideration in their permanency decisionmaking process, followed by *youth services* (55.3%), which could have included transition services such as employment, housing and college assistance, or medical care or other services that youth could receive through DCFS. The remaining considerations on the list included *caregiver wants to make his/her own decisions about how to care for youth* (45.9%), *belief that DCFS would pay a subsidy* (45.0%), and *life skills training for youth* (40.5%). Demonstration group caregivers reported the same top five issues as the control group caregivers with one exception—the control group caregivers listed *need the child welfare agency’s help with youth’s problems* rather than *life skills training for youth*. Varying somewhat from caregivers overall, the caregivers who had decided to enter subsidized guardianship or adopt

emphasized issues dealing with legal permanence for the youth, including the legal right to care for and provide a more permanent legal arrangement for youth.

Table 5.14: Issues Considered by Caregivers When Deciding about Permanence (latest interview)

Items Considered by...	Percentage
All caregivers:	
Need the child welfare agency to help with medical assistance	55.7
Services for youth	55.3
Caregiver wants to make his/her own decisions about how to care for youth	45.9
Belief that DCFS would provide a subsidy payment	45.0
Life skills training Program	40.5
Total (N=749)	
Caregivers Who Decided to Enter Subsidized Guardianship or Adopt Youth:	
Services for youth	65.8
Caregiver wants to make his/her own decisions about how to care for youth	63.4
Caregiver wants legal right to care for youth	61.7
Need the child welfare agency to help with medical assistance	58.6
Caregiver wants to provide a more permanent legal arrangement for youth	57.3
Total (N=295)	

Caregivers’ Reasons for Choosing Permanence. Caregivers were asked why they chose to adopt or enter subsidized guardianship with the youth in their care. The most common open-ended responses are provided in Table 5.15. Whether adopting or choosing subsidized guardianship, caregivers chose very similar reasons for their decisions, focused on their relationship with the youth, the relationship youth had with their family, and providing a stable, permanent home for the youth outside the foster care system.

Table 5.15: Caregivers’ Reasons for Choosing Permanence with Youth (latest interview)

Top Five Reasons for Choosing Permanence for...	Percentage
All caregivers who decided to adopt or enter subsidized guardianship:	
Caregiver grew to love youth as his/her own	18.6
Thought it was best for youth	18.6
Family should be with family	17.6
To give youth a permanent home	13.9
To take youth out of the foster care system	8.5
Total (N=295)	

Top Five Reasons for Choosing Permanence for...	Percentage
Caregivers who decided to enter subsidized guardianship:	
Thought it was best for youth	20.5
Family should be with family	14.5
Caregiver grew to love youth as his/her own	13.0
To give youth a permanent family	9.5
To give youth more services when he/she is older	8.5
Total (N=200)	
Caregivers who chose adoption:	
Caregiver grew to love the youth as his/her own	30.5
Family should be with family	24.2
To give youth a permanent home	23.2
Thought it was best for youth	14.7
Youth fit into the family and we liked having him/her	7.4
Total (N=95)	

Caregivers’ Reasons for Not Choosing Adoption. With over 60 percent of caregivers in the study having chosen to maintain youth in the foster care system during the study period, it is important to understand why caregivers did not choose a permanency option in order to learn more about their needs and the needs of the youth in their care. Table 5.16 provides the reasons caregivers reported most frequently when asked in an open-ended format why they chose not to adopt the youth in their care. The reasons given for not adopting youth included preference of the caregiver or youth, the youth’s age (too old for adoption), and because youth was already a blood relative. Caregiver responses reviewed separately for the demonstration group and control group caregivers offered no significant differences from the larger group responses (and are not shown in the table). Table 5.16 also shows caregiver responses separately for relative and nonrelative caregivers. Responses were generally the same as for all caregivers; however 14.4 percent of *nonrelative* caregivers reported their age as a reason they had not adopted youth, which was not reported among the top responses by relative caregivers.

Table 5.16: Caregivers’ Reasons for Not Choosing Adoption (latest interview)

Top Five Reasons for Not Choosing Adoption for....	Percentage
All caregivers who did not choose adoption:	
Youth does not want to be adopted.	53.8
Caregiver prefers to be a legal guardian.	41.7
Caregiver does not want to adopt youth.	40.7
Youth is too old.	23.7
Youth is already related by blood.	21.0
Total (N=405)	

Top Five Reasons for Not Choosing Adoption for....	Percentage
Relative caregivers who did not choose adoption:	
Youth is already related by blood.	63.8
Caregiver prefers to be a legal guardian.	53.8
Youth does not want to be adopted.	51.5
Caregiver does not want to adopt youth.	41.5
Youth is too old.	21.5
Total (N=130)	
Nonrelative caregivers who did not choose adoption:	
Youth does not want to be adopted.	55.9
Caregiver does not want to adopt youth.	40.7
Caregiver prefers to be a legal guardian.	36.3
Youth is too old.	25.2
Caregiver is too old.	14.4
Total (N=270)	

Caregivers' Reasons for Not Choosing Subsidized Guardianship. The reasons reported by caregivers, relative caregivers, and nonrelative caregivers for not choosing subsidized guardianship are presented in Table 5.17. In these lists, we see responses not previously reported that refer to youth's problems and possible reunification of youth with their parents. We see these themes repeated in the data that compare the responses separately for relative and nonrelative caregivers. Additionally, 10.3 percent of relative caregivers reported *youth will lose services* as a reason for not choosing subsidized guardianship with youth. Demonstration-control differences were not significant.

Table 5.17: Caregivers' Reasons for Not Choosing Subsidized Guardianship (latest interview)

Top Five Reasons for Not Choosing Subsidized Guardianship for....	Percentage
All caregivers who did not choose subsidized guardianship:	
Youth does not want to enter subsidized guardianship.	45.0
Caregiver prefers to be an adoptive parent.	30.8
Youth has too many problems.	11.3
Caregiver has already raised his/her own children.	10.3
Youth's parents will soon be able to care for youth.	9.3
Total (N=302)	
Relative caregivers who did not choose subsidized guardianship:	
Caregiver wants to be an adoptive parent.	40.2
Youth does not want to go into subsidized guardianship.	40.2
Caregiver has already raised own children.	14.9
Youth's parents will soon be able care for youth.	11.5
Youth will lose services.	10.3

Top Five Reasons for Not Choosing Subsidized Guardianship for...	Percentage
Total (N=87)	
Nonrelative caregivers who did not choose subsidized guardianship:	
Youth does not want subsidized guardianship.	47.2
Caregiver wants to be an adoptive parent.	26.9
Youth has too many problems.	13.7
Youth is too difficult.	10.4
Youth's parents will soon be able to care for youth.	8.5
Caregiver already raised own children.	8.5
Total (N=212)	

5.6 Permanence Over Time

To examine permanence over the study period, we compare permanence for a subset of caregivers at two points in time—the initial interview and the follow-up interview (referred to in these analyses as time 1 (T1) and time 2 (T2)). The subpopulation for these analyses consists of 446 caregivers for whom we have both T1 and T2 data, the T1/T2 subsample. Caregivers were interviewed only once if, at the time of the initial interview, the youth had already achieved adoption or subsidized guardianship, or if the youth had turned 18 or been reunified with his/her family (see Appendix C for more details), and these caregivers are not in the T1/T2 subsample. Examining this subpopulation of caregivers at these two points in time may provide additional information about permanency decisionmaking over time. Therefore, this section will look at differences in caregiver decisions and permanence achieved among this subsample.

Permanency Decisions at T1 and T2. Table 5.18 shows caregiver permanency decisions at T1 and T2. Overall, a small majority of caregivers (50-60%) reported the same decision at T1 and T2. Of those who changed their decision from T1 to T2, 12.4 percent of caregivers who had not chosen permanence at T1 did choose permanence at T2. Additionally, 13.4 percent of caregivers who had decided on permanence at T1 changed their mind and decided against permanence at T2.

Table 5.18: Caregivers' Permanency Decisions at T1 and T2 (T1/T2)

Permanency Decision at Time 2	Caregiver Permanency Decision at Time 1			
	Adoption (N=60) %	Subsidized Guardianship (N=118) %	Neither Adoption Nor SG (N=93) %	No Permanency Decision (N=174) %
Adoption	60.2	5.0	1.1	4.0
Subsidized guardianship	16.7	56.0	16.0	18.5
Neither adoption nor subsidized guardianship	11.6	22.9	54.8	26.9
No permanency decision	11.6	16.0	28.1	50.5
Total	100	100	100	100

$p < .001$

Permanence Completed at T1 and T2. Table 5.19 examines whether caregivers who decided on permanence at T1 achieved permanence by T2. The caregivers who had decided on permanence with youth at T1 completed permanence between 40 and 48 percent by T2 (varying by the type of permanence). Caregivers who had not chosen a permanency option at T1 obtained permanence at a much lower rate (10.9%).

Table 5.19: Caregiver Permanence Completed at T2 by Permanency Decision at T1 (T1/T2)

Completed Permanence at T2	Caregiver Permanency Decision at T1		
	Adoption (N=60) %	Subsidized Guardianship (N=118) %	Neither or No Permanency Decision (N=267) %
Yes*	48.3	40.8	10.9
No	51.7	59.2	92.9
Total	100%	100%	100%

$p < .001$

*Percentages who achieved permanence include caregivers who chose adoption at T1 but achieved subsidized guardianship at T2 ($n=3$), and caregivers who chose subsidized guardianship at T1 and achieved adoption at T2 ($n=3$).

Among the caregivers who made a decision to adopt or enter subsidized guardianship at T1, less than half (43.3%) had completed permanence with the youth at T2 (see Table 5.20). However, of the 56.7 percent of caregivers who had not completed permanence at T2, the vast majority (77.5%) reported at T2 that they had started the permanency process.

Table 5.20: Caregivers Who Decided To Adopt or Enter Subsidized Guardianship at T1, Whether Completed Permanence at T2 (T1/T2)

Chose Permanence at T1, Completed Permanence at T2	Overall %
Yes	43.3
No	56.7
Total, caregivers who chose permanence at T1 (N=178)	100

Factors Influencing Permanence. What factors were related to whether caregivers and youth obtained permanence? Neither caregivers’ evaluation group status nor financial hardship was related to whether caregivers obtained permanence at T2; however, caregivers’ relative status was significant. Table 5.21 presents the significant differences in permanence obtained at T2 separately for relative caregivers and nonrelative caregivers. Relative caregivers were more likely to obtain permanence by T2 than nonrelative caregivers. This mirrors the finding for youth who obtained permanence at T2, presented in Chapter 4.

Table 5.21: Caregivers’ Permanence Completed at T2, by Relative Status (T1/T2)

Permanence Completed at T2	Caregiver is a Relative (N=131) %	Caregiver is a Nonrelative (N=310) %	Overall (N=441) %
Yes	37.4	14.9	21.6
No	62.6	85.1	78.4
Total	100	100	100

$p < .001$

6. Summary and Conclusion

Subsidized guardianship provides an additional permanency option and has been found to increase permanency rates—but more so for younger children than for teenagers. The Illinois Older Wards Waiver was designed to test hypotheses to answer the questions: Are older youth less likely than younger children to achieve permanence because it would entail loss of access to transition and post-permanency services? If youth are assured that they would not lose access to services, are they more interested in and likely to achieve adoption or subsidized guardianship?

Through randomization, two statistically equivalent groups were created: (1) the demonstration group, which was eligible for enhanced transition services, and (2) the control group, which was not eligible for enhanced transition services but was eligible for a standard limited set of services. Both groups were eligible for subsidized guardianship or adoption. Youth in the demonstration group were eligible for enhanced transition services, including an employment incentive program, housing cash assistance, formalized and enhanced life skills training, and a youth-in-college/vocational training program—services that clearly would be helpful and important to youth transitioning to adulthood and the loss of which might act as a deterrent to permanence. The randomization was designed to ensure that any difference in outcomes observed between the two groups was due to the intervention, not to any systematic underlying difference between the groups, and that a lack of difference would indicate that the intervention did not have an observed effect.

The hypothesis testing of the Illinois Older Wards Waiver found no evidence of a waiver impact. Overall, there were no statistically significant demonstration-control differences in achievement of permanence (adoption, subsidized guardianship, or reunification), incidence and recurrence of abuse and neglect, restrictiveness of living arrangements, or educational experiences prior to permanence. This might indicate that the prospect of enhanced services has little effect on child safety, permanence, and well-being, and that losing access to services is not the barrier to permanence that might be expected. However, it is important to keep in mind a limitation of the Older Wards Waiver: we learned that the waiver's intervention was implemented inconsistently and, overall, quite weakly.

Our process study found that there was confusion among many court and agency staff about both the difference in service eligibility between youth in the demonstration group and those in the control group, and the difference between the present Older Wards Waiver and the earlier Subsidized Guardianship Waiver. Some mistakenly believed that youth in the control

group were ineligible for subsidized guardianship, which would have been the case under the earlier Subsidized Guardianship Waiver but was not the case under the present Older Wards Waiver. In addition, caseworkers often were not aware of all the services that would be available to families after they achieved permanence because those services tended to be the responsibility of post-permanence workers; thus, caseworkers were not able to tell families about those services. Any potential “treatment effect” from being eligible for enhanced services could have been diluted or reduced if caseworkers and courts: (1) were not aware that all the youth in the waiver were eligible for subsidized guardianship, (2) did not know that some youth were eligible for enhanced services, (3) were uncertain about what services youth would be eligible for, or (4) did not communicate the correct information to the youth and their caregivers. If there is no clear implementation of the intervention, with the treatment differences delivered as designed, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the effects of the intervention.

We analyzed interview data for clues about what was important in the youth and caregiver decisionmaking processes about permanence (defined in the interviews as subsidized guardianship and adoption only) and why we found no waiver impact. Note that youth interview questions differentiated among *discussing* permanence, *wanting* permanence, *choosing* permanence, and *achieving* permanence, in order to better understand the process of decisionmaking.³⁰ We learned that quite a few youth (42%) reported in interviews that they had never discussed guardianship or adoption with their caseworkers (demonstration-control differences were not significant). About 30 percent of the youth were unsure about whether they wanted either option. A third (34%) of caregivers had never discussed adoption or guardianship with their caseworkers and about the same proportion (33%) had not made a decision about permanence (again, no significant demonstration-control differences). Thus, availability of enhanced services for youth in the demonstration group did not increase the probability that caseworkers would discuss permanence with the families or that families would choose permanence. This indicates a large number of families who potentially were open to achieving permanence, but might have needed more information and discussion with their caseworkers. It is possible that caseworkers made accurate determinations that some families were not good candidates for guardianship or adoption and so never brought up the subject with them—but it is

³⁰ The Children’s Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has expressed interest in the decisionmaking process at this level of detail. For example, the standard Terms and Conditions for guardianship demonstrations require that data be collected on proportion of cases *eligible* for guardianship, *offered* guardianship, *accepting* or *rejecting* guardianship, and *awarded* guardianship. This is important in understanding to whom and in what situations subsidized guardianship should be proposed, and when subsidized guardianship works best.

also possible that many of those families would have wanted permanence if they had had more information.

In addition, there was some evidence from the youth and caregiver interviews that the services *were* important to both youth and caregivers in their decisionmaking about permanence. Over half (58%) of the youth in the demonstration group were not aware of the enhanced services, but those who did know were far more likely to *want* permanence with their caregivers than did those who did not know about the services (40% vs. 19%). They also were far more likely to have *chosen* permanence (43% vs. 27%). However, this did not translate into a significant difference in *achievement* of permanence (21% vs. 15%). The achievement of permanence can be a lengthy process, and if the tracking of the youth had gone on longer, we might have found that more achieved permanence.

Similarly, more than a quarter (28%) of caregivers in the demonstration group had not been told about the enhanced services that the youth would be eligible for if they achieved adoption or subsidized guardianship. And caregivers in the demonstration group who said they were aware of the enhanced services were more likely to choose permanence than caregivers who did not know about the services (52% vs. 24%) and were more likely to complete the permanency process (23% vs. 10%).³¹ As with discussions about permanence, it is possible that caseworkers only told families about the services if they thought that the families were good candidates for adoption or subsidized guardianship; however, it is also possible that awareness of the services would have helped more youth and caregivers achieve permanence.

We found some significant differences in decisionmaking depending on whether or not youth were living with caregivers who were relatives: youth with nonrelative caregivers were as interested in permanence as youth with relative caregivers, but youth with relatives were significantly more likely to have *chosen* permanence (44%) than were youth with nonrelatives (32%). They also were more likely to have *achieved* permanence: youth with relatives were more likely to be adopted (9%) and much more likely to achieve guardianship (20%) than youth with nonrelatives (6% were adopted, and 9% achieved guardianship). The differences might be explained by differences in characteristics of the two groups and a greater interest by relative caregivers than nonrelative caregivers in achieving permanence. There were indications that

³¹ The apparent difference between the percentages of youth who achieved permanence (discussed in the previous paragraph) and caregivers who achieved permanence is due to the different numbers who knew about the services: among the 312 youth in the dataset, 176 knew about the services, while among the 335 caregivers in the dataset, 242 knew about the services.

many youth who had been placed with nonrelatives had more severe needs than youth who had been placed with relatives: they were more likely to have disabilities, to have spent more time in restrictive placements, and to have had more moves while in foster care. In light of the new provisions for subsidized guardianship with kin caregivers under the recent *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008*, it is important to understand the differences in characteristics and decisionmaking between relative and nonrelative foster families, and further research is needed.

The top reason that youth said they wanted either adoption or guardianship was that they had a strong bond with their caregiver. The top reason that youth said they did not want either option was that they felt they were too old. And youth preference was important to the caregivers: the top reason that caregivers did not choose guardianship was that the youth did not want it. The top reason that caregivers did not choose adoption was that the youth was already related by blood (however, many related caregivers did choose to adopt). And over half of the caregivers did not choose adoption because the youth did not want to be adopted.

When asked what issues were most important in their decisionmaking about adoption and subsidized guardianship, issues related to services were the most frequently named. Among all caregivers, over half said that ***agency help with medical assistance***, as well as ***services for youth***, were the top considerations in their decisionmaking process about permanence. Two thirds of the caregivers who had decided on guardianship or adoption said that ***services for youth*** were the most important consideration.

Among youth who said at their initial interviews that they wanted guardianship or adoption with their caregivers, only 30 percent had achieved it by the time of their follow-up interviews (19% had achieved guardianship, and 11% had been adopted). Among caregivers who said at their initial interview that they had chosen permanence, only 43 percent had achieved it by their follow-up interview. Many of the youth had lost interest in permanence by the follow-up interview, saying that they were too old or had become more interested in living on their own or going into Independent Living. In most cases, it was not the relationship with the caregiver that had changed; rather, youth felt that the time for achieving permanence had passed and they had set their sights on moving into independence. Average age at initial interview was 15.6 years and at follow-up interview was 17.3 years; thus, youth interest in permanence appears to fall off dramatically between ages 15 and 17, indicating that it is important to discuss permanence with youth as early as possible. We found that younger youth (ages 14-15) were more likely to ***want*** permanence with their caregivers than were older youth (47% vs. 23%), more likely to have

chosen permanence (55% vs. 26%), and more likely to have *achieved* permanence (30% vs. 14%).

In a separate analysis of the subset of 730 youth who achieved permanence, we found that youth assigned to the demonstration group were less likely to be reunified (25% of the demonstration group vs. 34% of the control group) and more likely to go into subsidized guardianship (45% of the demonstration group vs. 37% of the control group vs.) than youth assigned to the control group ($p=.0177$). The proportions of youth who were adopted were nearly equal (around 29%) for demonstration and control groups. As previously mentioned, demonstration-control differences regarding permanency exits for *all* youth in the waiver were not statistically significant, indicating no waiver impact on achievement of permanence. However, this analysis was different because it focused on the subset of youth who achieved permanence and because the model adjusted for the effects of other factors. The finding could be due to (1) chance, (2) waiver impact, or (3) inconsistent implementation of the intervention. It is possible that some caseworkers mistakenly believed that youth in the control group were not eligible for subsidized guardianship and so were more likely to suggest reunification or adoption to those families. No definite conclusions can be drawn, but this is an issue that warrants further research.

Thus, although we did not find a significant waiver impact, our interview findings support some common casework perceptions about permanency decisionmaking and youth:

- (1) Services are important considerations for caregivers in their decisionmaking.
- (2) Many teenagers in foster care do want permanence but it is important to move quickly because their interest often wanes as they get older.
- (3) Many families are not informed about permanency options and might choose adoption or guardianship if caseworkers discuss those options with them.
- (4) It is critical that caseworkers have complete and up-to-date information on the transition services that young people are eligible for, depending on their permanency choices, and communicate that information to the families.

Given the range of services available to youth under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (*Foster Care Independence Act of 1999*) and the new subsidized guardianship eligibility and reimbursement provisions under the *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008*, young people and their caregivers need fully to understand their options. In particular, as states begin to implement the *Fostering Connections*

provisions and other new initiatives, they will need to make sure that the range of options and services are presented to families in clear, easy to understand, and consistent language, and that families are well-prepared for whatever permanency options they choose. This will be a challenging implementation issue.

Appendix A
Youth Interview Instrument

DID YOUTH SIGN ASSENT FORM?

- YES
- NO [YOUTH MUST SIGN ASSENT FORM BEFORE STARTING INTERVIEW]

DID CAREGIVER SIGN CAREGIVER CONSENT FOR YOUTH FORM?

- NA, YOUTH IS 18 OR OLDER
- YES
- NO [CAREGIVER MUST SIGN CONSENT IF YOUTH IS UNDER 18 BEFORE STARTING YOUTH INTERVIEW]

RECORD START TIME: |_|_|:|_|_| AM PM (CIRCLE ONE)

A. INTRODUCTION

Again, my name is _____ and it's great to talk to you today.

First I have some questions about you and the people who are important in your life.

A1. How old are you?

|_|_| YEARS

A2. What is your birthdate?

|_|_| |_|_| 19 |_|_|
MONTH DAY YEAR

A3. What race or ethnicity do you consider yourself? You can pick more than one.
Are you...(CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- Hispanic 01
- African-American. 02
- White 03
- Native American..... 04
- Asian 05
- Some other race or ethnicity 06
- Specify: _____

A4. Is [NAME OF CAREGIVER] a relative?

- YES 1
- NO..... 2 GO TO A6

A5. What relation is [NAME OF CAREGIVER] to you?

- GRANDMOTHER..... 01
- GRANDFATHER..... 02
- AUNT 03
- UNCLE 04
- SISTER 05
- BROTHER..... 06
- COUSIN 07
- ADOPTIVE MOTHER 08
- ADOPTIVE FATHER 09
- BIRTH MOTHER..... 10
- STEPMOTHER 11
- BIOLOGICAL FATHER..... 12
- STEPFATHER 13
- OTHER..... 14
- SPECIFY: _____

(IF YOUTH SAYS CAREGIVER IS "MOTHER" OR "FATHER" PROBE FOR ADOPTIVE, BIOLOGICAL OR STEP)

A6. What do you call your [CAREGIVER]?

A7. What would you like me to call her/him in this interview?

A8. Is [CAREGIVER] your godparent?

- YES 1
- NO..... 2

A9. INTERVIEWER: NOTE YOUTH'S GENDER FROM OBSERVATION

- MALE 1
- FEMALE..... 2

B. SOCIAL NETWORKS

Now let's talk about people who are important to you. Think back over this past month. What people have been important to you? They may have been people you saw, talked with, or wrote letters to. This includes people who made you feel good, people who made you feel bad, and others who just played a part in your life.

- B1. First, think of people who live in this home who have been important to you in the past month. What are their first names or initials?
(LIST NAMES AND CODE AREA OF LIFE ON CHART)
NO ONE.....1 (ASK B2)
- B2. How about family who live outside your home, including extended family and people you consider to be like family?
(LIST NAMES AND CODE AREA OF LIFE ON CHART)
NO ONE.....1 (ASK B3)
- B3. How about friends or people you know from this neighborhood?
(LIST NAMES AND CODE AREA OF LIFE ON CHART)
NO ONE.....1 (ASK B4)
- B4. How about people you know from school or work or support groups that we haven't already listed?
(LIST NAMES AND CODE AREA OF LIFE ON CHART)
NO ONE.....1 (ASK B5)
- B5. How about professional people such as teachers or mentors, counselors or caseworkers or clergy?
(LIST NAMES AND CODE AREA OF LIFE ON CHART)
NO ONE.....1
- B6. I will read your list to you (READ LIST). Is there any name you want to add?
(LIST NAMES AND CODE AREA OF LIFE ON CHART)
NO.....1

MORE THAN 5 PEOPLE WERE LISTED.....1
5 OR FEWER PEOPLE WERE LISTED.....2 (GO TO B8)
- B7. Of the (NUMBER) names you have given me, who are the five that are most important to you? PLACE AN ASTERISK (*) IN PERSON COLUMN NEXT TO 5 MOST IMPORTANT AND CROSS OUT ALL OTHERS.
- B8. ENTER THE APPROPRIATE CODE FOR EACH PERSON, UNDER AREA OF LIFE.
- B9. Now I'm going to ask you a few questions about these people. ASK B10-B17 ABOUT EACH PERSON OF THE 5 MOST IMPORTANT PERSONS AND ENTER CODE NUMBERS FROM TOP OF COLUMN.

- B10. Who would be available to help you out, for example, would give you a ride if you needed one, or would help you with a big chore? Can you rely on (NAME) for this kind of help...
hardly ever
sometimes, or
almost always?
- B11. Who would be available to give you emotional support, for example, would comfort you if you were upset or talk to you about your feelings? Can you rely on (NAME) for this kind of support...
hardly ever
sometimes, or
almost always?
- B12. Who do you rely on for advice? For example, who would tell you how to do something, or help you make a big decision? Would you rely on (NAME) for advice...
hardly ever
sometimes, or
almost always?
- B13. Who do you feel is critical of you, that is, makes you feel bad? Is (NAME) critical of you...
hardly ever
sometimes, or
almost always?
- B14. Now think about where help goes both ways. Do you usually...
help (NAME)
does (NAME) help you, or
do you help each other?
- B15. Now think about how close you are to those people. Is (NAME)...
not very close to you,
somewhat close to you, or
very close to you?
- B16. Do you usually see (NAME)...
daily
weekly
monthly
a few times a year, or
not at all?
- B17. How long have you known (NAME)...
less than a year
from 1-5 years, or
more than 5 years?

B1a1-5 ENTER ALL NAMES OR INITIALS BELOW. IF MORE THAN 5, PLACE * NEXT TO 5 MOST IMPORTANT. CROSS OUT ALL OTHERS.

PERS # B1a1-5 FIRST NAME OR INITIALS

B81-5 AREA OF LIFE

ENTER CODE #
 1. In home
 2. Family outside home
 3. Friends or people from the neighborhood
 4. School, work, support group
 5. Professional people

B10. HELP

ENTER CODE #
 1. Hardly ever
 2. Sometimes
 3. Almost always

B11. EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

ENTER CODE #
 1. Hardly ever
 2. Sometimes
 3. Almost always

B12. INFORMATION/ADVICE

ENTER CODE #
 1. Hardly ever
 2. Sometimes
 3. Almost always

B13. CRITICAL

ENTER CODE #
 1. Hardly ever
 2. Sometimes
 3. Almost always

B14. DIRECTION OF HELP

ENTER CODE #
 1. You help (PERSON)
 2. (PERSON) helps you
 3. Help each other

B15. CLOSENESS

ENTER CODE #
 1. Not very close
 2. Sort of close
 3. Very close

B16. HOW OFTEN SEEN

ENTER CODE #
 1. Daily
 2. Weekly
 3. Monthly
 4. Few time/year
 5. Not at all

B17. HOW LONG KNOWN

ENTER CODE #
 1. Less than 1 year
 2. From 1-5 years
 3. More than 5 years

A-5

- 01
- 02
- 03
- 04
- 05
- 06
- 07
- 08
- 09
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15

We have just talked about the people who were important to you in the past month.

Now I would like you to tell me the names of two people who have ever made a positive difference in your life. (They may be the same people or they may be different people). Who would they be? What is each person's relationship to you?
 (RECORD FIRST NAME AND CODE)

B18. PERSON 1: _____

B19. PERSON 2: _____

<u>RELATIONSHIP</u>	<u>B20: PERSON 1</u>	<u>B21: PERSON 2</u>
a. BIRTH OR ADOPTIVE PARENT	01	01
b. FOSTER PARENT	02	02
c. SIBLING	03	03
d. OTHER RELATIVE	04	04
e. FRIEND	05	05
f. TEACHER	06	06
g. COUNSELOR	07	07
h. EMPLOYER	08	08
i. SOCIAL WORKER	09	09
j. OTHER (SPECIFY) PERSON 1 _____	88	88
PERSON 2 _____		

ASK FOR EACH PERSON

How did [PERSON] make a positive difference? (RECORD VERBATIM)
 (PROBE: Can you give me an example of what [PERSON] did that made a difference?)

B22. PERSON 1: _____

B23. PERSON 2: _____

B24. Did you know these two people prior to coming to live with [CAREGIVER]?

YES, BOTH..... 1 GO TO SECTION C
 YES, ONE..... 2 GO TO SECTION C
 NO, NEITHER..... 3

B25. Was there anyone who made a positive difference in your life before you came to live with [CAREGIVER]?

YES..... 1
 NO..... 2 GO TO SECTION C

B26. Can you give me the name of this person or these people?

B27. What relationship [is this person/are these people] to you? CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| a. BIRTH OR ADOPTIVE PARENT | 01 |
| b. FOSTER PARENT | 02 |
| c. SIBLING | 03 |
| d. OTHER RELATIVE | 04 |
| e. FRIEND | 05 |
| f. TEACHER | 06 |
| g. COUNSELOR | 07 |
| h. EMPLOYER | 08 |
| i. SOCIAL WORKER | 09 |
| j. OTHER (SPECIFY) _____ | 88 |

B28. Do you still see or talk to [this person/these people]?

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| YES, ONE PERSON ONLY | 1 |
| YES, ALL OF THEM | 2 |
| YES, SOME OF THEM | 3 |
| NO, NONE OF THEM | 4 |

C. LIFE SKILLS

Now I have some questions about things you do around the home.

C1. How often do you cook dinner or help cook dinner?

At least once a week 1
 At least once a month 2
 Less than once a month..... 3
 Never..... 4

C2. How often do you go grocery shopping or help shop for groceries for your household?

At least once a week 1
 At least once a month 2
 Less than once a month..... 3
 Never..... 4

C3. Do you know what you would do to look for a job?
 Would you say...?

Yes 1
 No..... 2
 Sort of..... 3

C4. Do you have a bank account?

YES 1
 NO 2

C5. Is there anything that you are saving money for?

YES 1
 NO..... 2 GO TO C7

C6. What is it? [RECORD VERBATIM] _____

C7. Do you know how to budget your money?
 Would you say...?

Yes 1
 No..... 2
 Sort of..... 3

C8. Do you have a driver's license or learner's permit?

YES 1
 NO..... 2 GO TO C11

C9. Do you have a car?

YES 1
 NO..... 2

C10. Does anyone in your household have a car they let you use?

YES 1
NO..... 2

C11. Do you have a computer at home?

YES 1
NO..... 2

C12. How good are you at using computers?
Would you say...?

Very good..... 1
Pretty good..... 2
Fair..... 3
Poor..... 4
NEVER USE A COMPUTER AT
SCHOOL OR HOME..... 5

Now I have a few questions about school.

C13. Are you currently attending school? [IF IT IS SUMMER, CODE AS NO IF THE YOUTH IS OUT OF SCHOOL FOR THE SUMMER]

YES 1
NO..... 2 GO TO C15

C14. What grade are you in school?

5th GRADE 01
6th GRADE 02
7th GRADE 03
8th GRADE 04
9th GRADE 05
10th GRADE 06
11th GRADE 07
12th GRADE 08
IN COLLEGE 09

GO TO C17

C15. Why aren't you currently attending school?

GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL 1
DROPPED OUT..... 2
SUMMER VACATION..... 3
OTHER 4
SPECIFY: _____

C16. What is the highest grade you completed in school?

LESS THAN 5 th GRADE	01
5 th GRADE	02
6 th GRADE	03
7 th GRADE	04
8 th GRADE	05
9 th GRADE	06
10 th GRADE	07
11 th GRADE	08
12 th GRADE	09

C17. How far do you think you will go in school?

Less than high school (1 TO 8 years)	01	
Some high school (9 to 11 years)	02	
Will finish high school	03	
Will get a GED	04	
Will complete a vocational program	05	
Will go to college	06	GO TO C20
Will graduate from college	07	GO TO C20
Will get a graduate degree like MA or MS, MBA, PhD, MD or law degree	08	GO TO C20

C18. Is this as far as you want to go in school?

YES	1	GO TO C21
NO	2	

C19. What might prevent you from completing more school? Would it be...?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a. That you are not interested in school	1	2
b. Financial problems	1	2
c. Transportation	1	2
d. That you need to work fulltime	1	2
e. School work is too difficult	1	2
f. You can't get into school	1	2
g. Health reasons,	1	2
h. Because of some other reason	1	2
Specify: _____		

GO TO C21

C20. Have you taken any of the following steps toward going to college, such as...?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a. Talking with a school guidance counselor about college	1	2
b. Talking with [CAREGIVER] about college	1	2
c. Talking with your caseworker about college	1	2
d. Taking the right classes to prepare for college	1	2
e. Thinking about what college you would like to attend.....	1	2
f. Visiting colleges.....	1	2
g. Looking into financial aid or scholarships to help pay for college	1	2
h. Saving money for college	1	2
i. Applying to college	1	2
i. Anything else.....	1	2
Specify_____		

C21. Are you currently working?

YES 1
 NO 2 GO TO SECTION D

C22. What is your type of work?

D. SERVICES

This section covers some services you may receive.

- D1. How often do you usually see or talk to your caseworker?
Would you say...?

Every day or almost every day.....	1
About once a week	2
Once or twice a month	3
Less than once a month.....	4
Never.....	5
IT VARIES	6
DOES NOT HAVE A CASEWORKER	7 GO TO D5

- D2. Have you seen or talked to your caseworker in the past 30 days?

YES	1
NO.....	2 GO TO D5

- D3. In the past 30 days, has your caseworker helped you with a problem you had?

YES	1
NO.....	2

- D4. In the past 30 days, has your caseworker taken you anywhere?

YES	1
NO.....	2

D5. Have your caseworker, foster care agency or independent living program provided you with classes or training on:

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a. How to manage your money	1	2
b. How to open a bank account.....	1	2
c. How to balance a checkbook	1	2
d. How to make friends	1	2
e. How to get health care	1	2
f. How to make decisions about birth control	1	2
g. How to protect yourself from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), like AIDS	1	2
h. How to prepare meals	1	2
i. How to choose nutritionally good food	1	2
j. How to find a job.....	1	2
k. How to write a resume	1	2
l. How to interview for a job.....	1	2
m. How to apply for college.....	1	2
n. How to find a place to live	1	2
o. How to do housekeeping.....	1	2
p. How to obtain legal assistance.....	1	2
q. How to locate community resources (i.e., post office, hospital, counseling services)	1	2
r. How to set and achieve goals	1	2
s. How to tell other people how you feel	1	2
t. How to express your opinion.....	1	2
u. How to make good decisions	1	2

D7. Have you ever had counseling about personal or family problems?

YES 1
NO..... 2

D8. Have you ever received tutoring in schoolwork?

YES 1
NO..... 2

D9. Have you ever received employment services like job counseling or job training?

YES 1
NO..... 2

E. RELATIONSHIP WITH CAREGIVER

Now I have some questions about your home life.

E1. When you go out, how often do you tell [CAREGIVER] where you're going and what you're doing?

Would you say...?

All of the time 1
 Most of the time 2
 Sometimes 3
 Hardly ever 4
 Never 5

E2. How often does [CAREGIVER] check out your friends or people you hang out with?

Would you say...?

All of the time 1
 Most of the time 2
 Sometimes 3
 Hardly ever 4
 Never 5

E3. How often does [CAREGIVER] set rules about when you have to be back home if you go out?

Would you say...?

All of the time 1
 Most of the time 2
 Sometimes 3
 Hardly ever 4
 Never 5

E4. When did you first start to live with [CAREGIVER]? Can you give me the month and year?
 (PROBE: GET AT LEAST THE YEAR EVEN IF YOUTH CANNOT RECALL MONTH)

Month			Year			

E5. Since you started living in the home you're in now, has anyone moved in?

YES 1
 NO 2 GO TO E8

E6. Have you felt happy because someone came to live in your home?

YES 1
 NO 2

E7. Have you felt unhappy because someone came to live in your home?

YES 1
 NO 2

- E8. Do you ever feel scared of someone who lives in your home?
- YES 1
NO..... 2
- E9. How many times have you moved to live with a different family or a different family member in your life? Would you say...
- 1 time 1
2 times..... 2
3 times..... 3
4 or more times 4
- E10. Do you like living with the people you live with now?
Would you say...?
- All of the time 1
Most of the time 2
Sometimes 3
Hardly ever..... 4
Never..... 5
- E11. Do you feel like you're part of this family?
Would you say...?
- All of the time 1
Most of the time 2
Sometimes 3
Hardly ever..... 4
Never..... 5
- E12. How much longer do you think you will be living with [CAREGIVER]?
Would you say...?
- A couple of weeks longer 01
A couple of months longer 02
A year longer 03
A couple of years longer 04 GO TO E14
Until you are 18 05 GO TO E14
Until you are 21 06 GO TO E14
Until some other time 07 GO TO E14
SPECIFY: Until what time do you think you will be living
here? _____

E13. Who do you think you'll be living with next year? RECORD VERBATIM AND THEN CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY

- a. BIOLOGICAL MOTHER AND/OR FATHER 01
 b. ANOTHER RELATIVE 02
 c. FOSTER PARENT 03
 d. FRIEND OR ROOMMATE 04
 e. SPOUSE 05
 f. IN A GROUP HOME 06
 g. IN AN INDEPENDENT LIVING APARTMENT 07
 h. BY YOURSELF ALONE..... 08
 i. OTHER..... 09
 SPECIFY: _____

E14. Is there someone else who is responsible for taking care of you if [CAREGIVER] is ill or away?

- YES 1
 NO..... 2 SKIP TO E16

E15. Is this person in your home?

- YES 1
 NO..... 2

E16. Is there someone's home you could stay at if you need a place to stay?

- YES 1
 NO..... 2

E17. Have you ever run away from the family you live with now for overnight or longer? (IF YES, how often?)

- NO..... 1
 YES, ONCE 2
 YES, MORE THAN ONCE..... 3

E18. Have you ever been thrown out or locked out of this home for overnight or longer?

- YES 1
 NO..... 2

F. HEALTH

Now I have some questions about your health.

F1. Compared to other people your age, would you say your present health is...?

- Excellent..... 1
- Good 2
- Fair..... 3
- Poor..... 4

F2. Have you (given birth to/fathered) any children?

- YES 1 GO TO SECTION G
- NO..... 2

F3. Have you ever been pregnant/gotten anyone pregnant)?

- YES 1
- NO..... 2
- DON'T KNOW 8

G. NEIGHBORHOOD AND FRIENDS

Now I have some questions about your neighborhood and your friends.

G1. For each of the following items, please tell me how often each one happened to you during the past three months. (READ ITEM) Would you say never, once, or more than once?

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Once</u>	<u>More than once</u>
a. You saw non-violent crimes take place in your neighborhood – for example, selling drugs or stealing.....	1	2	3
b. You heard or saw violent crime take place in your neighborhood.	1	2	3
c. You know someone who was a victim of a violent crime in your neighborhood.	1	2	3
d. You were a victim of violent crime in your neighborhood.	1	2	3
e. You were a victim of violent crime in your home.....	1	2	3

G2. Do any of your friends smoke cigarettes?

YES 1
NO..... 2

G3. Do any of your friends drink alcohol, such as beer, wine or liquor?

YES 1
NO..... 2

G4. Do any of your friends use drugs to get high?

YES 1
NO..... 2

H. RELATIONSHIP WITH BIOLOGICAL PARENTS AND SIBLINGS

BOX H1
IF CAREGIVER IS BIRTH MOTHER (A5 on p. 3 = 10) GO TO H10

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about your birth mother.

H1. Is your mother living?

YES 1
 NO 2 GO TO BOX H10
 DON'T KNOW 8 GO TO BOX H10

H2. Does [CAREGIVER] ever see your mother or talk to your mother at all?

YES 1
 NO 2 GO TO H4

H3. Do [CAREGIVER] and your mother get along OK?

YES 1
 NO 2

H4. Do you ever see your mother?

YES 1
 NO 2 GO TO BOX H10

H5. About how often do you see your mother?
 Would you say...?

Everyday 1
 Almost everyday 2
 About once a week 3
 Once or twice a month 4
 Less than once a month 5

H6. When was the last time you saw or talked to your mother?

WITHIN THE LAST WEEK 1
 WITHIN THE LAST MONTH 2
 WITHIN THE PAST 3 MONTHS 3
 WITHIN THE PAST 6 MONTHS 4
 MORE THAN 6 MONTHS AGO 5
 MORE THAN 1 YEAR AGO 6

- H7. Do you do enjoyable activities with your mother when you see her?
Would you say...?
- All of the time 1
Most of the time 2
Sometimes 3
Hardly ever 4
Never 5
- H8. Do you talk to your mother about important things in your life when you see her?
Would you say...?
- All of the time 1
Most of the time 2
Sometimes 3
Hardly ever 4
Never 5
- H9. Do you wish you saw your mother more, less or the same amount as you do now?
- MORE 1
LESS 2
THE SAME AMOUNT 3

<p>BOX H10 IF CAREGIVER IS BIOLOGICAL FATHER (A5 on p. 3 = 12) GO TO H18</p>
--

- H10. Now I want to ask you a few questions about your biological father. Is your father living?
- YES 1
NO 2 GO TO H18
DON'T KNOW 8 GO TO H18
- H11. Does [CAREGIVER] ever see your father or talk to your father at all?
- YES 1
NO 2 GO TO H13
- H12. Do [CAREGIVER] and your father get along OK?
- YES 1
NO 2
- H13. Do you ever see your father?
- YES 1
NO 2 GO TO H18

- H14. About how often do you see your father?
Would you say...?
- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Everyday | 1 |
| Almost everyday | 2 |
| About once a week | 3 |
| Once or twice a month | 4 |
| Less than once a month..... | 5 |
- H15. Do you do enjoyable activities with your father when you see him?
Would you say...?
- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| All of the time | 1 |
| Most of the time | 2 |
| Sometimes | 3 |
| Hardly ever..... | 4 |
| Never..... | 5 |
- H16. Do you talk to your father about important things in your life when you see him?
Would you say...?
- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| All of the time | 1 |
| Most of the time | 2 |
| Sometimes | 3 |
| Hardly ever..... | 4 |
| Never..... | 5 |
- H17. Do you wish you saw your father more, less or the same amount as you do now?
- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| MORE | 1 |
| LESS..... | 2 |
| THE SAME AMOUNT | 3 |
- H18. Do you have any brothers or sisters who don't live with you, including half-brothers and half-sisters?
- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| YES | 1 |
| NO..... | 2 GO TO I1 |
- H19. When was the last time you saw or talked to one of your brothers or sisters who lives outside your home?
- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| WITHIN THE LAST WEEK | 1 |
| WITHIN THE LAST MONTH..... | 2 |
| WITHIN THE PAST 3 MONTHS | 3 |
| WITHIN THE PAST 6 MONTHS | 4 |
| MORE THAN 6 MONTHS AGO..... | 5 |
| MORE THAN 1 YEAR AGO..... | 6 |

I. DECISION-MAKING ON GUARDIANSHIP AND ADOPTION

BOX I1
IF CAREGIVER IS BIRTH MOTHER (A5 on p. 3 = 10) OR BIOLOGICAL FATHER (A5 on p. 3 = 12)
GO TO SECTION K

Now I have some questions about guardianship and adoption.

11. Have you been legally adopted by [CAREGIVER]? To be legally adopted, you would have appeared before a judge who made [CAREGIVER] your adoptive parent. You would no longer have a caseworker or any involvement with DCFS.

YES 1 GO TO J1
 NO 2

12. Have you and [CAREGIVER] gone through the process by which [CAREGIVER] becomes your legal guardian? To become your legal guardian, you would have appeared before a judge who declared [CAREGIVER] your guardian and you would no longer have a caseworker or any involvement with DCFS.

YES 1 GO TO J10
 NO 2

13. Has your caseworker ever talked to you about [CAREGIVER] becoming your legal guardian?

YES 1
 NO 2

14. Has anyone in your home ever talked to you about [CAREGIVER] becoming your legal guardian?

YES 1
 NO 2

IF YOUTH IS IN GROUP B [LABEL IS BLUE], GO TO I6

15. Did your caseworker tell you that if [CAREGIVER] became your legal guardian you could get enhanced Transition Services like education and training vouchers, money for college, housing assistance, and life skills training that would help you get ready to live on your own?

YES 1
 NO 2

16. Do you think you want [CAREGIVER] to become your legal guardian?

YES 1
 NO 2 GO TO I8
 NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW 8 GO TO I9

17. Why do you want [CAREGIVER] to become your legal guardian?

RECORD VERBATIM

(PROBE: Are there any other reasons?)

GO TO I9

18. Why don't you want [CAREGIVER] to become your legal guardian?

RECORD VERBATIM

(PROBE: Are there any other reasons?)

19. Has your caseworker ever talked to you about [CAREGIVER] adopting you?

YES 1
NO 2

110. Have you ever talked with [CAREGIVER] about being adopted?

YES 1
NO 2

IF YOUTH IS IN GROUP B [LABEL IS BLUE], GO TO I12

111. Did your caseworker tell you that if you were adopted you could get enhanced Transition Services like education and training vouchers, money for college, housing assistance, and life skills training that would help you get ready to live on your own?

YES 1
NO 2

I12. Do you want to be adopted by [CAREGIVER]?

- YES 1
- NO 2 GO TO I14
- NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW 8 GO TO I15

I13. Why do you want [CAREGIVER] to adopt you? RECORD VERBATIM

(PROBE: Are there any other reasons?)

GO TO I15.

I14. Why don't you want [CAREGIVER] to adopt you? RECORD VERBATIM

(PROBE: Are there any other reasons?)

I15. Have you and [CAREGIVER] made a decision about adoption or guardianship?

- YES 1
- NO 2 GO TO I17
- NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW 8 GO TO I17

I16. What is your decision?

- ADOPTION 1
- GUARDIANSHIP 2
- NEITHER 3
- DON'T KNOW 8

117. Do you think adoption and guardianship are equally permanent?

- YES 1
- NO..... 2
- NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW 8 GO TO SECTION K

118. Why do you think this?

GO TO SECTION K

J. POST-ADOPTION AND GUARDIANSHIP

J1. Now I have some questions about your adoption. What is the main reason you wanted to be adopted? RECORD VERBATIM

Four horizontal lines for recording the answer to J1.

IF YOUTH IS IN GROUP B [LABEL IS BLUE] GO TO J4.

J2. Did your caseworker tell you that if you were adopted you could get enhanced Transition Services (like education and training vouchers, medical card, money for college, housing assistance, and life skills training) that would help you get ready to live on your own?

YES 1
NO 2

J3. Did the fact that you could get these Transition Services if you were adopted play a role in your decision to be adopted?
Would you say...?

Not at all 1
Somewhat 2
A great deal..... 3

J4. What advice would you tell other teens considering adoption?

RECORD VERBATIM

Four horizontal lines for recording the answer to J4.

J5. Has adoption made your relationship with [CAREGIVER]...

Better..... 1
Worse, or 2
About the same..... 3

J6. Has adoption made your life...

- Better..... 1
- Worse, or..... 2
- About the same..... 3

J7. Since being adopted, do you find it is easier or harder to make plans for the future? Would you say...?

- Easier 1
- Harder, or..... 2
- About the same..... 3

J8. Do you think adoption and guardianship are equally permanent?

- YES 1
- NO..... 2
- NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW 8 GO TO SECTION K

J9. Why do you think this?

GO TO SECTION K

J10. Now I have some questions about [CAREGIVER] becoming your legal guardian. What is the main reason you wanted [CAREGIVER] to become your legal guardian?
RECORD VERBATIM

IF YOUTH IS IN GROUP B [LABEL IS BLUE], GO TO J13.

J11. Did your caseworker tell you that if you went into subsidized guardianship you could get enhanced Transition Services (like education and training vouchers, medical card, money for college, housing assistance, and life skills training) that would help you get ready to live on your own?

YES 1
NO..... 2

J12. Did the fact that you could get these Transition Services if you went into guardianship play a role in your decision to have [CAREGIVER] become your guardian?
Would you say...?

Not at all 1
Somewhat 2
A great deal..... 3
DON'T KNOW 8

J13. Did you consider having [CAREGIVER] adopt you instead of becoming your guardian?

YES 1
NO..... 2 GO TO J15

J14. Why did you and [CAREGIVER] decide on guardianship instead of adoption?

RECORD VERBATIM

J15. Do you think adoption and guardianship are equally permanent?

YES 1
NO..... 2
NOT SURE/DON'T KNOW 8 GO TO J17

J16. Why do you think this?

J17. What advice would you tell other teens considering guardianship?

RECORD VERBATIM

J18. Has guardianship made your relationship with [CAREGIVER]...

- Better..... 1
- Worse, or 2
- About the same 3

J19. Has guardianship made your life...

- Better..... 1
- Worse, or..... 2
- About the same 3

J20. Since going into the subsidized guardianship program, do you find it is easier or harder to make plans for the future?
Would you say...?

- Easier 1
- Harder, or 2
- About the same 3

SECTION K

INTERVIEWER--HAND YOUTH SELF-REPORT FORM TO RESPONDENT.

We often read these next questions to respondents. Would you like me to read them to you or would you prefer to read them to yourself? I am going to have you mark your answers on this sheet. Questions that refer to "parent" are talking about [CAREGIVER] who is your caregiver.

INTERVIEWER CIRCLE 1 OR 2:

QUESTIONS READ TO YOUTH 1
YOUTH READ QUESTIONS 2

L. CONTACT INFORMATION

Because we want to contact you again for the followup interview, I would like to get some information from you that will help us locate you in case you move.

L1. Your home phone number: _____

L2. Whose name is the phone listed under: _____

L3. Your cell phone number: _____

L4. Your email address: _____

L5. Will you please tell me the name, address and telephone numbers of three individuals who will always know where you are or how to reach you. We will only contact these individuals if we are unable to locate you at your current address or telephone number. Anyone we contact will be asked only if they know how to reach you. They won't be given any information, and they won't be interviewed.

Name	Address	Home Telephone Number	Cell or Work Telephone Number	Relationship to you (e.g., family, friend, co-worker, etc.)

[PROVIDE R WITH \$20.00 CASH INCENTIVE]

That is all. Thank you very much for helping us with our study.

RECORD END TIME: |__|__|:|__|__| AM PM (CIRCLE ONE)

Appendix B
Caregiver Interview Instrument

DID CAREGIVER SIGN CONSENT FORM?

YES

NO [CAREGIVER MUST SIGN CONSENT FORM BEFORE STARTING INTERVIEW]

TIME STARTED: _____ AM/PM (CIRCLE ONE)

A. HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE AND CHARACTERISTICS**INTRODUCTION**

Again, my name is _____ and I work for Westat, the national research organization that is conducting the Illinois Family Study. The study will help the Department of Children and Family Services provide better services to teens.

I would like to ask you questions specifically regarding [YOUTH].

A1. First, please tell me if you are [YOUTH]'s ...

Adoptive parent.....	01	
Foster parent.....	02	
Legal guardian	03	
Birth mother/step mother	04	(GO TO A3)
Biological father/step father	05	(GO TO A3)
OTHER [SPECIFY] _____	07	

A2. Prior to becoming his/her (adoptive parent/foster parent/guardian/other) were you related to [YOUTH], and if so, what is your relation?

GRANDMOTHER	01
GRANDFATHER.....	02
SISTER/STEPSISTER	03
BROTHER/STEPBROTHER	04
AUNT	05
UNCLE	06
OTHER RELATIVE [SPECIFY] _____	07
NON-RELATIVE	08

A3. I would like to know the names of all the adults and children who are members of your household, including yourself and any who may not be living here right now (i.e. at school or college or temporarily living out of the house or staying with someone else).

Let's start by listing the names of each person. Then I'd like to ask you a few questions about each member.

Your name is.....

[LIST ALL NAMES. THEN ASK ALL QUESTIONS IN TABLE FOR ONE PERSON BEFORE GOING TO NEXT]

Person #	A3a. .NAME	A3b. RELATION TO CHILD	A3c. STAYING IN THE HOME	A3d. AGE AND BIRTHDATE	A3e. SEX	A3f. RACE/ETHNICITY
	LIST ALL NAMES STARTING WITH THE CAREGIVER YOU ARE INTERVIEWING ON LINE 01 FOLLOWED BY THE YOUTH IN THE STUDY.	And the relation to [YOUTH] is.....? GRANDPARENT 01 SISTER/STEPSISTER02 BROTHER/STEPBRO.03 AUNT04 UNCLE05 OTHER RELATIVE (SPECIFY)_____06 NON-RELATIVE (SPECIFY)_____07 ENTER CODE	Is this person currently staying in the home? YES.....1 NO.....2 ENTER CODE	What is the person's date of birth and age? ENTER DOB/AGE	Is the person male or female? M.....1 F.....2 ENTER CODE	What race/or ethnic origin are you/he/she? You may choose more than one. Hispanic/Latino origin...1 African American.....2 White.....3 Native American.....4 Asian.....5 Some other race or origin?..... 6 (SPECIFY: _____) ENTER ALL CODES THAT APPLY
01	[RESPONDENT]			_____ DATE OF BIRTH _____ AGE		
02	[YOUTH]			_____ DATE OF BIRTH _____ AGE		
03				_____ DATE OF BIRTH _____ AGE		

Person #	A3a. .NAME	A3b. RELATION TO CHILD	A3c. STAYING IN THE HOME	A3d. AGE AND BIRTHDATE	A3e. SEX	A3f. RACE/ETHNICITY
	LIST ALL NAMES STARTING WITH THE CAREGIVER YOU ARE INTERVIEWING ON LINE 01 FOLLOWED BY THE YOUTH IN THE STUDY.	And the relation to [YOUTH] is.....? GRANDPARENT01 SISTER/STEPSISTER02 BROTHER/STEPBRO.03 AUNT04 UNCLE05 OTHER RELATIVE (SPECIFY)_____06 NON-RELATIVE (SPECIFY)_____07 ENTER CODE	Is this person currently staying in the home? YES.....1 NO.....2 ENTER CODE	What is the person's date of birth and age? ENTER DOB/AGE	Is the person male or female? M.....1 F.....2 ENTER CODE	What race/or ethnic origin are you/he/she? You may choose more than one. Hispanic/Latino origin...1 African American.....2 White.....3 Native American.....4 Asian.....5 Some other race or origin?..... 6 (SPECIFY: _____) ENTER ALL CODES THAT APPLY
04				_____ DATE OF BIRTH _____ AGE		
05				_____ DATE OF BIRTH _____ AGE		
06				_____ DATE OF BIRTH _____ AGE		

Person #	A3a. .NAME	A3b. RELATION TO CHILD	A3c. STAYING IN THE HOME	A3d. AGE AND BIRTHDATE	A3e. SEX	A3f. RACE/ETHNICITY
	LIST ALL NAMES STARTING WITH THE CAREGIVER YOU ARE INTERVIEWING ON LINE 01 FOLLOWED BY THE YOUTH IN THE STUDY.	And the relation to [YOUTH] is.....? GRANDPARENT01 SISTER/STEPSISTER02 BROTHER/STEPBRO03 AUNT04 UNCLE05 OTHER RELATIVE (SPECIFY)_____06 NON-RELATIVE (SPECIFY)_____07 ENTER CODE	Is this person currently staying in the home? YES.....1 NO.....2 ENTER CODE	What is the person's date of birth and age? ENTER DOB/AGE	Is the person male or female? M.....1 F.....2 ENTER CODE	What race/or ethnic origin are you/he/she? You may choose more than one. Hispanic/Latino origin...1 African American.....2 White.....3 Native American.....4 Asian.....5 Some other race or origin?.....6 (SPECIFY: _____) ENTER ALL CODES THAT APPLY
07				_____ DATE OF BIRTH _____ AGE		
08				_____ DATE OF BIRTH _____ AGE		

B. YOUTH CHARACTERISTICS**EDUCATION**

Now, I am going to ask you some questions about [YOUTH].

B1. Is [YOUTH] currently attending school?

YES 1 (GO TO B4)
NO 2

B2. Why not?

DROPPED OUT 01
GRADUATED 02
ILLNESS 03
SUMMER VACATION 04
SUSPENDED 05
INCARCERATED 06
OTHER [SPECIFY] _____ 07

B3. What level of school/grade did (he/she) last attend?

BELOW 5TH GRADE 01
5TH GRADE 02
6TH GRADE 03
7TH GRADE 04
8TH GRADE 05
9TH GRADE 06
10TH GRADE 07
11TH GRADE 08
12TH GRADE 09
VOCATIONAL 10
ATTENDING COLLEGE 11
GRADUATE SCHOOL 12
OTHER [SPECIFY] _____ 13

GO TO B5

B4. What level of school or grade is (he/she) currently attending?

BELOW 5 TH GRADE	01
5 TH GRADE	02
6 TH GRADE	03
7 TH GRADE	04
8 TH GRADE	05
9 TH GRADE	06
10 TH GRADE	07
11 TH GRADE	08
12 TH GRADE	09
VOCATIONAL	10
ATTENDING COLLEGE	11
GRADUATE SCHOOL	12 (GO TO B12)
OTHER (SPECIFY) _____	13

B5. Including [YOUTH]'s current school, how many different schools has (he/she) attended in the last year?

[BE SURE RESPONDENT INCLUDES CURRENT SCHOOL IN TOTAL]

--	--

 NUMBER (IF 1, GO TO B7)

B6. Has [YOUTH] had trouble adjusting to new schools?

YES	1
NO	2

B7. Does [YOUTH] have an Individualized Education Program or Plan (IEP)?

YES	1
NO	2
DON'T KNOW	8

B8. In general, how would you describe [YOUTH]'s grades?

MOSTLY As	01
MOSTLY As AND Bs	02
MOSTLY Bs	03
MOSTLY Bs AND Cs	04
MOSTLY Cs	05
MOSTLY Cs AND Ds	06
MOSTLY Ds	07
MOSTLY Ds AND Fs	08
MOSTLY Fs	09

B9. How far do you think [YOUTH] will go in school? Would you say...

Less than high school (1-8 years).....	01
Some high school (9-11 years).....	02
(He/she) will finish high school.....	03
(He/she) will get a GED	04
(He/she) will complete a vocational program	05
(He/she) will go to college	06
(He/she) will graduate from college	07
(He/she) will get a graduate degree like MA or MS, MBA, PhD, MD, or law degree)	08

B10. During this school year, how many days of school did [YOUTH] miss for reasons other than accidents, illnesses, or injuries?

0 DAYS	1
1-5 DAYS	2
6-10 DAYS	3
10-20 DAYS	4
MORE THAN 20 DAYS.....	5
DON'T KNOW	8

B11. Has anyone from school contacted you in the past year about problems with [YOUTH]'s grades, attendance, or behavior?

YES	1
NO.....	2

HEALTH

Now I want to ask some questions regarding [YOUTH]'s health.

B12. In general, how would you describe [YOUTH] physical health? Would you say it is...?

Excellent.....	1
Good	2
Fair, or.....	3
Poor?.....	4

B13. Are you able to get [YOUTH] health care when (he/she) needs it?

YES	1
NO.....	2

B14. Has [YOUTH] ever been (pregnant/gotten anyone pregnant)?

YES	1
NO.....	2 (GO TO B16)

B15. Has [YOUTH] (given birth to/fathered) any children?

YES	1
NO.....	2 (GO TO B16)

B15a. How many children has [YOUTH] (given birth to/fathered)?

____|____|
NUMBER

B16. Does [YOUTH] have any diagnosed physical, emotional, or learning disabilities?

YES 1
NO 2 (GO TO B19)

B17. What kind of disability does (he/she) have? Does he/she have....(CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

A developmental delay, 01

(PROBE: Please name the specific disability/condition)

SPECIFY _____

An emotional disturbance, 02

(PROBE: Please name the specific disability/condition)

SPECIFY _____

A learning disability, 03

(PROBE: Please name the specific disability/condition)

SPECIFY _____

A hearing, speech or sight impairment, or 04

(PROBE: Please name the specific disability/condition)

SPECIFY _____

Some other disabling condition? 05

(PROBE: Please name the specific disability/condition)

SPECIFY _____

B18. Are you able to get help for [YOUTH] disability or condition?

YES 1
NO 2

B19. In the past 30 days, has [YOUTH] been taken to the emergency room at a hospital or clinic for a health problem or medical emergency?

YES 1
NO 2 (GO TO B20)

B19a. How many times?

____|____|
NUMBER

BEHAVIOR

Now I want to ask you some questions about how [YOUTH] has been acting recently.

- B20.** In the last 30 days how often would you say [YOUTH] has been [a]? Would you say it was never, sometimes or often...? How often was [YOUTH] [b-g]? Would you say it was...?

	Never	Sometimes	Often
a. Moody?	1	2	3
b. Loving?	1	2	3
c. Hostile or aggressive?	1	2	3
d. Cheerful?	1	2	3
e. Playful?	1	2	3
f. Nervous or worried?	1	2	3

- B21.** In the last 30 days, how often would you say [YOUTH] has [a]? Would you say it was...Never, Sometimes, or Often? [In the last 30 days,] How often has [YOUTH] b-m]? Would you say it was...?

	Never	Sometimes	Often
a. Gotten along well with friends?	1	2	3
b. Lost his/her temper?	1	2	3
c. Been cruel, bullying or mean to other kids?	1	2	3
d. Been funny and made you laugh?	1	2	3
e. Participated in family activities?	1	2	3
f. Used alcohol or drugs?	1	2	3
g. Refused to do chores?	1	2	3
h. Run away?	1	2	3
i. Been cruel, bullying, or mean to adults?	1	2	3
j. Destroyed or damaged property on purpose?	1	2	3
k. Helped around the house?	1	2	3
l. Participated in a recreational activity?	1	2	3
m. Been very fearful or anxious?	1	2	3
n. Displayed a special talent in music, art or a sport?	1	2	3
o. Stolen or shoplifted?	1	2	3
p. Had trouble with the police?	1	2	3
q. Acted impulsively without thinking?	1	2	3
s. Deliberately harmed (himself/herself)?	1	2	3
t. Enjoyed going to school?	1	2	3
u. Been unhappy, sad, or depressed?	1	2	3

- B22.** Thinking about [YOUTH]'s behavior, has (his/her) behavior improved, stayed the same, or gotten worse in the last 30 days?

IMPROVED	1
STAYED THE SAME	2
GOTTEN WORSE	3

SOCIAL SUPPORT

I want to ask you a few questions about who cares for [YOUTH].

B23. Besides yourself, are there other adults who live with you who regularly care for and supervise [YOUTH]?

YES 1
NO 2

B24. Are there any relatives or friends outside of your household who regularly care for and supervise [YOUTH]?

YES 1
NO 2

B25. Are there other people in your family who could take care of [YOUTH] in case you became ill or could not take care of (him/her)?

YES 1
NO 2 (GO TO B27)
.....

B25a. About how many people could take care of (him/her)?

|_|_|
NUMBER

B26. You just told me about a person(s) who would help you take care of [YOUTH]. Can you tell me how this person is related to you? If you told me more than one person would help, tell me how the person most likely to take care of [YOUTH] is related to you?

RELATION TO CAREGIVER

CONTINUITY

B27. How long has [YOUTH] lived in your home?

YEARS			MONTHS	

B28. Has [YOUTH] spent more than two weeks at a time in any other household in the past year?

YES 1
 NO 2 (GO TO B32)

B29. How many times has this happened in the past year? Would you say...?

Once 1
 Twice 2
 Three times 3
 Four or more times 4

B30. Was this with (his/her) family members?

YES 1
 NO 2

B31. Why did [YOUTH] live in another household for more than two weeks? Was it because [a-h]?

	YES	NO
a. You were on vacation?	1	2
b. You were ill or there was an illness in the family?	1	2
c. Someone else wanted to spend time with (him/her)?	1	2
d. (He/She) was misbehaving?	1	2
e. You needed a break	1	2
f. You could not afford to keep (him/her)?	1	2
g. The child welfare agency moved (him/her) into a different household?	1	2
h. Something else? (SPECIFY) _____	1	2

B32. How much longer do you think [YOUTH] will be living with you? Would you say...?

A couple of weeks longer, 01
 A couple of months longer, 02
 A year longer, 03
 A couple of years longer, 04
 Until (he/she) is 18? 05
 Until (he/she) is 21 06
 Until some other time
 (SPECIFY) _____ .. 07

C. CAREGIVER STATUS, PARENTING SKILLS AND RESOURCES**PHYSICAL HEALTH**

- C1. Now, I want to ask you some questions about how you are doing. In general, how would you describe your physical health? Would you say it is...?

Excellent..... 1
 Good 2
 Fair 3
 Poor..... 4

- C2. Are you able to get health care for yourself when you need it?

YES 1
 NO..... 2

- C3. Do you have any physical or emotional disabilities?

YES 1
 NO..... 2 (GO TO C5)

- C4. Does your disability make it difficult for you to care for any of the children who live with you?

YES 1
 NO..... 2

MENTAL HEALTH

- C5. Now, I want to ask you about problems and complaints that people sometimes have. I am going to ask you how much that problem has bothered or distressed you during the past week, including today.
 How much were you bothered by [a-m]?

(USE RESPONSE CARD)

Would you say it was...?

		Not at all	A little bit	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
a.	Feeling low in energy or slowed down?	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Thoughts of ending your life?	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Loss of sexual interest or pleasure?	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Crying easily?	1	2	3	4	5
e.	A feeling of being trapped or caught?	1	2	3	4	5
f.	Blaming yourself for things?	1	2	3	4	5
g.	Feeling lonely?	1	2	3	4	5
h.	Feeling blue?	1	2	3	4	5
i.	Worrying too much about things?	1	2	3	4	5
j.	Feeling no interest in things?	1	2	3	4	5
k.	Feeling helpless about the future?	1	2	3	4	5
l.	Feeling everything is an effort?	1	2	3	4	5
m.	Feelings of worthlessness?	1	2	3	4	5

- C6.** Now, I want to ask you about any problems you have had doing certain things around the house or taking care of [YOUTH] in your household. As I read each problem tell me whether it applies.

In the last 30 days, have you had difficulty...?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a. Doing routine household chores, like cleaning,	1	2
b. Preparing meals,	1	2
c. Spending time doing things with [YOUTH],	1	2
d. Helping [YOUTH] with problems,	1	2
e. Taking [YOUTH] to a doctor or dentist appointment, or	1	2
f. Taking [YOUTH] shopping for clothes or school supplies?	1	2

CAREGIVER'S SOCIAL NETWORK

Now, I want to ask you about people who help you and give you support when you need it.

- C7.** As I read each way they might offer support, please tell me whether it applies.

Are there any adult family members who live with you who support you by...?

(IF NO FAMILY MEMBERS LIVE WITH CAREGIVER, MARK "3" (N/A) FOR EACH)

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>N/A</u>
a. Comforting you when you are upset,	1	2	3
b. Talking to you about your feelings,	1	2	3
c. Helping you with child care,	1	2	3
d. Helping with transportation,	1	2	3
e. Lending you money when you need it,	1	2	3
f. Helping with shopping, or	1	2	3
g. Helping when someone is ill?	1	2	3

- C8.** What about any relatives or friends who do NOT live with you? As I read each way they might offer support, please tell me whether it applies.

Are there any relatives or close friends outside of your household who support you by...?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a. Comforting you when you are upset,	1	2
b. Talking to you about your feelings,	1	2
c. Helping you with child care,	1	2
d. Helping with transportation,	1	2
e. Lending you money when you need it,	1	2
f. Helping with shopping, or	1	2
g. Helping when someone is ill?	1	2

C9. Do you attend a church, temple or mosque?

YES 1
NO 2 (GO TO C11)

C10. What about support or help from others in your church, temple, or mosque? As I read each way they might offer support, please tell me whether it applies.

Are there any church members that support you by...?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a. Comforting you when you are upset,	1	2
b. Talking to you about your feelings,	1	2
c. Helping you with child care,	1	2
d. Helping with transportation,	1	2
e. Lending you money when you need it,	1	2
f. Providing food for you and/or your family	1	2
g. Providing clothes to you or your family	1	2
h. Helping with shopping, or	1	2
i. Helping when someone is ill?	1	2

C11. Do you have any relatives who live near you?

YES 1
NO 2 (GO TO C13)

C12. How often do you see at least one of these relatives? Would you say...?

Almost every day 1
About once a week 2
Several times a month 3
Once a month or less 4

CHILD REARING

Now I want to ask you some things that affect how children grow up.

C13. Do you have household rules you ask [YOUTH] to follow?

YES 1
NO 2 (GO TO C15)

C14. Please answer yes or no to the following items. In your house, are there rules or routines for [YOUTH] about...?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a. How late (he/she) can stay out?	1	2
b. When (he/she) can have friends at the house?	1	2
c. Doing (his/her) homework?	1	2
d. How long (he/she) can talk on the telephone?	1	2
e. How many hours [YOUTH] can use the computer?	1	2
f. What [YOUTH] can access online or the games (he/she) plays on the computer?	1	2
g. Leaving a note when (he/she) leaves the house and you're not home	1	2
h. What chores [YOUTH] does?	1	2

C15. In the last 30 days, how often have you [a]? Would you say it was...? In the last 30 days, how often have you [b-g]? Would you say it was...?

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Often</u>
a. Had difficulty controlling (him/her)?	1	2	3
b. Showed that you liked having (him/her) around?	1	2	3
c. Seen (his/her) behavior get worse when you punished (him/her)?	1	2	3
d. Comforted [YOUTH] when (he/she) had problems?	1	2	3
e. Made (him/her) feel loved?	1	2	3
f. Praised [YOUTH] for doing something really well?	1	2	3
g. Hesitated to enforce rules because you feared (he/she) might harm someone in your household?	1	2	3

C16. Other than [YOUTH] living here now, have you ever raised any other children who were not your birth children?

YES 1
NO 2 (GO TO C18)

C17. How many other children have you raised, excluding your own? [INCLUDE DECEASED]

NUMBER

C18. How many children have you (given birth to/fathered)? [INCLUDE DECEASED]

NUMBER

C19. Were you ever [a-c]?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a. In foster care?	1	2
b. Adopted?	1	2
c. Informally taken care of by relatives?	1	2

C20. Were you born in the United States?

YES 1 (GO TO SECTION D)
NO 2

C21. What country were you born in?

COUNTRY NAME

C22. How many years have you lived in the United States?

NUMBER OF YEARS

D. DYNAMICS OF FAMILY SITUATION**CAREGIVER'S RELATIONSHIPS**

D1. Below is a series of statements about your relationship with [YOUTH]. For each statement, please tell me the number of the category that most applies to your relationship with (him/her).

(USE RESPONSE CARD)

		Definitely Does Not Apply	Not Really	Neutral, Not Sure	Applies Sometimes	Definitely Applies
a.	I share an affectionate, warm relationship with [YOUTH].	1	2	3	4	5
b.	(He/she) and I always seem to be struggling with each other.	1	2	3	4	5
c.	If upset, (he/she) will seek comfort from me.	1	2	3	4	5
d.	(He/she) is uncomfortable with physical affection or touch from me.	1	2	3	4	5
e.	(He/she) values (his/her) relationship with me.	1	2	3	4	5
f.	When I praise (him/her), (he/she) beams with pride.	1	2	3	4	5
g.	(He/she) spontaneously shares information about (himself/herself).	1	2	3	4	5
h.	(He/she) easily becomes angry with me.	1	2	3	4	5
i.	It is easy to be in tune with what (he/she) is feeling.	1	2	3	4	5
j.	(He/she) remains angry or is resistant after being disciplined.	1	2	3	4	5
k.	Dealing with (him/her) drains my energy.	1	2	3	4	5
l.	When (he/she) is in a bad mood, I know we're in for a long and difficult day.	1	2	3	4	5
m.	(His/her) feelings toward me can be unpredictable or can change suddenly.	1	2	3	4	5
n.	(He/she) is sneaky or manipulative with me.	1	2	3	4	5
o.	(He/she) openly shares (his/her) feelings and experiences with me.	1	2	3	4	5

D2. What is your current marital status?

MARRIED..... 1 (GO TO D4)
 SEPARATED 2
 DIVORCED 3
 WIDOWED 4
 NEVER MARRIED 5

D3. Are you currently in a relationship with someone living in your home whom you consider to be your partner?

YES 1
 NO..... 2 (GO TO
 D6INTRO)

D4. Now I want to ask about how things are going with your spouse or partner. In the last 30 days, how have you been getting along with your spouse or partner? Would you say that overall you have gotten along...?

Very well,..... 1
 Well, or 2
 Not very well? 3

D5. Was your spouse or partner living with you when [YOUTH] came to live with you?

YES 1
 NO..... 2 (GO TO D6INTRO)
 NOT APPLICABLE 3 (GO TO D6INTRO)

D5a. Comparing how you are getting along now with your spouse or partner to how you were getting along before [YOUTH] came to stay with you, would you say that overall things are...?

Better now than before,..... 1
 About the same now as before, or 2
 Not as good now as before? 3

D6INTRO: Now I want to ask you about your family. I am talking about family members who live with you and those who live somewhere else.

D6. Comparing how you are getting along now with your family to how you were getting along before [YOUTH] lived with you, would you say that overall things are...?

Better now than before,..... 1
 About the same now as before, or 2
 Not as good now as before? 3

D7. Before you took over as caregiver for [YOUTH], did the other members of your family agree that [YOUTH] should be living with you?

YES 1
 NO..... 2

E. CAREGIVER EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL SITUATION

E1. Are you currently.....?

Working full-time (35 hrs or more per week).....	01
Working part-time.....	02
Looking for work.....	03
Laid off from work.....	04
In school or training/not working	05
Keeping house	06
Retired.....	07
Something else (SPECIFY) _____.	08

E2. Please look at this card and tell me which of these amounts comes closest to your total household income from all sources for [LAST CALENDAR YEAR]. You can tell me the letter...?

(USE RESPONSE CARD)

A. Less than \$1,000,	01
B. \$1,000- \$2,499,	02
C. \$2,500- \$4,999,	03
D. \$5,000- \$9,999,	04
E. \$10,000- \$19,999,	05
F. \$20,000-\$39,999,	06
G. \$40,000-\$59,999, or	07
H. \$60,000 or more?	08

E3. For each of the following sources of support, tell whether you received each of the following for the care of [YOUTH] last month.

Did you receive [a-f]?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a. Adoption or guardianship subsidy	1	2
b. Foster care boarding payment	1	2
e. Welfare or TANF checks	1	2
d. Child support payments	1	2
e. SSI (Supplementary Security Income)	1	2
f. Social Security Survivor Benefit	1	2

E4. I have some questions about how things are with you money-wise.

In the last 30 days, have you had any difficulty...?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a. Paying your rent or mortgage	1	2
b. Paying your electric and heating bills	1	2
c. Buying enough food for your family	1	2
d. Buying clothes for [YOUTH]?	1	2

E5. In the last 30 days, overall, have you had enough money to maintain your household?

YES	1
NO.....	2

E6. Do you own or rent your residence?

OWN 1
 RENT 2

F. AGENCY/SERVICES

Now I want to ask you about some services or assistance you or [YOUTH] may have asked for or received from the child welfare agency or somewhere else.

F1. In the last 30 days, how often have you seen or talked to any caseworker? Would you say...?

Not at all 1
 Once 2
 Twice 3
 Three times 4
 Four or more times 5

F2. How satisfied have you been with the help or assistance provided to you by your caseworker? Would you say you were...?

Very satisfied, 1
 Satisfied, 2
 Dissatisfied, or 3
 Very dissatisfied? 4

- F3. Now, I am going to ask you about some services that you may have received or tried to get for yourself, either from the child welfare agency or somewhere else in the last year.

		A. In the last year, have you ever been referred for or tried to get...?		B. Have you received it?	
		YES	NO	YES	NO
	Services				
a.	Family counseling	1	2	1	2
b.	Individual counseling for yourself	1	2	1	2
c.	Respite care	1	2	1	2
d.	Housing assistance	1	2	1	2
e.	Help looking for a job	1	2	1	2
f.	Job training	1	2	1	2
g.	Adult education	1	2	1	2
h.	Legal assistance	1	2	1	2
i.	Alcohol or drug treatment	1	2	1	2
j.	TANF or other public aid	1	2	1	2
k.	WIC	1	2	1	2
l.	Food stamps	1	2	1	2
m.	Social security disability payments	1	2	1	2
n.	Help to pay the rent, electricity, or phone bill	1	2	1	2
o.	Other services (SPECIFY) _____	1	2	1	2

- F4.** Now, I am going to ask you about some services that [YOUTH] may have received or tried to get, either from the child welfare agency or somewhere else in the last year.

Services	A. In the last year, has [YOUTH] ever been referred for or tried to get...?		B. Has [YOUTH] received it?		C. Did the child welfare agency help [YOUTH] to get?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
a. Individual counseling	1	2	1	2	1	2
b. Health care	1	2	1	2	1	2
c. Hospitalization	1	2	1	2	1	2
d. Medical card	1	2	1	2	1	2
e. Alcohol or drug treatment	1	2	1	2	1	2
f. Tutoring	1	2	1	2	1	2
g. College stipend	1	2	1	2	1	2
h. Employment services or job support/training	1	2	1	2	1	2
i. Employment stipend	1	2	1	2	1	2
j. Life skills services	1	2	1	2	1	2
k. Housing assistance	1	2	1	2	1	2
l. Family counseling	1	2	1	2	1	2
m. Social security payments	1	2	1	2	1	2
n. Other (SPECIFY) _____	1	2	1	2	1	2

G. DECISIONS ON PERMANENCY

G1. Has your caseworker held a family meeting to talk about a permanent living arrangement for [YOUTH]?

YES 1
NO..... 2 (GO TO G7)

G2. How many family meetings have been held in the last year?

One meeting 1
Two meetings..... 2
Three or more meetings..... 3

G3. Who usually attended the family meetings?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a. Did you attend?	1	2
b. Did [YOUTH]?	1	2
c. Did [YOUTH]'s birth mother attend?	1	2
d. Did [YOUTH]'s biological father attend?	1	2
e. Did other family members attend? [SPECIFY] _____	1	2

G4. Which of the following topics were discussed at the family meetings? As I read each topic, please tell me whether it was discussed.

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a. Getting support from family and community?	1	2
b. Future service needs for [YOUTH]?	1	2
c. Future service needs for the family?	1	2
d. Adoption or guardianship of [YOUTH]?	1	2
e. Terminating parental rights?	1	2
f. Visitation with birth/biological parent and [YOUTH]?	1	2
e. Any other service? [SPECIFY] _____	1	2

G5. Of the topics you just identified [REFER TO THOSE CIRCLED ABOVE] would you say that they were very important, somewhat important, or not important to decisions made about [YOUTH]'s permanency?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Not discussed
a. Getting support from family and community	1	2	3	4
b. Future needs for services for [YOUTH]	1	2	3	4
c. Future needs for services for you and other members of the family	1	2	3	4
d. Adoption or guardianship of [YOUTH]	1	2	3	4
e. Terminating parental rights	1	2	3	4
f. Visitation with birth parent and [YOUTH]	1	2	3	4
g. Any other service (SPECIFY)	1	2	3	4

IF G5 b, c, OR g WERE IDENTIFIED (Service needs) AS VERY OR SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT, GO TO G6, ELSE GO TO G7

B-25

G6. What specific services were most important in discussing decisions on permanency?

G7. Have you attended a Caregiver Institute workshop for foster parents in the past year?

YES 1
 NO 2 (GO TO BOX G1)

G7a. Did you learn about the importance of permanency for older youth at the workshop?

YES 1
 NO 2

BOX G1

(SEE A1 on p. 2.) IF YOUTH HAS BEEN REUNIFIED WITH A PARENT, AND PARENT IS RESPONDENT, GO TO SECTION I

G8. In the last year, has your caseworker talked to you about [YOUTH] going home to live with (his/her) birth parents?

YES 1
NO 2

G9. In the last year, has your caseworker talked to you about legally adopting [YOUTH]?

YES 1
NO 2 (GO TO G12)

G10. Approximately how many times in the last year have you talked about or discussed adoption with a caseworker?

 |_|_|
NUMBER OF TIMES

G11. When was the last time adoption was mentioned to you by a caseworker? Was it...?

A week ago, 01
A month ago, 02
2 to 3 months ago, 03
4 to 6 months ago, or 04
7 to 12 months ago 05

G12. In the last year, has your caseworker talked to you about becoming a legal guardian under the subsidized guardianship program for [YOUTH]?

YES 1
NO 2 (GO TO BOX G2)

G13. Approximately how many times in the last year have you discussed this program with a caseworker?

 |_|_|
NUMBER OF TIMES

G14. When was the last time the subsidized guardian program was mentioned to you by a caseworker? Was it...?

A week ago, 01
A month ago, 02
2 to 3 months ago, 03
4 to 6 months ago, or 04
7 to 12 months ago 05

BOX G2

IF GROUP = B (blue label) GO TO G16

B-26

G15. Did your caseworker tell you that [YOUTH] can continue receiving transition services for teens including employment, college, and life skills, even though you become (his/her) adoptive parent or legal guardian?

YES 1
NO..... 2

G16. Did your caseworker pressure you to adopt or become [YOUTH]'s legal guardian?

YES 1
NO..... 2

G17. Have you made a decision on whether to adopt [YOUTH] or become (his/her) legal guardian?

YES, HAVE MADE A DECISION..... 1
NO, HAVE NOT DECIDED 2

B-27

G18. Which of the following things have you been considering in deciding about adopting or becoming a legal guardian?

Items for Consideration		A. Did you consider [a-r]?		B. How important was this in your decision? Was it...?			
		YES	NO	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not At All Important
a.	Services that [YOUTH] may be eligible for? ASK: I'd like to ask you about some specific services....did you consider.....	1	2	1	2	3	4
b.	Youth in College, a program for college/vocational education assistance?	1	2	1	2	3	4
c.	Youth in Employment, a program providing employment preparation and assistance?	1	2	1	2	3	4
d.	Life Skills Training, a program that teaches life skills for living independently?	1	2	1	2	3	4
e.	Housing Cash Assistance, a program that assists with finding, securing, and paying for housing and furniture?	1	2	1	2	3	4
f.	Housing Advocacy, a program that assists in finding housing and helping to prepare for living independently?	1	2	1	2	3	4
g.	Education and Training Vouchers, a program that provides education and vocational assistance for youth in adoption/subsidized guardianship?	1	2	1	2	3	4
h.	Community College Tuition Payment, a program that provides payment assistance for community college?	1	2	1	2	3	4
i.	Youth in Scholarship, a program that provides merit-based college scholarship?	1	2	1	2	3	4
j.	Northern Illinois University Education Access Project, a program that provides educational advocacy for former foster care youth?	1	2	1	2	3	4
k.	Want less involvement with the child welfare agency?	1	2	1	2	3	4
l.	Want the caseworker to stop visiting your home?	1	2	1	2	3	4
m.	Want to be free to make decisions about (him/her)?	1	2	1	2	3	4
n.	Believe the program was best for (him/her)?	1	2	1	2	3	4
o.	Want to have the legal right to care for (him/her)?	1	2	1	2	3	4

Items for Consideration		A. Did you consider [a-r]?		B. How important was this in your decision? Was it...?			
		YES	NO	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not At All Important
p.	Want to make your own decisions about how to care for (him/her)?	1	2	1	2	3	4
q.	Need the child welfare agency to help with youth's problems?	1	2	1	2	3	4
r.	Want to provide a more permanent legal arrangement for (him/her)?	1	2	1	2	3	4
s.	Want to insure that (he/she) would not be taken away?	1	2	1	2	3	4
t.	Need someone else to take care of (him/her)?	1	2	1	2	3	4
u.	Need (him/her) to live with (his/her) parents?	1	2	1	2	3	4
v.	Want to have the child welfare agency involved to protect (him/her)?	1	2	1	2	3	4
w.	Want to continue to have help from your caseworker?	1	2	1	2	3	4
x.	Need the child welfare agency to help with medical assistance?	1	2	1	2	3	4
y.	Like having a caseworker to help you?	1	2	1	2	3	4
z.	Believe that DCFS would pay you a subsidy?	1	2	1	2	3	4
aa.	Think it would be too difficult to care for (him/her)] when (he/she) got older?	1	2	1	2	3	4
bb.	Think you would lose other subsidies or benefits?	1	2	1	2	3	4
cc.	Think about other things (SPECIFY)?	1	2	1	2	3	4

IF G17 (on page 27) = 2 (HAVE NOT DECIDED), GO TO G25

G19. What was your decision about legally adopting or becoming a legal guardian? Was it...?

- To enter the subsidized guardianship program 1
- To adopt 2
- Neither become legal guardian or adopt..... 3 (GO TO BOX G3)

G20. Why did you decide to [ADOPT/BECOME GUARDIAN] for [YOUTH]?

[RECORD RESPONSE VERBATIM]

G21. Have you told your caseworker/child welfare agency about your decision?

- YES 1
- NO 2 (GO TO BOX G3)

G22. Has the process of [adoption/guardianship] been completed, started, or not started?

- Completed..... 1
- Started..... 2
- Not Started 3

BOX G3

IF G19 = 1 or 3, GO TO G23
IF G19 = 2, GO TO G24

G23. Why aren't you going to adopt [YOUTH]. As I read each reason, please tell me whether it applies.

Is it because...?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a. You don't have enough information about adoption	1	2
b. You can't afford to adopt (him/her)]	1	2
c. (He/she) is too old	1	2
d. You are too old	1	2
e. [YOUTH] does not want to be adopted	1	2
f. (He/she) has too many problems	1	2
g. (He/she) will lose needed services	1	2
h. (He/she) is already related by blood	1	2
i. (His/her) parents will soon be able to take care of (him/her)	1	2
j. You already raised your own children	1	2
k. (He/she) is too difficult	1	2
l. You don't want to adopt,	1	2
m. You prefer becoming a guardian	1	2
n. Some other reason? (SPECIFY) _____	1	2

IF a. = 1 ABOVE, GO TO G23a. BELOW, ELSE GO TO BOX G4

G23a. What other information do you need? As I read each item, please tell me whether it applies.

Do you need information about...?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a. How much money you would receive,	1	2
b. What services or help is available to you or [YOUTH]	1	2
c. What services or help you or [YOUTH] might lose	1	2
d. What papers you would have to sign,	1	2
e. What is involved in adopting (him/her), or	1	2
f. Something else? (SPECIFY) _____	1	2

BOX G4

IF G19 (on page 30) =1, GO TO G25
IF G19 (on page 30) = 3, GO TO G24

G24. Why did you decide against entering the subsidized guardianship program? As I read each reason, please tell me whether it applies.

Is it because...?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a. You don't have enough information about the subsidized guardianship program,	1	2
b. You are unsure about the future of the subsidized guardianship program	1	2
c. (He/she) has too many problems	1	2
d. (He/she) will lose needed services	1	2
e. (His/her) parents will soon be able to take care of (him/her)	1	2
f. You want to be an adoptive parent	1	2
g. (He/she) does not want to go into guardianship	1	2
h. You already raised your own children	1	2
i. (He/she) is too difficult	1	2
j. Some other reason? (SPECIFY) _____	1	2

IF a=1, GO TO G24a. BELOW, ELSE GO TO G25
--

G24a. What other information do you need? As I read each item, please tell me whether it applies.

Do you need information about...?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
a. How much money you would receive,	1	2
b. What services or help is available to you or [YOUTH]	1	2
c. What services or help you or [YOUTH] might lose	1	2
d. How much contact with the child welfare agency you would have,	1	2
e. What papers you would have to sign,	1	2
f. What is involved in being a guardian, or	1	2
g. Something else? (SPECIFY) _____	1	2

G25. Now I want to ask you about your beliefs about adoption and taking care of children. As I read each description, please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

(USE RESPONSE CARD)

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a.	Adoption is really best only for young children.	1	2	3	4
b.	Adoption by a relative stirs up too much trouble in the family.	1	2	3	4
c.	Adoption is best no matter how old the child.	1	2	3	4
d.	You are too old to adopt.	1	2	3	4
e.	Adoption takes too long.	1	2	3	4
f.	Adoption is really only for children who aren't related to you.	1	2	3	4
g.	Adoption gives children greater security even if they are related by blood.	1	2	3	4
h.	Children who must be removed from their birth parents should be placed with relatives rather than non-relatives.	1	2	3	4
i.	Families have a moral duty to take care of their own kin regardless of whether government pays for the cost of care.	1	2	3	4
j.	Placement in foster care for children should be the last resort only after efforts have been made to place children with their kin.	1	2	3	4

G26. Do you think adoption and guardianship are equally permanent?

YES 1
 NO 2

G26a. Why do you think this? [RECORD RESPONSE VERBATIM] _____

IF G22=1 ASK THE QUESTIONS BELOW. OTHERWISE, GO TO SECTION H.

G27. Has [adoption/guardianship] made your relationship with [YOUTH]...

- Better..... 1
- Worse, or 2
- About the same..... 3

G28. Since you have [adopted/obtained guardianship], do you find it is easier or harder to make plans for [YOUTH'S] future?

Would you say...?

- Easier 1
- Harder, or 2
- About the same..... 3

G29. Has the [adoption/guardianship] subsidy agreement provided you with all of the services that you need for [YOUTH]?

- YES 1 GO TO G31
- NO..... 2

G30. What additional services do you need?

G31. Have you asked for additional help from DCFS since the [adoption/guardianship] was finalized?

- YES 1
- NO..... 2 GO TO G33

G32. Overall, how helpful has DCFS been responding to your needs since the [adoption/guardianship] was finalized?

Would you say...?

- Very helpful 1
- Somewhat helpful 2
- Not at all helpful, or 3

G33. What advice would you give other foster parents considering adoption or subsidized guardianship?

H. ROLE OF BIRTH PARENTS

I have a few questions about [YOUTH]'s birth parents. These are questions about how you get along with them and about the visits they may have with (him/her).

H1. Do you know who [YOUTH]'s birth mother is?

YES 1
 NO..... 2 (GO TO H13)

H2. Is (his/her) birth mother still alive?

YES 1
 NO..... 2 (GO TO H13)
 DON'T KNOW 8 (GO TO H13)

H3. Where does [YOUTH]'s birth mother currently live?

In her own home with a spouse or partner 01
 In her own home alone or with roommates..... 02
 With other relatives or friends 03
 In jail or prison..... 04
 In a hospital or other medical facility..... 05
 Changing, because she moves a lot or is homeless 06
 Somewhere else (SPECIFY) _____ 07
 DON'T KNOW 08

H4. In the last 30 days, how often have you talked to [YOUTH]'s birth mother? Would you say...?

Every day, 1
 Several times a week, 2
 About once a week, 3
 1 to 3 times a month, 4
 Not at all? 7

H5. In the last year, how would you describe your relationship with [YOUTH]'s birth mother? Would you say...?

- Very friendly, 1
- Friendly, 2
- Unfriendly, or 3
- Very unfriendly? 4
- NO RELATIONSHIP 5

H6. Do you ever have to ask (his/her) birth mother to leave because of alcohol or drug use?

- YES 1
- NO 2

H7. Does (his/her) birth mother sometimes stay with you?

- YES 1
- NO 2

H8. In the past year, how much say has (his/her) birth mother had in making decisions about (his/her) care and upbringing? Would you say it was...?

- None, 1
- Some, or 2
- A lot? 3

H9. What is the plan of visits between [YOUTH] and (his/her) birth mother? Is it...?

- A few times a week, 1
- Once a week, 2
- A few times a month, 3
- Once a month, 4
- Less often than that, or 5
- That there is no plan? 6 (GO TO H11)

H10. Is this plan usually kept?

- YES 1
- NO 2

H11. In the last year, about how often has [YOUTH] seen (his/her) birth mother? Would you say it was...?

- Several times a week, 1
- About once a week, 2
- 1 to 3 times a month, 3
- Several times a year, 4
- About once a year, or 5
- Not at all? 6 (GO TO H13)

H12. Would you say the visits were supervised...?

- All of the time, 1
- Some of the time, or 2
- Never? 3

H13. Now I'd like to ask about [YOUTH]'s biological father. Do you know who [YOUTH]'s birth father is?

- YES 1
- NO 2 (GO H25)

H14. Is (his/her) birth father still alive?

- YES 1
- NO 2
- DON'T KNOW 8 (GO TO H25)

H15. Where does [YOUTH]'s biological father currently live? Is it...?

- In his own home with a spouse or partner, 01
- In his own home alone or with roommates, 02
- With other relatives or friends, 03
- In jail or prison, 04
- In a hospital or other medical facility, 05
- Changing, because he moves a lot or is homeless, or 06
- Somewhere else? (SPECIFY) _____ 07
- DON'T KNOW 08

H16. In the last 30 days, how often have you talked to [YOUTH]'s biological father? Would you say...?

- Every day, 1
- Several times a week, 2
- About once a week, 3
- 1 to 3 times a month, 4
- Not at all? 7

H17. In the last year, how would you describe your relationship with [YOUTH]'s biological father?
Would you say...?

Very friendly, 1
 Friendly, 2
 Unfriendly, or..... 3
 Very unfriendly? 4
 NO RELATIONSHIP 5

H18. Do you ever have to ask (his/her) biological father to leave because of alcohol or drug use?

YES 1
 NO..... 2

H19. Does (his/her) biological father sometimes stay with you?

YES 1
 NO..... 2

H20. In the past year, how much say has (his/her) biological father had in making decisions about (his/her) care and upbringing? Would you say it was...?

None, 1
 Some, or..... 2
 A lot? 3

H21. What is the plan of visits between [YOUTH] and (his/her) biological father? Would you say it was...?

A few times a week, 1
 Once a week, 2
 A few times a month, 3
 Once a month, 4
 Less often than that, or 5
 That there is no plan? 6 (GO TO H23)

H22. Is this plan usually kept?

YES 1
 NO..... 2

H23. In the last year, about how often has [YOUTH] seen (his/her) biological father? Would you say it was...?

- Several times a week, 1
- About once a week, 2
- 1 to 3 times a month, 3
- Several times a year, 4
- About once a year, or..... 5
- Not at all? 6 (GO TO H25)

H24. Would you say the visits were supervised...?

- All of the time, 1
- Some of the time, or..... 2
- Never?..... 3

H25. Now I want to ask you about any siblings [YOUTH] has. Does (he/she) have siblings who live somewhere else?

- YES 1
- NO 2(GO TO SECTION J)
- DON'T KNOW..... 8(GO TO SECTION J)

H26. In the past year, has [YOUTH] seen (his/her) siblings on a regular basis?

- YES 1(GO TO SECTION J)
- NO..... 2(GO TO SECTION J)

I. INFORMATION ON BIRTH/BIOLOGICAL PARENT

IF BIRTH MOTHER IS RESPONDENT, BEGIN WITH I1. IF BIOLOGICAL FATHER IS RESPONDENT,
GO TO I11

I1. Is [YOUTH]'s biological father still alive?

YES 1
 NO..... 2 (GO TO SECTION J)
 DON'T KNOW 9 (GO TO SECTION J)

I2. Where does he currently live? Is it...?

In his own home with a spouse or partner, 01
 In his own home alone or with roommates, 02
 With other relatives or friends, 03
 In jail or prison, 04
 In a hospital or other medical facility, 05
 Changing, because he moves a lot or is homeless, or 06
 Somewhere else? (SPECIFY) _____ 07

I3. In the last 30 days, how often have you talked to [YOUTH]'s biological father? Would you say...?

Every day, 01
 Several times a week, 02
 About once a week, 03
 1 to 3 times a month, 04
 Several times a year, 05
 About once a year, or 06
 Not at all 07

I4. In the last year, how would you describe your relationship with [YOUTH]'s biological father?
Would you say...?

Very friendly, 1
 Friendly, 2
 Unfriendly, or 3
 Very unfriendly? 4
 NO RELATIONSHIP 5

15. Does (his/her) biological father sometimes stay with you?

YES 1
NO 2

16. In the past year, how much say has [YOUTH]'s biological father had in making decisions about (his/her) care and upbringing? Would you say it was...?

None, 1
Some, or 2
A lot? 3

17. What is the plan of visits between [YOUTH] and (his/her) biological father? Would you say it was...?

A few times a week, 1
Once a week, 2
A few times a month, 3
Once a month, 4
Less often than that, or 5
That there is no plan? 6 (GO TO I9)

18. Is this plan usually kept?

YES 1
NO 2

19. In the last year, about how often has [YOUTH] seen (his/her) biological father? Would you say it was...?

Several times a week, 1
About once a week, 2
1 to 3 times a month, 3
Several times a year, 4
About once a year, or 5
Not at all? 6 (GO TO I11)

110. Would you say the visits were supervised...?

All of the time, 1
Some of the time, or 2
Never? 3

GO TO SECTION J

111. Is [YOUTH]'s birth mother still alive?

YES 1
NO 2 (GO TO SECTION J)
DON'T KNOW 8 (GO TO SECTION J)

112. Where does she currently live? Is it...?

- In her own home with a spouse or partner, 01
- In her own home alone or with roommates, 02
- With other relatives or friends, 03
- In jail or prison, 04
- In a hospital or other medical facility, 05
- Changing, because she moves a lot or is homeless, or 06
- Somewhere else? (SPECIFY) _____ ... 07

113. In the last 30 days, how often have you talked to [YOUTHs]'s birth mother? Would you say...?

- Every day, 01
- Several times a week, 02
- About once a week, 03
- 1 to 3 times a month, 04
- Several times a year, 05
- About once a year, or 06
- Not at all 07

114. In the last year, how would you describe your relationship with [YOUTH]'s birth mother? Would you say...?

- Very friendly, 1
- Somewhat friendly, 2
- Somewhat unfriendly, or 3
- Very unfriendly? 4
- NO RELATIONSHIP 5

115. Does (his/her) birth mother sometimes stay with you?

- YES 1
- NO 2

116. In the past year, how much say has [YOUTH]'s birth mother had in making decisions about (his/her) care and upbringing? Would you say it was...?

- None, 1
- Some, or 2
- A lot? 3

117. What is the plan of visits between [YOUTH] and (his/her) birth mother? Would you say it was...?

- A few times a week, 1
- Once a week, 2
- A few times a month, 3
- Once a month, 4
- Less often than that, or 5
- That there is no plan? 6 (GO TO I19)

118. Is this plan usually kept?

- YES 1
- NO 2

119. In the last year, about how often has [YOUTH] seen (his/her) birth mother? Would you say it was...?

- Several times a week, 1
- About once a week, 2
- 1 to 3 times a month, 4
- About once a year, or 5
- Not at all? 6 (GO TO SECTION J)

120. Would you say the visits were supervised...?

- All of the time, 1
- Some of the time, or 2
- Never? 3

J. CONTACT INFORMATION

Because we want to contact you again for the followup interview, I would like to get some information from you that will help us locate you in case you move.

J1. Your home phone number: - -

J2. Whose name is the phone listed under? _____

J3. Your cell phone number: - -

J4. Your email address: _____

J5. Please tell me the name, address and telephone numbers of three individuals who will always know where you are or how to reach you. We will only contact these individuals if we are unable to locate you at your current address or telephone number. Anyone we contact will be asked only if they know how to reach you. They won't be given any information, and they won't be interviewed.

Name	Address	Home telephone number	Cell or work telephone number	Relationship to you (e.g., family, friend, co-worker, etc.)
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[PROVIDE RESPONDENT WITH \$20.00 CASH INCENTIVE]

That is all. Thank you very much for helping us with our study.

TIME ENDED: _____ **AM/PM**
(CIRCLE ONE)

Appendix C

Survey Response for the Youth and Caregiver Interviews

Initial interviews were attempted with all eligible and in-scope youth and caregivers who had been assigned to the waiver through December 31, 2007, in the three study regions. Youth were considered ineligible or out of scope for the interview sample if consent had not been granted by the DCFS Guardian for the interview, the youth was determined to be too disabled for the interview by the caregiver, the youth had moved too far from the study area for an in-person interview, the youth was living in a group home or institution, the youth had been reunified with a parent, or the youth had run away and did not return before the end of the study period. The caregivers of these youth could be interviewed under a few special circumstances: namely, if the youth was disabled and the DCFS Guardian gave consent to interview the caregiver only and where the family had moved and the caregiver could be interviewed over the telephone. A total of 665 initial interviews were completed with youth, and 749 initial interviews were completed with caregivers. Initial interviews were completed with the youth, the caregiver, or both for 754 cases (370 demonstration, 384 control).

The study design called for follow-up interviews to be conducted when the youth exited care through adoption or subsidized guardianship, turned 18, or at the end of the study, whichever came first. There was considerable variability in the length of time between the initial and follow-up interviews as the follow-up interview did not occur at a set interval but depended on the youth's age and movement into permanence. The mean length of time between the initial and follow-up interview was 15.5 months (median = 13.8 months), but one-quarter of the sample had a follow-up interview after fewer than 8.5 months, and one-quarter had a follow-up interview that was 21.0 or more months after the initial interview. Follow-up interviews were scheduled only for cases where a youth or caregiver had been interviewed for the initial interview. Due in part to delays in the consent process, in many cases youth turned 18, were adopted, or went into subsidized guardianship either before the initial interview or shortly thereafter.¹ In these cases, only one interview was completed with the youth and caregiver as these youth had already met the criteria for the follow-up interview at the time of the initial interview. In other cases, a follow-up interview could not be fielded because the youth had been reunified, was institutionalized, had run away, or had moved from the study area and could not be interviewed in-person.

¹ In order to allow enough time between the initial and follow-up interview to measure change, an interval of at least 6 months had to pass before the youth could be interviewed for the follow-up interview. If the youth turned 18 before 6 months passed between the initial and follow-up interview, only one interview was conducted.

As shown in Table C.1, a total of 919 youth in the three study regions who were assigned to the waiver through December 31, 2007, were also eligible for the interview sample. After excluding youth for reasons discussed below, the final initial interview samples included 761 youth and 850 caregivers. Response rates for the initial interviews were relatively high, even when including out-of-scope cases (defined below): 72.4 percent of eligible assigned youth and 81.6 percent of eligible caregivers were interviewed. When we excluded cases where consent was denied and those that were out of scope, response rates were 87.4 percent for youth and 88.2 percent for caregivers.

Table C.1: Response Rates for Initial Interviews

Total eligible youth randomly assigned	919
Total eligible youth in scope with consent	761
Total eligible caregivers in scope with consent	850
Total youth interviews completed	665
Youth response rate for all eligible cases	72.4%
Youth response rate for all eligible and in-scope cases	87.4%
Total caregiver interviews completed	750
Caregiver response rate for all eligible cases	81.6%
Caregiver response rate for all eligible and in-scope cases	88.2%

As noted previously, before we could interview any youth we had to obtain written consent from the DCFS Guardian, and one reason that some cases were excluded was a delay or denial of consent from the Guardian. There were sometimes delays between the youth's eligibility for the interview and the time that consent was obtained from the Guardian's office, and 30 youth exited foster care through reunification before consent was obtained. These youth were excluded from the interview sample. In addition, the Guardian denied consent for 16 youth, who were then also excluded from the sample.

Another reason for exclusion was that a case was out of scope. Youth were deemed out of scope when the youth was too disabled to be interviewed (53 youth); the family had moved out of the study area and the youth could not be interviewed in-person as required (42 youth); the youth was living in a group home or institution (11 youth); and the youth had run away (7 youth). Caregivers were deemed out of scope for many of the same reasons, except that they could be interviewed by telephone. Caregivers were excluded when the youth had been reunified (30 caregivers), the DCFS Guardian denied consent (16 caregivers), the youth had been institutionalized and was not expected to return to the caregiver's home (11 caregivers), the

caregiver had moved out of state and could not be reached by telephone (7 caregivers), and the youth had run away (6 caregivers). After excluding out-of-scope cases from the samples, the final sample of eligible youth for whom consent was granted included 759 youth. The caregiver sample was larger: 848 caregivers.

From the 754 cases with an initial caregiver or youth interview, 287 (38.1%) youth were ineligible for a follow-up interview. Table C.2 shows the reasons why youth were not eligible for a follow-up interview for the demonstration and control groups. Overall, the reasons for ineligibility for a follow-up interview were similar between the two groups.

Table C.2: Reasons Why Youth Were Not Eligible for Follow-Up Interviews for All Cases with Initial Interviews

Reason	Demonstration*	Control*	Total*
Age 18 at or shortly after initial interview	55 (14.9%)	40 (10.4%)	95 (12.6%)
Adopted at or shortly after initial interview	8 (2.2%)	19 (4.9%)	27 (3.6%)
In subsidized guardianship at or shortly after initial interview	20 (5.4%)	19 (4.9%)	39 (5.2%)
Reunified before follow-up interview	21 (5.7%)	20 (5.2%)	41 (5.4%)
Youth too disabled for interview	16 (4.3%)	14 (3.6%)	30 (4.0%)
Institutionalized	10 (2.7%)	19 (4.9%)	29 (3.8%)
Moved out of study area	10 (2.7%)	7 (1.8%)	17 (2.3%)
Runaway/whereabouts unknown	0	7 (1.8%)	7 (0.9%)
Deceased	1 (0.3%)	0	1 (0.1%)
Other	0	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.1%)
Total cases with initial interview	370	384	754

*Percent is of total cases with an initial caregiver or youth interview.

A total of 467 youth were eligible to be interviewed for a follow-up interview. Interviews were completed with 433 youth (92.7%). Table C.3 shows the final disposition codes for all youth eligible for a follow-up interview. The response rate for the control group was slightly lower than the response rate for the demonstration group, though both exceeded 90 percent.

Table C.3: Final Disposition for Youth Interviews

Disposition	Demonstration	Control	Total
Complete	215 (93.9%)	218 (91.6%)	433 (92.7%)
Caregiver refusal	4 (1.7%)	11 (4.6%)	13 (2.8%)
Youth refusal	1 (.4%)	0	1 (.2%)
Not located	6 (2.6%)	7 (2.9%)	13 (2.8%)
Not home, max. contacts	3 (1.3%)	2 (.8%)	5 (1.1%)
Total eligible cases	229	238	467

Of the 754 cases that had either a caregiver or youth initial interview, 481 cases were determined to be eligible for a follow-up caregiver interview. In general, the reasons for eligibility for a follow-up caregiver interview were the same as the youth interview. That is, follow-up interviews were not completed in cases where the youth turned 18, were adopted, or went into subsidized guardianship either before the initial interview or shortly thereafter. Interviews with the caregiver, but not the youth, could be conducted in cases where the youth was disabled and where the family had moved from the study area but the caregiver could be reached by telephone. Interviews were not conducted with caregivers in cases where the youth were in Independent Living or living on their own with no caregiver. Table C.4 provides the reasons why cases were not eligible for a caregiver interview. Again, there were few notable differences between the demonstration and control groups.

Table C.4: Reasons Why Caregivers Were Not Eligible for Follow-Up Interviews for All Cases with Initial Interviews

Reason	Demonstration*	Control*	Total*
Youth turned 18 before or shortly after initial interview	55 (14.9%)	40 (10.4%)	95 (12.6%)
Youth adopted before or shortly after initial interview	8 (2.2%)	19 (4.9%)	27 (3.6%)
Youth in subsidized guardianship before or shortly after initial interview	20 (5.4%)	19 (4.9%)	39 (5.2%)
Youth reunified before follow-up interview	21 (5.7%)	20 (5.2%)	41 (5.4%)
Youth institutionalized	10 (2.7%)	19 (4.9%)	29 (3.8%)
Youth ran away/whereabouts unknown	0	7 (1.8%)	7 (0.9%)
Youth deceased	1 (0.3%)	0	1 (0.1%)
Other		1 (0.3%)	1 (0.1%)
Youth in Independent Living or living on own with no caregiver	18 (4.9%)	15 (3.9%)	33 (4.4%)

Reason	Demonstration*	Control*	Total*
Total cases with initial interview	370	384	754

*Percent is of total cases with an initial caregiver or youth interview.

Follow-up caregiver interviews were completed for 446 of the 481 (92.7%) cases eligible for a caregiver follow-up. Table C.5 shows the final disposition of all cases eligible for a follow-up caregiver interview. Response rates for the caregiver were similar for the demonstration group and control group (93.2% and 92.2%, respectively).

Table C.5: Final Disposition for Caregiver Interviews

Disposition	Demonstration	Control	Total
Complete	221 (93.2%)	225 (92.2%)	446 (92.7%)
Caregiver refusal	6 (2.5%)	9 (3.7%)	15 (3.1%)
Not located	7 (3.0%)	8 (3.3%)	15 (3.1%)
Not home, max. contacts	3 (1.3%)	2 (0.8%)	5 (1.0%)
Total eligible cases	237	244	481

The Latest Interview and Time 1/Time 2 Datasets. For cases where the initial interview occurred after permanence had been achieved (66 cases) or where the youth had turned 18 before or shortly after the initial interview (95 cases), the initial interview was the only interview conducted (note that the same instrument was used for both interviews). Given the number of cases for which only one interview was feasible, a dataset was constructed of the “latest” interview for the caregiver or youth, whether it was close to time of assignment or at the end of the data collection period. These datasets for the caregiver and youth provide the most current interview information available regarding the youth’s well-being and permanency decisionmaking.

The latest interview youth dataset contains 678 records, 245 from cases with only one interview and 433 from cases where there are two interviews, where the latest interview is included. The number of days between when the youth was eligible for the Older Wards Waiver and when the youth was interviewed for the latest interview varied from 14 days to 1,251 days, with a mean of 468 days. There were no significant differences between the demonstration and control groups. The latest interview caregiver dataset contains 748 records, 302 from cases where there was only one interview and 446 cases with both initial and follow-up interviews.

The Time 1/Time 2 dataset includes all cases with both initial and follow-up interviews. For 14 youth interviews, there was an initial interview for the caregiver, but the youth could not

be interviewed at that time. This was typically because the family lived outside of the study area at the time of the initial interview, and, while the caregiver could be interviewed over the telephone, the specifications of the youth interview required that the youth be interviewed in-person. In other cases, the caseworker or caregiver felt that the youth's disability was too great for the youth to be interviewed when the caregiver had an initial interview, or the caregiver or youth refused the initial interview but not the follow-up interview. The Time 1/Time 2 dataset for the youth interview has 433 records, and the Time 1/Time 2 dataset for the caregiver has 446 records.

Given that fact that many cases were not eligible for a follow-up interview because the youth was already in permanence or age 18 at the time of the initial interview, the latest interview dataset is more representative of the total sample than the Time 1/Time 2 dataset. The Time 1/Time 2 dataset contains information only on youth who were not in permanence at the time of the initial interview and who were not reunified and did not age out before the follow-up interview. Analyses in this report therefore typically rely on the latest interview dataset for either the youth or the caregiver. For variables of interest that look at change between the initial and follow-up interviews for the selected population who had two interviews, the Time 1/Time 2 dataset is used, and this is noted in the text.

Nonresponse Adjustment. All population numbers presented in this report are unweighted, but in general the percentages and averages are weighted to adjust for nonresponse. A set of sampling weights was created to weight the information from the responding youth up to all youth selected into the interview sample. These sampling weights adjust for nonresponse, taking into account the fact that different groups of youth have different probabilities of responding. The weight for each responding youth can be thought of as the number of similar youth represented by that youth.

Assuming all sampled children respond to the survey, the sampling weights are determined by the sample design, i.e., how the sample of youth was selected. The sum of the sampling weights is equal to the number of youth in the population from which the sampled youth were selected. When some youth do not respond to the survey, the sum of the sampling weights for the responding youth is less than the number of children in the population. Assuming that each youth has the same probability of responding is equivalent to assuming that the nonrespondents are like the respondents. Using this assumption, the adjusted sampling weights can be calculated by scaling up the sampling weights for the respondents so that the total of the adjusted weights equals the number of children in the population.

However, if the probability of responding is not the same for all youth, the weighted survey values may provide biased estimates of the corresponding population values. In this survey, the response rates were relatively high and the number of nonrespondents is small. As a result, there is relatively little information from which to assess if the response rates are different for different groups of youth. At the same time, the difficulty of contacting and interviewing out-of-state caregivers and caregivers of disabled youth suggested that response rates for those caregivers might be different from those for other youth. Thus, based on a review of the available information for adjusting for nonresponse and contact procedures, the weights for the youth data obtained from the caregivers were adjusted by whether the youth was disabled or out of state. No factors were identified that were related to nonresponse in the youth interview, and thus the weights for the youth interview had only an adjustment for overall response rate.

Appendix D
Youth School Status

Two variables in the administrative data relate to success in school. The first variable is school status: attending or having completed school versus having been expelled, suspended, or excluded, or having dropped out. As shown in Table D.1, most of the youth (75.4% overall) had completed school or were attending school. The proportion is slightly higher for the demonstration group, but the differences in this table are not statistically significant. (A cautionary note: there are nearly 23 percent of cases with information unavailable because the school data are missing, not applicable, or unknown.) Since school status is heavily influenced by youth's age, Table 2.9 also shows school status for youth less than 17 years old, age 17, or age 18 and older on September 30, 2008. For older youth, the proportion that has dropped out, been expelled, suspended, or excluded is higher than for those less than 17 years old. The differences between experimental groups are not statistically significant.

Statewide distributions are very similar to those in the study regions (Table D.2). Again, demonstration/control differences are not significant.

A second education variable available in the DCFS administrative data is the number of years of education completed by the youth, which also is heavily influenced by age. Table D.3 shows the average number of years of education for the demonstration and control groups in the study regions, along with the percentage of cases (21.7% overall) for which the information is missing. For the cases with non-missing data, the average number of years of education overall is 9.49. Differences between demonstration and control groups are not significant. The table also shows the average years of education for youth less than 17 years old, 17 years old, and 18 years or older on September 30, 2008.

Table D.4 presents the comparable statewide analysis. Again, the differences are not significant.

Table D.1: School Status of Youth in Study Regions on September 30, 2008

School Status	Demonstration Group %	Control Group %	Overall %
All Youth:			
Missing, unknown, not applicable	22.1	23.8	23.0
Dropped-out, expelled, excluded, suspended	1.8	1.6	1.7
Attending	71.2	71.7	71.5
Completed	4.8	2.9	3.9
Total	100 (N=497)	100 (N=509)	100 (N=1,006)
Youth Less Than 17 Years Old:			
Missing, unknown, not applicable	21.3	24.2	22.8
Dropped-out, expelled, excluded, suspended	0.0	0.0	0.0
Attending	78.7	75.8	77.2
Completed	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100 (N=183)	100 (N=190)	100 (N=373)
Youth 17 Years Old:			
Missing, unknown, not applicable	14.4	19.2	16.9
Dropped-out, expelled, excluded, suspended	1.1	1.0	1.1
Attending	84.4	79.8	82.0
Completed	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100 (N=90)	100 (N=99)	100 (N=189)
Youth 18 Years or Older:			
Missing, unknown, not applicable	25.9	25.5	25.79
Dropped-out, expelled, excluded, suspended	3.6	3.2	3.4
Attending	59.8	64.5	62.2
Completed	10.7	6.8	8.8
Total	100 (N=224)	100 (N=220)	100 (N=444)

Chi-square test was based on all children: $p=.46$

Table D.2: School Status of Youth Statewide on September 30, 2008

School Status	Demonstration Group %	Control Group %	Overall %
All Youth:			
Missing, unknown, not applicable	22.1	23.0	22.6
Dropped out, expelled, excluded, suspended	1.0	12	1.1
Attending	73.0	72.6	72.8
Completed	3.8	3.1	3.5
Total	100 (N=1472)	100 (N=1,468)	100 (N=2,940)
Youth Less than 17 Years Old:			
Missing, unknown, not applicable	20.4	20.1	20.3
Dropped out, expelled, excluded, suspended	0.0	0.0	0.0
Attending	79.6	79.9	79.7
Completed	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100 (N=598)	100 (N=601)	100 (N=1,199)
Youth 17 Years Old:			
Missing, unknown, not applicable	18.3	153	168
Dropped out, expelled, excluded, suspended	0.7	1.0	0.9
Attending	80.6	83.3	81.9
Completed	0.3	0.3	0.3
Total	100 (N=273)	100 (N=281)	100. (N=610)
Youth 18 Years or Older:			
Missing, unknown, not applicable	25.6	29.7	27.6
Dropped out, expelled, excluded, suspended	2.2	2.65	2.4
Attending	63.1	60.1	61.6
Completed	9.2	7.9	8.4
Total	100 (N=601)	100 (N=586)	100 (N=1,187)

Chi-square test was based on all children: $p=.65$

Table D.3: Mean Years of Education of Youth in Study Regions on September 30, 2008

Youth's Education	Demonstration Group %	Control Group %	Overall %
Average years of education:*			
All youth	9.42	9.57	9.49
Youth under 17	7.87	8.03	7.95
Youth 17 years old	9.13	9.57	9.37
Youth 18 years of older	11.07	11.02	11.04
Percent of youth with education data:**			
Available	77.1	79.6	78.3
Missing, not applicable, unknown	22.9	20.4	21.7
Total	100 (N=497)	100 (N=509)	100 (N=1006)

Kindergarten and prekindergarten coded as 0, GED coded as 12 years.

*Significance test: $p=.32$ for any differences in mean years of education between study groups.

**Chi-square test: $p=.36$ for differences in proportion of cases with education data among study groups.

Table D.4: Mean Years of Education of Youth Statewide on September 30, 2008

Youth's Education	Demonstration Group %	Control Group %	Overall %
Average years of education:*			
All youth	9.50	9.48	9.49
Youth under 17	8.05	8.12	8.08
Youth 17 years old	9.62	9.57	9.59
Youth 18 years of older	11.13	11.03	11.08
Percent of children with education data:**			
Available	79.6	79.5	79.5
Missing, not applicable, unknown	20.4	20.5	20.5
Total	100 (N=1472)	100 (N=1468)	100 (N=2940)

Kindergarten and pre-kindergarten coded as 0, GED coded as 12 years.

*Significance test: $p=.77$ for any differences in mean years of education between study groups.

**Chi-square test: $p=.97$ for differences in proportion of cases with education data among study groups.

Appendix E

Differences Between Relative and Nonrelative Families

The Illinois Older Wards Waiver study was not designed to assess the extent or impact of the differences between families where the youth and caregiver were related and families in which they were not related. However, Chapters 3, 4, and 5 in this report presented some statistically significant differences between relative and nonrelative families that bear further exploration. When the caregiver and youth were related (about a third of the families in the interview sample), youth and caregivers were more likely to choose or decide on permanence, to achieve permanence, and to achieve permanence faster. In addition, relative caregivers reported lower household incomes, lower rates of home ownership, and more financial difficulties than nonrelative caregivers. So despite their greater financial hardships, these families were significantly more likely than nonrelated families to achieve both adoption and subsidized guardianship.

Our first exploration was to see whether demographic characteristics differed between youth with relatives and those with nonrelatives. The only statistically significant difference we found was on ethnicity/race. Table E.1 shows that youth who identified as Hispanic were more likely to be with nonrelative caregivers, and youth who identified as African American were more likely to be with relatives. Differences for youth who identified as white were not statistically significant.

Table E.1: Youth Ethnicity/Race by Relative Status of Caregiver (youth interviews)

Youth Ethnicity/Race	Caregiver Is a Relative (N = 214) %	Caregiver Is a Nonrelative (N = 459) %	Overall (N = 673) %
Hispanic (<i>p</i> =.006)			
Hispanic	7.0	13.3	11.3
Not Hispanic	93.0	86.7	88.7
Total	100	100	100
African American (<i>p</i> =.008)			
African American	71.5	61.6	64.8%
Not African American	28.5	38.4%	35.2%
Total	100	100	100%
White (<i>p</i> =.195)			
White	22.9	27.2	25.9
Not white	77.1	72.8	74.1
Total	100	100	100

We next turned to differences in severity of youth needs as a factor that might influence permanence: families with youth with more severe needs might be less likely to choose permanence because adoption or guardianship would mean that they would lose eligibility for needed services and supports. We investigated several possible indicators of higher needs: disability status, multiple foster care placements, and restrictiveness of foster care placements. Table E.2 shows that youth with disabilities (as identified by caregivers in their interviews) were significantly more likely to be living with nonrelatives than were youth without disabilities.

Table E.2: Youth Disability Status by Relative Status of Caregiver (caregiver interviews)

Youth Disability Status	Caregiver Is a Relative (N=239) %	Caregiver Is a Nonrelative (N=502) %	Overall (N=741) %
Youth has disability	36.0	51.2	46.3
Youth has no disability	64.0	48.8	53.7
Total	100	100	100%

$p < .001$

Frequent moves in foster care can be associated with higher levels of problem behaviors. Although we did not collect information on extent of youth's problem behaviors, we did ask youth how many times they had moved while in foster care. As shown in Table E.3, youth currently with relative caregivers were significantly more likely to have experienced only one or two moves while in foster care (over the entire foster care history), and youth with nonrelative caregivers were significantly more likely to have experienced three or more moves.

Table E.3: Youth Moves by Relative Status of Caregiver (youth interviews)

Number of Moves While in Care	Caregiver Is a Relative (N=212) %	Caregiver Is a Nonrelative (N=461) %	Overall (N=673) %
One	27.4	8.2	14.3
Two	30.2	15.6	20.2
Three	17.9	25.2	22.9
Four or more	24.5	50.9	42.6
Total	100	100	100

$p < .001$

Restrictive foster care placements are associated with more severe needs. Placements in institutions such as residential treatment centers, hospitals, mental health facilities, detention centers, and group homes often are indicators of high mental health or behavioral needs. In order to measure this indicator, we examined the total time that youth had spent in living arrangements with different levels of restrictiveness.¹ Note that eligibility for the waiver required that a youth had been in a licensed foster or relative home for at least 1 year, so youth currently in other types of placements would not have been eligible. That requirement likely influenced the findings by increasing the overall amount of time that youth in the waiver had spent in a foster or relative home, compared to youth who were ineligible for the waiver because they had not been in a foster or relative home for at least a year. And youth who were in the more restrictive settings were likely to have more severe mental health needs. Thus, these distributions are not representative of all youth in foster care, only of all youth who met the requirements for the waiver.

Table E.4 shows, for the three study regions, the total time (aggregated for all youth) in each type of living arrangement before either permanence or September 30, 2008, for youth living with relatives compared to youth living with nonrelatives at the time of assignment to the waiver. Differences for all living arrangements except “Other” are statistically significant. This table differs from the information presented in Chapter 2 because it includes youth’s entire foster care placement history, not just placements after assignment to the waiver; thus, it does not portray impact findings, only descriptive information about the youth. The important finding in this table is the row showing percentage of time in institutions: for youth living with nonrelative caregivers, the percentage of time spent in institutions was significantly higher than for youth living with relative caregivers (although the percentages were fairly low in both cases). Figure E.1 following the table portrays the findings in a bar chart; note the difference in the yellow bars indicating institutional placements. Table E.5 and Figure E.2 present the same information for youth statewide, rather than just the study regions, and the findings are similar.

¹ For this analysis, several types of foster home (typecode = FHA, FHB, FHP, FHS, or FHI), institutional arrangements (typecode = ICF, IDC, IMH, IOP, IPA, IRS, HHF, or NCF), runaway categories (typecode = RNY, WCC, WUK, UAP, or UAH), transitional placements (typecode = YIC, CUS, ILO, or TLP), and other living arrangements (typecode = ASD, DEC, OTH, PND, UNK, JTP, CIL, ABD, YES, or MIS) were combined to create a smaller number of categories.

Table E.4: Percentage of Time in Each Living Arrangement in Study Regions Before Permanence or September 30, 2008, by Living Arrangement When Eligible for the Waiver (DCFS administrative data)

Living Arrangement	Percentage of Time in Living Arrangements for Youth Living with:*		<i>p</i> -value
	Relative (<i>N</i> = 320) %	Nonrelative (<i>N</i> = 686) %	
Foster home	19.4	79.1	<0.0001
Relative home	73.4	11.5	<0.0001
Institution	1.9	6.7	<0.0001
Transitional	3.2	1.7	0.0114
Unauthorized	1.3	0.6	0.0147
Other	0.7	0.4	0.0576
Total	100	100	

*At time of assignment to waiver.

Figure E.1: Total Time in Each Living Arrangement in Study Regions Before Permanence or September 30, 2008, by Living Arrangement When Eligible for the Waiver

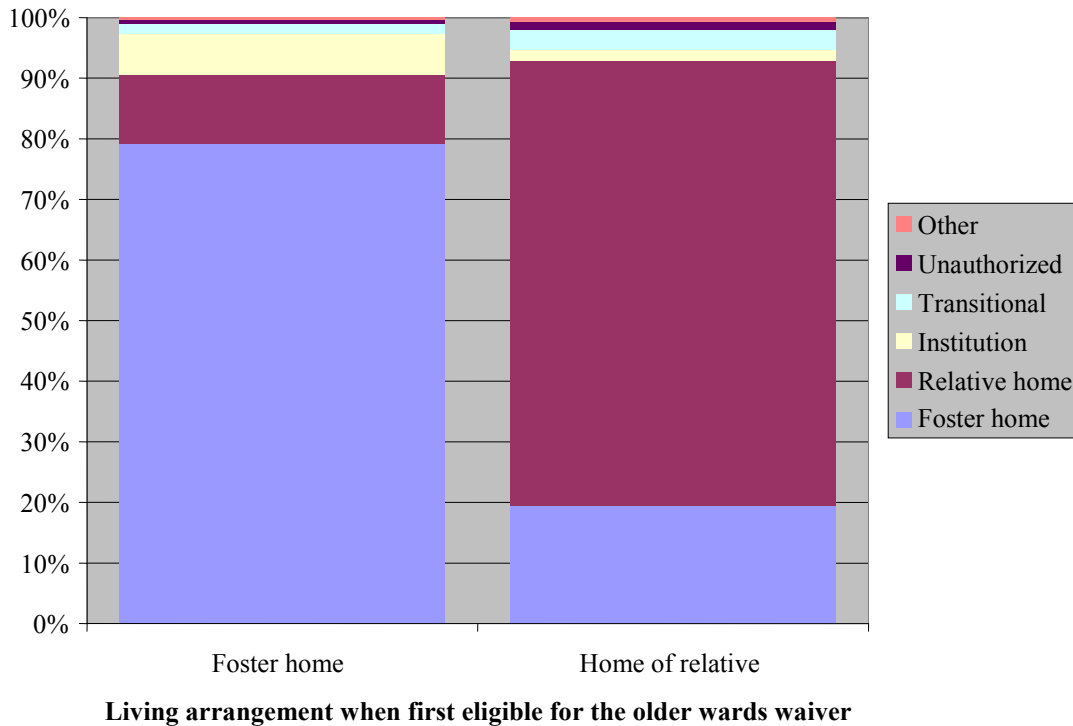
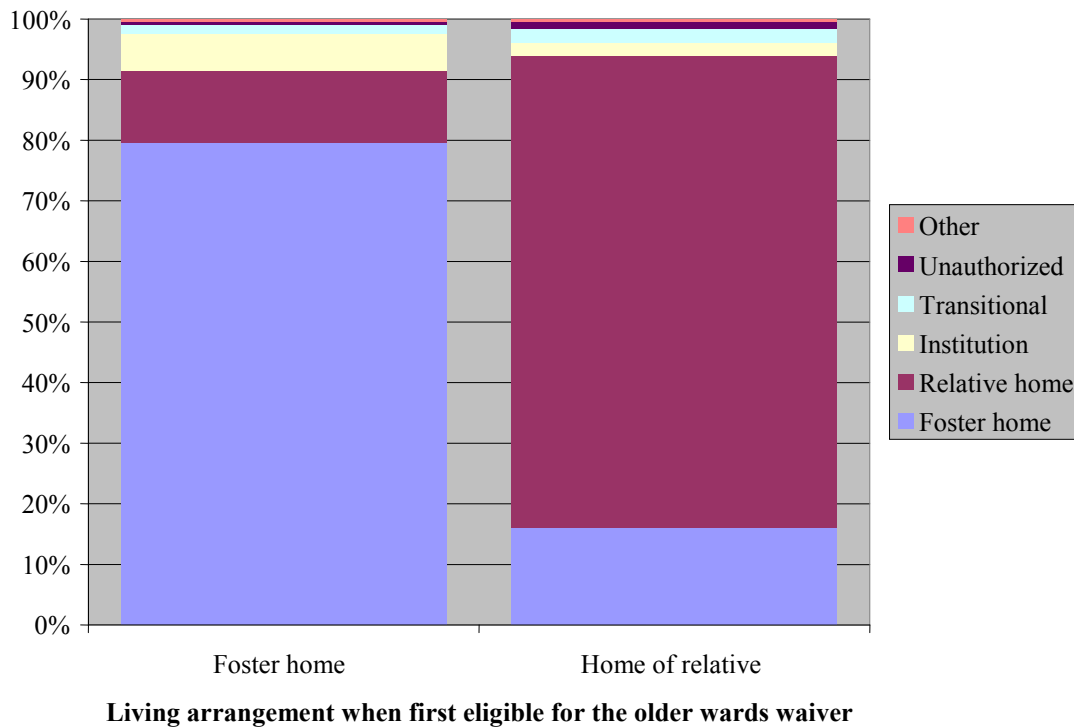


Table E.5: Percentage of Time in Each Living Arrangement Statewide Before Permanence or September 30, 2008, by Living Arrangement When Eligible for the Waiver (DCFS administrative data)

Living Arrangement	Percentage of Time in Living Arrangements for Youth Living with:*		<i>p</i> -value
	Relative (<i>N</i> = 105) %	Nonrelative (<i>N</i> = 1887) %	
Foster Home	16.1	79.5	<0.0001
Relative Home	77.8	11.9	<0.0001
Institution	2.1	6.1	<0.0001
Transitional	2.4	1.4	0.0003
Unauthorized	1.1	0.6	<0.0001
Other	0.5	0.4	0.4014
Total	100	100	

*At time of assignment to waiver.

Figure E.2: Total Time in Each Living Arrangement Statewide Before Permanence or September 30, 2008, by Living Arrangement When Eligible for the Waiver



Thus, it appears that there were underlying differences between youth living with relatives and those living with nonrelatives; in other words, these groups are not equivalent. We next investigated whether caseworkers treated the families differently regarding permanency decisionmaking. As shown in Table E.6, caseworkers were somewhat more likely to propose guardianship when the caregiver was a relative, but there were no significant differences on discussing reunification or adoption.

Table E.6: Caseworker Permanency Discussions by Relative Status of Caregiver (caregiver interviews)

In the last year, has your caseworker talked to you about...	Caregiver Is a Relative (N=239) %	Caregiver Is a Nonrelative (N=502) %	Overall (N=741) %
Youth going home to live with his/her parents? ($p=.992$)			
Yes	28.5	28.5	28.5
No	71.5	71.5	71.5
Total	100	100	100
Legally adopting youth? ($p=.994$)			
Yes	49.4	49.4	49.4
No	50.6	50.6	50.6
Total	100	100	100
Becoming a legal guardian under the subsidized guardianship program? ($p=.041$)			
Yes	63.2	55.6	58.0
No	36.8	44.4	42.0
Total	100	100	100

As shown in Table E.7, there were no statistically significant differences between relatives and nonrelatives in the proportion of caregivers in the demonstration group who were aware of the availability of transition services if they achieved adoption or subsidized guardianship.

Table E.7: Awareness of Enhanced Services Among Caregivers in the Demonstration Group by Relative Status of Caregiver (caregiver interview)

Did your caseworker tell you that youth can continue receiving transition services even though you become his/her adoptive parent or legal guardian?	Caregiver Is a Relative (N=117) %	Caregiver Is a Nonrelative (N=213) %	Overall (N=330) %
Yes	68.4	74.6	72.4
No	31.6	25.4	27.6
Total	100	100	100

p=.180

The findings reported in this appendix support a conclusion that youth placed with relatives had somewhat less severe needs than the youth with nonrelatives. In addition, caseworkers were more likely to discuss guardianship with relative caregivers than with nonrelatives. These provide tantalizing but inconclusive evidence about the complexity of selecting appropriate placement settings. Whenever available and appropriate, relatives are the first choice for a child in need of foster care. And under the *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008*, only relative caregivers are eligible for subsidized guardianship, making it even more important to understand the difference in permanency decisionmaking between relative and nonrelative foster families. This is an issue that warrants further research.