SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

The Georgia Division of Family and Children Services would like to thank you for participating in this important survey. The following survey is an attempt to gain a better understand how foster parents and kinship caregivers feel and think about the juvenile court dependency process. The focus of the survey is on how foster parents and kinship caregivers participate in the dependency process, specifically court hearings.

The survey is composed of multiple questions and is divided into four sections: Introductory Information, Notice, Opportunity to be Heard, and Intervention and Party Status. When answering the following questions, provide as much information you deem necessary. Please answer as honestly and freely as possible, your anonymity is ensured.

**Please email the completed survey to James Farnan at** [**jefarna@emory.edu**](mailto:jefarna@emory.edu) **by July 23, 2020.**

Your insight will help DFCS improve Georgia’s child welfare system and your participation is greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,

James Farnan

Division of Family and Child Services Intern, General Counsel’s Office

Emory Summer Child Advocacy Program Participant

**Survey Regarding Participation of Kinship Caregivers and Foster Parents in**

**Juvenile Court Dependency Proceedings**

1. **Introductory Information**
2. What county do you live in?
3. How long have you been a kinship (relative) caregiver or foster parent?
4. Are you a kinship caregiver, foster parent, or a pre-adoptive foster parent? Please specify which.

- Kinship Caregiver

- Foster Parent  
- Pre-adoptive Foster Parent

1. How many children have you fostered or had placed with you as a kinship caregiver?
2. Why did you become a foster parent or kinship caregiver?
3. Do you participate in your child’s dependency proceedings?

* Yes
* No

1. If yes, please describe how you feel about the process overall? Do you feel your contributions are heard, valued, and/or considered?
2. **Notice**
3. You are entitled to notice to dependency proceedings under federal and state law. Have you received notice of dependency hearings for the child or children placed with you?

* Yes
* No

1. If yes, how did you receive notice? Indicate all that applies.

* By Mail
* Telephonically
* Orally
* Electronically
* Other

1. How many days in advance of the hearing did you receive notice?
2. What information was included in the notice you received for the hearing?
3. Who provided you notice of the proceedings? Check all that apply.

* The Juvenile Court
* DFCS
* The Parent Attorney
* The Child Attorney
* CASA
* Guardian Ad Litem

1. Do you feel the notice you received was adequate? Please indicate which applies.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

No Opinion

Agree

Strongly Agree

1. If you believe the notice was inadequate, please describe why you believe it was inadequate?
2. What is your preferred method of receiving notice regarding upcoming hearings?

* Postal Service
* Telephone
* Electronically
* Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Opportunity to be Heard and Participation**
2. Under federal and state law, you are allowed to attend all dependency hearings and have an opportunity to be heard during those hearings. Have you utilized your opportunity to be heard?

* Yes
* No

1. Was your presence at the hearing acknowledged by the court?

* Yes
* No

1. If yes, please check all of the applicable ways you were acknowledged by the court.

* Appearance documented by the court
* Participation in the case acknowledged in the court order
* Directly acknowledged by Juvenile Court Judge
* Directly acknowledged by DFCS or the SAAG
* Directly acknowledged by Parents Attorney
* Directly acknowledged by Child’s Attorney
* Directly acknowledged by CASA
* Directly acknowledged by Guardian Ad Litem

1. What did your “opportunity to be heard” look like? Indicate which applies.

* Testify in court
* Submit a written report
* Have the DFCS attorney relay your information to the court
* Other: (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you believe the court considered the information you provided? Please indicate which applies.

No Consideration

Some Consideration

Partial Consideration

Strong Consideration

1. Do you feel that your information and insight plays a role in the direction of the child’s case? Please indicate which applies.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

No Opinion

Agree

Strongly Agree

1. How often is your information and insight requested both inside and outside the courtroom? Please indicate which applies.

Never

Rarely

Occasionally

Often

Very Often

1. Do you feel like your information and insight are fairly and accurately represented in the courtroom? Please explain fully.
2. What would you prefer your “opportunity to be heard” look like? What do you believe would be the most effective ways to provide your information and insight to the court? Please check all that apply.

* In court testimony under oath
* Oral reports directly presented by you to the court
* Written reports directly presented by you to the court at the hearing
* Oral report presented to the court via a DFCS attorney
* Written report presented to the court via a DFCS attorney
* Written report submitted to the court prior to the hearing
* All offered opinions entered into the record and orders as applicable

1. Would you prefer more informal (non-courtroom) opportunities to provide your information and insight?

* Yes
* No

1. If yes, what would this involvement look like in your eyes? E.g. Periodic team meetings between you and other relevant and involved individuals in the child’s life, more interactions with case managers and division attorneys, more constructive chances to interact and collaborate with birth parents, etc.
2. **Intervention and Party Status**
3. In Georgia, foster parents, pre-adoptive foster parents, and kinship caregivers are not considered parties within juvenile court dependency proceedings but are interested nonparties. Have you ever desired to be elevated to a party within a dependency proceeding? (A party is defined as a legally required participant in the dependency proceeding such as the mother, father, child, GAL, or the State of Georgia.)

* Yes
* No

1. If you have wished to intervene and become a party in the dependency proceeding, why?
2. Do you believe the dependency proceeding would be better served if you were a party in the dependency action?

* Yes
* No

1. Do you believe foster parents or kinship caregivers should have a right to be a party? Or should the juvenile court have the discretion on a case-by-case basis to make that determination?

* Foster Parents or kinship caregivers should have a right to intervene
* Foster Parent or kinship caregiver intervention should be decided   
  on a case-by-case basis
* Neither

1. Do you believe your involvement would be better represented if you were a legal party to the proceeding?

* Yes
* No

1. Should the child’s opinion about an individual’s intervention and participation be considered? Should it factor into whether a court allows an interested non-party to become a party to the proceedings? Is the child’s attachment to the potential intervening party relevant?
2. Should the court consider the child’s best interests as the deciding factor for whether an individual can intervene? Should it be the deciding factor in dependency proceedings?
3. Is there any additional information not previously covered that you would like to provide regarding your involvement in the juvenile court dependency process and how we could improve this element of Georgia’s child welfare system?

**Thank you for completing this survey!   
Please remember to submit all survey results to James Farnan at** [**jefarna@emory.edu**](mailto:jefarna@emory.edu) **by July 23, 2020.**