

**Evaluation of the *QIC-ChildRep* Best Practices Model Training for Attorneys Representing Children in the Child Welfare System**

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Andrew Zinn**

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**Child  
Welfare  
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## *QIC-ChildRep* Training and Coaching Intervention Designers and Providers

See Appendix B for detailed biographies

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State Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care

Coaching: Robert Wyman

Training and Pod Meetings: Timothy Jaasko-Fischer

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# Abstract

From 2010 to 2015, as part of its role as the U.S. Children’s Bureau National Quality Improvement Center on the Representation of Children in the Child Welfare System, the University of Michigan Law School designed and implemented the *QIC-ChildRep* intervention in partnership with Georgia and Washington State. The *QIC-ChildRep* intervention, an in-depth and ongoing professional development initiative, was intended to raise the level of practice among attorneys representing children in child welfare dependency cases and to evaluate how those changes affected attorney behavior and child welfare outcomes. The *QIC-ChildRep* intervention was piloted in selected counties in Georgia and throughout Washington State.

Using a randomized control design, the evaluation addressed the question of whether treatment group attorneys representing at-risk children, after being exposed to a certain set of skills embodied in the *QIC-ChildRep* Best Practice Model over a two and a half year period, would help their child clients have more stable placements and reach permanency faster than child clients represented by control group attorneys who practiced without the intervention in the same jurisdictions over the same period. The findings show that treatment attorney behaviors changed to be more in alignment with a nationally recognized best practice model. And for one subgroup of children – older children – client-directed attorneys who were trained to practice in this model achieved, on average, more permanency within six months for their child clients. The study also revealed that there was an appetite among largely independent and isolated attorneys for learning from experts and from each other.

The report also provides detailed information about the children and attorneys studied in the evaluation, including the experience, previous training, compensation, and advocacy context of attorneys, what circumstances governed appointment of attorneys, the type of representation received, the timing of representation and the distribution of age and placement status of children at the time of appointment.

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# Executive Summary

As part of its role as the U.S. Children’s Bureau National Quality Improvement Center on the Representation of Children in the Child Welfare System, the University of Michigan Law School (hereafter UM QIC) designed and implemented an intervention (the *QIC-ChildRep* intervention) intended to raise the level of practice among attorneys representing children in child welfare dependency cases and to evaluate how those changes affected attorney behavior and child welfare outcomes. The *QIC-ChildRep* intervention, an in-depth and ongoing professional development initiative, was piloted in selected counties in Georgia and throughout Washington State. The intervention was based on the hypothesis that the existing practice of child representation in local courts could be improved, and that better trained and more effective attorneys would achieve better child welfare outcomes, than those children represented by attorneys who had not received the intervention. The UM QIC selected Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago to serve as the evaluator for the intervention, and this is the final evaluation report. The intervention and evaluation took place from January 2012 through March 2015.

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## ***QIC-ChildRep* Intervention**

University of Michigan Law School professor Donald N. Duquette developed the *QIC-ChildRep* Best Practice Model of Child Representation based upon a year-long national assessment of child representation in the U.S. conducted in 2009–10. Duquette subsequently identified six core skills that were both necessary for lawyers to fully implement the Best Practice Model and that could be imparted within the constraints of a two-day training session. The basic six core skills of the intervention were:

- (1) enter the child’s world
- (2) assess child safety
- (3) actively evaluate needs
- (4) advance case planning
- (5) develop case theory
- (6) advocate effectively

The *QIC-ChildRep* intervention was developed to teach and reinforce this Best Practice Model. Attorneys in the treatment group attended an initial two-day training on these six core skills. In each quarter following the initial two-day training, treatment attorneys were provided supplemental training in the form of group meetings (“pod meetings”) with a lead attorney trainer and individual discussions

(“coaching”) with a resource/coach attorney. These two elements of support were intended to maximize the attorneys’ retention of the six core skills and to maximize fidelity to the intervention model. The supplemental pod meetings and coaching sessions continued for approximately two and a half years.

Georgia and Washington State agreed to become demonstration partners for the project. In Georgia, the project was operated by the Georgia Supreme Court Committee on Justice for Children Court Improvement Program (J4C), with 13 participating judicial districts representing 26 percent of Georgia’s child general population. In Washington State, the project was operated by the Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ) and the Washington Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA), on behalf of the Washington State Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care, with 21 participating judicial districts representing 89 percent of Washington’s general child population.

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## **Evaluation Design**

In order to inform future efforts of a similar approach and scope, the evaluation was designed to measure the average effect of the intervention over multiple jurisdictions. The results showed the average impact of the intervention that was offered to a panel of practicing attorneys with a variety of skills and experience in a variety of local contexts. It was designed to have both internal validity (relevant for the group studied) and external validity (relevant to other jurisdictions, to the extent possible given variations in law and practice). Power estimates indicated that the evaluation had enough power to detect moderate effects on attorney and child outcomes.

To achieve a representative group of attorneys reflecting the typical range of ability, experience, and motivation of attorneys practicing as child representatives, all attorneys practicing child representation in the participating judicial districts were contacted for participation. Project partners chose the method of recruitment that they believed would maximize participation within each jurisdiction. In Georgia, attorneys were not asked directly to participate. The judges of the relevant districts agreed that attorneys practicing in their courtrooms would be enrolled, and attorneys were informed of the judge’s agreement about the project, and whether they had been assigned to the treatment or control group. In Washington, state partners asked each individual attorney who was known to be practicing in the state as a child representative to participate voluntarily. Most attorneys agreed and a signed agreement was obtained from each of them. They were notified of their treatment or control status before the intervention began.

A total of 146 attorneys in Georgia and 118 attorneys in Washington State participated and were randomly assigned to serve as either a treatment or control attorney. Over the course of the study, Georgia attorneys represented a total of 2,318 children and Washington attorneys represented a total of 1,956 children, for a total of 4,274 children in the two states.

Attorneys were randomly assigned to treatment or control groups within each jurisdiction. Random assignment within jurisdiction controlled for contextual jurisdiction-level factors such as judicial culture, supervision, mentoring, caseloads, and payment. Children were not randomly assigned to attorneys. Instead, local court staff responsible for appointing attorneys to represent individual children were asked

to continue their usual practice of appointing attorneys to children according to a standard rotation and were provided with a rotation list that alternated treatment and control attorneys.

The data for the evaluation were drawn from databases maintained by state agencies, Chapin Hall's Multistate Foster Care Data Archive, and the web-based attorney surveys administered by Chapin Hall. Attorneys from both treatment and control groups participated in all data collection. The web-based attorney surveys were designed to capture the way attorneys represented individual children. These child-specific surveys contained questions designed to measure the effect of the intervention on attorney behavior. Survey notices were emailed to attorneys within a month of their appointment as legal counsels and continued at approximately six-month intervals thereafter (In Washington State, the survey notices were also sent to attorneys when they had a disposition or termination of parent right proceeding), as long as the child remained in out-of-home placement or the assignment was not closed. Attorneys were asked to answer questions about the frequency of contact with their child clients, frequency of contact between attorneys and various parties to a case (e.g., child clients, children's family members), amount of time attorneys devoted to various case-related activities (e.g., legal case preparation, service advocacy), quality of attorney's relationships with child clients, and the attributes of children's dispositional hearings and order.

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## **Attorneys and Children Studied**

Attorneys in both states had many similar characteristics. Child representation practice constituted less than 20 percent of legal work and income for most attorneys. Attorneys were practicing in a number of different fields of law, including divorce and paternity, private adoption, truancy, and juvenile justice. In the six months prior to the study, attorneys had represented an average of between six and ten children; however, one-third of the attorneys had represented five or fewer child welfare cases. They were almost all white and had no graduate degrees other than a law degree. Attorneys were normally distributed by age, and the lawyers in both states were experienced, with an average of 13.5 years of practice. Just over half had experience as a biological, foster, or adoptive parent and about a third reported they had worked with children in some other capacity. Almost two-thirds of the attorneys found their job as child representatives rewarding, and most thought they had a significant impact on child outcomes. Most thought compensation was somewhat or very inadequate. Two-thirds of the attorneys did not have psychologists or psychiatrists with whom they could consult.

Throughout most of the study, neither state's law provided that every child should have an attorney appointed in a maltreatment case. When appointed, Georgia attorneys represented children over a range of ages. Georgia attorneys were mostly appointed early in an out-of-home care placement and provided a mix of best-interest and client-directed representation to these clients. In Washington State, client-directed attorneys were usually appointed to serve two distinct groups of children: children who were younger when they were placed and who had been in foster care for more than six months, and teenagers who were entering care. As a result, children represented in Washington State tended to be older than children represented in Georgia. Washington State attorneys almost always represented children already placed,

whereas in Georgia, almost one-third of appointments were made while a child was not in placement. A greater proportion of appointments in Washington State (43%) were made after a child had been in placement for more than six months. In Georgia, 21% of appointments were made after a child had been in care for more than six months.

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## **Summary of Findings**

### **Implementation**

Almost all Georgia and Washington State attorneys attended the initial two-day training. Only 7 out of the 131 attorneys assigned to the treatment group missed the initial training.

Attorney participation in pod meetings and coaching sessions following the two-day training differed in the two states. In Georgia, fewer sessions were offered and participation rates ranged from 10 percent to 60 percent of treatment attorneys; on average around 45 percent of treatment attorneys attended each offered session. In Washington State, participation was consistent and usually ranged from between 70 and 80 percent of treatment attorneys for the majority of offered sessions. The median number of pod meetings attended by Georgia attorneys was three (out of seven offered) and the median number of coaching sessions among Georgia attorneys was also three (out of eight offered). In Washington State, treatment attorneys attended a median of seven pod meetings (out of ten offered) and participated in a median of nine coaching sessions (out of ten offered).

Pod meetings and coaching sessions were implemented with greater fidelity to the intervention plan in Washington State than in Georgia. Five out of seven Georgia pod meetings were conducted as online meetings, whereas all Washington State pod meetings were done in person. Coaching sessions in Washington State followed a consistent format, whereas Georgia coaching sessions did not.

### **Attorney Behaviors**

Over the course of the multi-year intervention, forty-nine distinct attorney opinions and behaviors were analyzed based on data from the child-specific surveys. Questions covered four domains: frequency of contact with individuals related to the case, time spent on selected activities, frequency of occurrence of certain events, and relationship and advocacy activities.

The surveys showed that Georgia treatment attorneys met with their child client more frequently, contacted more parties relevant to the case, spent more time on cases, and engaged in more advocacy activities than control attorneys. Fewer differences on survey responses were found between Washington treatment and control attorneys, but several responses did reveal differences. Washington treatment attorneys contacted foster parents and substitute caregivers more, spent more time developing the theory of the case, and made more efforts to initiate a non-adversarial case resolution process. Family team meetings and motion hearings were also more likely to occur for cases represented by treatment attorneys, compared to control attorneys in Washington State.

## Child Outcomes

The evaluation addressed the question of whether children assigned to attorneys who received the intervention experienced differences in permanency outcomes, rates of kinship placement, and rates of movement within one year of assignment compared to children assigned to control attorneys.

The child outcome sample included all children assigned either a treatment or control attorney and who entered out of home care in early to mid 2012 through November 30, 2014. Every child in the out-of-home care sample was represented by an attorney at some point, though timing of onset of representation varied.

- There was no average difference in the likelihood of permanency among children represented by treatment attorneys compared to control attorneys, including all assignment and exit timings, in either state.
- When a distinction was added to the analysis model to analyze the likelihood of permanency within six months (and, by definition, having been represented by either a treatment or control attorney at some point during those six months), the findings were different by state. Children assigned to treatment attorneys in Washington State were 40 percent more likely than children represented by control attorneys to experience permanency within six months. The Georgia sample did not show average differences in permanency between treatment and control attorneys.
- For the remainder of the sample, children assigned attorneys after at least six months in care, there was no average difference in the likelihood of permanency in either state.
- Children represented by treatment and control attorneys did not have different experiences of placement moves or placement with kin, in either state.

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## Limitations

The evaluation of attorney behavior change was based on attorney self-reports, and limited to aspects of behavior that could be quantified based on survey questions.

With respect to child welfare outcomes, there are several limitations. First, the evaluation only examined those outcomes that were available through existing administrative data, which were limited to permanency and other substitute care outcomes. Second, the observation period was limited to a maximum of 3 years. Permanency outcomes had not been observed for approximately half of the children in the sample when the evaluation ended. The impact of the intervention on the outcomes for children who have been in care for longer periods has not been measured.

Finally, the evaluation was designed to detect moderate average effects on attorney and child outcomes. Detecting small average impacts would have required a greater number of attorneys and cases. For the outcomes where no statistically significant results were found, there may have been small average impacts that the evaluation did not have enough power to detect.

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## Knowledge for the Field

The *QIC-ChildRep* intervention and evaluation has made several contributions to knowledge for the decision-makers and stakeholders in jurisdictions where children are already being represented by attorneys. Some of these contributions are based on the experience in the Washington State site, some based on the Georgia site, and some based on the comparative experience in the two sites.

- Attorneys trained in the *QIC-ChildRep* model, providing client-directed representation, and appointed early in the case, may achieve faster permanency for older children than attorneys who have not been trained in the model. These attorneys may be better able to influence situations where the course of action is clearer (child should go home), and where the voice of the child may have a stronger impact (child wants to go home). (Washington site)
- Attorney behaviors that are associated with better representation for older children who are provided counsel early may be increased contacts with foster parents or substitute caregivers, increased time developing the theory of the case, and more efforts to initiate a non-adversarial case resolution process. Attorneys practicing according to the *QIC-ChildRep* model for these cases may not need to spend significantly more time on cases. Rather, the model may cause attorneys to work differently, but not necessarily more. (Washington site)
- Opportunities for better-trained attorneys to change the course of a case after a child has been in care for more than six months may not occur often enough to generate a detectable system-level difference in permanency for these types of cases. However, with significant numbers of these children still in care as of the end of this study, this finding could be revisited in both states. (Both sites)
- Fidelity to the model of pods and coaching may be important, as well as matching the right people to the roles. In Washington, both the coach and the lead trainer were experienced in child representation and adult learning styles, and the coach was also a social worker. The coaching and pod meetings they held had high fidelity to the intervention design and consistent, voluntary participation by attorneys. Coaching session notes reflected a disciplined but flexible approach that was tailored to each attorney's level of practice and engagement with the six core skills. In the pod meetings, there was an emphasis on professional growth, development and support of the treatment attorneys by setting targets and goals for each participant, and helping them build a "reflective practice" by taking the time to improve their skills for the long term. These activities were built around the six core skills of the *QIC-ChildRep* model, and these six topical areas were consistently used to frame conversations with treatment attorneys. Such a framework may be important to engage attorneys, at least initially. (Washington site)
- The *QIC-ChildRep* model may be more difficult to engage with for both intervention staff and attorneys where there is uncertainty about the child representative's role (best-interest, client-directed or dual role). One interpretation of lower engagement in post-training offerings in Georgia is that the core emphasis of the *QIC-ChildRep* model, focusing on the voice of the child,

may not be as natural when the attorney is primarily charged with making his or her own recommendation about the case. (Georgia site)

- Forming a “community of practice” may be difficult to implement without initial attorney buy-in. The most common hypothesis voiced by Georgia project partners for lower engagement after the initial two-day training was that attorney buy-in was negatively affected by the initial presentation of the project as a requirement. The lack of opportunity to consent to participate was considered a significant barrier to maintaining attorney participation after the 2-day training. In Washington, where attorneys consented to participate in the treatment with the understanding they could drop out at any time, engagement of attorneys over the evaluation period was more successful. (Both sites)
- There is an appetite among largely independent and isolated attorneys for learning from experts and from each other about child representation. A nonintensive program— a total of 6-8 hours a year – may change what attorneys do for their child clients. (Both sites)
- Those who would replicate the intervention should also pay attention to the fact that *QIC-ChildRep* intervention was built around six core skills, and these six topical areas were used to frame the initial training and ongoing contacts with attorneys over multiple years. Data collected about each pod meeting and coaching session, as well as the review of pod meeting agendas and sample coaching notes show that these skills were consistently used to frame conversations with treatment attorneys, though more so in Washington than in Georgia. Such a framework may be important to engage attorneys, at least initially.

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## Implications for Policy

Many states require that at-risk children whose families are brought before courts in child abuse and neglect proceedings be represented by attorneys. Outside of larger cities, most of this work is being done by solo practitioners or in small firms, or in small non-profit legal aid organizations, as one part of a varied law practice. Whether or not these attorneys add value to the decisions that are made, hear the child’s voice and accurately represent it can have a real impact – for better or for worse. In confronting this challenge, states and local courts have choices to make about what training and continuing legal education to require, and what voluntary opportunities to provide for attorneys to improve their practice.

The *QIC-ChildRep* intervention offers a low-cost model for ongoing training and support, and the evaluation suggests that an appetite among attorneys doing this work exists for participating in a community of practice led by legal and social work professionals that goes beyond the traditional CLE model. The evaluation indicates that at least in these two pilots, attorneys’ behavior was changed by the intervention. And it suggests that better-trained attorneys will be more able to address inefficiencies in the decision-making process early in older children’s placement experiences.

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# Introduction

Children’s due process rights in court proceedings that concern them or their care have been the subject of numerous federal laws, state laws and court decisions. In the landmark 1967 case, *In re Gault*, the Supreme Court ruled that children involved in delinquency proceedings had the same due process rights and liberty interests as adults, and as such, were entitled to an attorney who will represent their interests (Duquette & Haralambie, 2010). The federal due process rights of children in dependency cases were, and remain, less clear. Federal law currently requires that a “representative” be appointed to children involved in child welfare proceedings, but this representative need not be an attorney.<sup>1</sup> The federal requirement also defines this representative as a *guardian at litem* (GAL) whose role is to make a recommendation to the court as to the child’s best interest. States and regions within states vary in who the representative must be, how the representative is trained, when the representative is appointed, and whether the representative is an attorney. If the representative is an attorney, there are further differences whether that attorney’s role is as a substitute judgment/best interests GAL or a client-directed attorney.<sup>2</sup>

Against this backdrop, advocacy for all children in child welfare proceedings to be represented by a well-trained attorney has grown. This advocacy is both rights-based (children are entitled to the same legal representation as an adult) and based on the belief that better representation for children will improve child welfare outcomes. As many states implement requirements for attorney representation for children in child welfare proceedings and what those attorneys must do, questions have arisen in the field about what constitutes effective representation, how to best train attorneys in this complex field, and what the impacts of improving child representation may have on outcomes for children.

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<sup>1</sup> 42 U.S.C. §5106a(b)(2)(A)(xiii)

<sup>2</sup> Client-directed attorneys are charged with representing a child in the same way the attorney would represent an adult client, where the attorney is charged to learn and to represent the child’s expressed interest. Other terms for client-directed attorneys are attorney *at litem*, child’s counsel, counsel for the child, child’s attorney, or attorney for the child.

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## *QIC-ChildRep*

In 2009, the U.S. Children’s Bureau created the National Quality Improvement Center on the Representation of Children in the Child Welfare System (*QIC-ChildRep*) at the University of Michigan Law School. This center was one of five National Quality Improvement Centers funded by the Children’s Bureau at that time. Other centers that received funding were focused on non resident fathers in child welfare cases, privatization, differential response, and child development and maltreatment prevention.

As described by the Children’s Bureau, *QIC-ChildRep*’s purpose is “to gather, develop, and communicate knowledge on child representation that presents the strengths and weaknesses of methods of representing children, promotes consensus on the role of the child’s legal representative, and provides an analysis of how legal representation for the child might best be delivered.”

In its first phase (2010), *QIC-ChildRep* (hereafter, UM QIC) conducted a nationwide assessment of the state of child representation. The results of this work are available on the UM QIC website, [improvechildrep.org](http://improvechildrep.org), and in (Duquette, 2012). Information on research, policy, and practice was integrated from many sources, including state laws, journal articles, government- and foundation-issued reports, annual reports submitted by states, and in-person and phone discussions with a wide range of policy makers and practitioners. The culmination of this work was the *QIC-ChildRep* Best Practice Model of Child Presentation, a set of standards and expectations based on the 1996 American Bar Association *Standards of Practice for Lawyers Who Represent Children in Abuse and Neglect Cases* and informed by the current thinking about how best to represent children in the child welfare system (Quality Improvement Center on the Representation of Children in the Child Welfare System, 2010). The first part of the standards sets out the duties of the child representative in and out of court over the course of a child welfare case. The second part of the standards focuses on the organizational supports for lawyers representing children, such as process of assignment, training, compensation, and caseloads.

In its second phase, the UM QIC was charged with advancing empirical knowledge about child representation—how it is best delivered and its impacts—through one or more demonstration projects. With the *QIC-ChildRep* Best Practice Model in hand, the UM QIC asked what would be the best contribution to a field that had been the subject of very little empirical research. Many directions were possible. For example, one option was to fund a series of descriptive case studies of child representatives practicing in staff attorney offices, assessing the extent to which staff attorneys practiced according to the *QIC-ChildRep* Best Practice Model and describing the outcomes of children served by those attorneys. However, without a valid comparison group, such a study would have contributed little to understanding

the *impact* of representation according to the *QIC-ChildRep* Best Practice Model. Furthermore, most attorneys representing children across the country are not part of staff attorney offices and practice either as independent contractors (panel attorneys) or in small firms.

At the end of 2010, the UM QIC, in consultation with the Children’s Bureau and Chapin Hall, decided to focus the demonstration projects on testing the hypothesis of whether attorneys practicing according to Part 1 of *QIC-ChildRep* Best Practice Model would improve safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children involved with the child welfare system, relative to attorneys whose practice may not accord with the model. The goal was to implement an intervention that, if successful, could be replicated in other jurisdictions around the country.

The second part of the *QIC-ChildRep* Best Practice Model describes the organizational and administrative supports that a child representative should have, particularly around training, compensation, and caseload. These administrative factors could not be manipulated experimentally, so the experiment was limited to the impact of attorney-driven change in the absence of changes in these other external factors.

The UM QIC released an RFP in January 2011 to solicit partners in implementing a project. Two states agreed to become demonstration sites for the project: The Georgia Supreme Court Committee on Justice for Children Court Improvement Program (J4C), with 13 participating judicial districts representing 26 percent of Georgia’s child population, and the Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ) and Washington Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA), on behalf of the Washington State Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care with 21 participating judicial districts representing 89 percent of Washington State’s child population. What followed was a five-year research and demonstration project involving the legal-judicial communities in two states, 264 attorneys and 4,274 children.

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## **Hypotheses and Research Questions**

The *QIC-ChildRep* intervention was based on the hypothesis that one of the barriers to permanency and stability for at-risk children was the lack of a trained and effective legal representative who was able to “enter the child’s world” to learn the child’s needs and wishes and effectively advocate for the child in and out of court (Taylor, 2009). Figures 1 and 2 show the logic model for the intervention. As with practice models for other professionals such as teachers and doctors, the *QIC-ChildRep* Best Practice Model would only have value through the attorneys practicing it. Measuring if and how the intervention influenced attorney behavior was the threshold question. The intervention was intended to increase attorney knowledge about child development and trauma, increase understanding of the importance of child representative-specific tasks, such as listening to and counseling the child, and increase motivation to perform the role of child representative as laid out by *QIC-ChildRep* Best Practice Model. These

changes were expected to lead to better relationships with child clients, more engagement in and out-of-court activities, and more vigorous advocacy.

If these behaviors were more prevalent among treatment attorneys, better proximate and distal child welfare outcomes were expected to result. For proximate outcomes, children and families would receive services that better reflect their needs and wishes, court decisions would be more likely to reflect child's interests, and the child would be empowered, with an increased sense of autonomy and self-determination. Distal outcomes reflected hypotheses about the tendency of child welfare systems to place too many children in care and to place too few children who needed placement with kin or siblings. Attorneys trained in the model would counteract these tendencies, and on average, children served by these attorneys would experience a lower likelihood of placement and more placements with kin and siblings. Distal outcomes also reflected hypotheses about the tendency for children to spend more time in foster care than necessary, while court and agency actors figure out and implement the right permanency plan. Attorneys trained in the model would counteract these tendencies as well. Children served by attorneys trained in the model would, on average, experience reduced time in care. Children would also experience increased rates of permanent exits and decreases in nonpermanent exits, such as running away or aging out. Finally, decreases in the use of foster care would not be associated with any changes in repeat maltreatment or reentry.

In developing these hypotheses, the UM QIC made certain assumptions about the practice of attorneys in these two jurisdictions. First, it was assumed that there was room for improvement in the behaviors shown in Figure 1 among attorneys practicing in these two jurisdictions. Second, the UM QIC acknowledged that attorneys are one of several actors in complex child welfare decision making and interact with at least two other attorneys (agency attorney and parent attorney) seeking to influence a case. How would the logic models work in this context, where at least some of the time, the child representative would be advocating for a similar decision being advanced by the agency attorney or the parent attorney? In these cases, it was hypothesized that the additional advocacy by the child representative would still promote better and more timely decisions by the legal-judicial system.

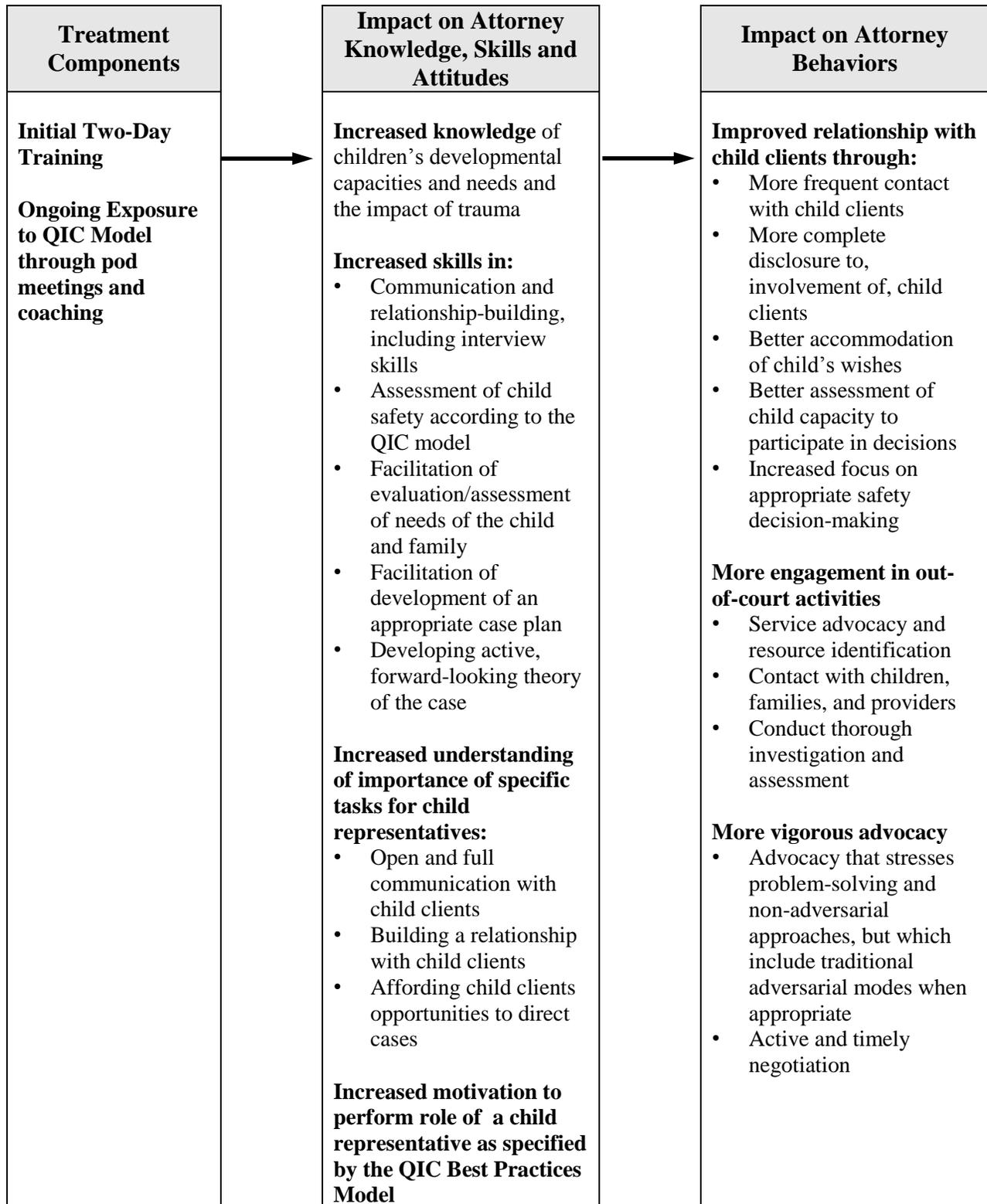
It is important to emphasize that the evaluation did not address the question of whether having an attorney versus not having an attorney affected the safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children. All children in the study were represented by an attorney at some point during the dependency cases analyzed in this study.

Based on the logic models above, the evaluation was designed to answer two questions for a group of child attorneys that represented the typical range of talent, experience, and motivation of attorneys practicing as child representatives in the two sites:

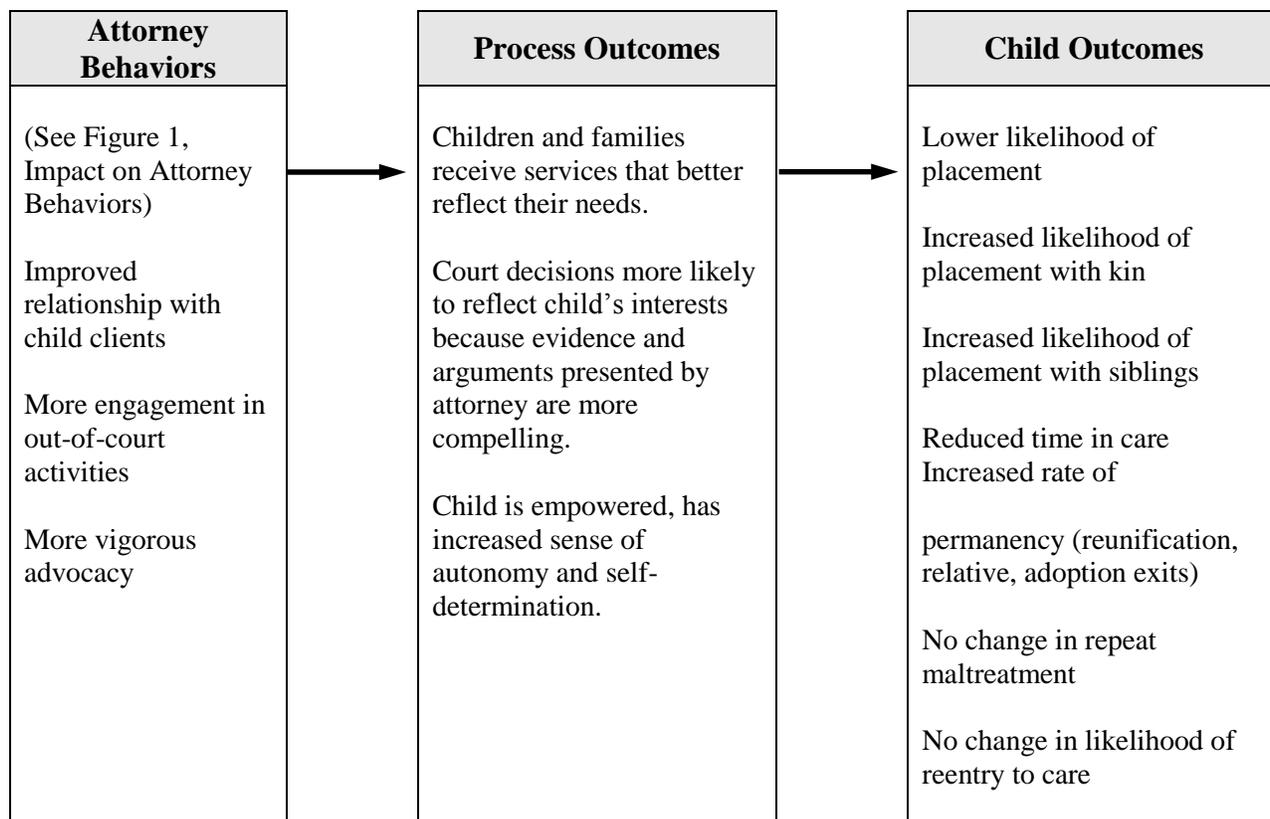
1. Does the group of attorneys given the opportunity to participate in the intervention (intent-to-treat group or treatment group) provide better child representation than attorneys who are not given the opportunity (control group)?
2. Does the group of children represented by the treatment group experience better child welfare outcomes compared to those represented by the control group?

The UM QIC was also interested in gathering data about how the interaction between the child and his or her attorney could make the attorney more effective in handling the case. It was beyond the capacity of the evaluation to gather this type of observational data. However, several questions on the attorney surveys addressed whether and how often these interactions took place.

**Figure 1. QIC-ChildRep Best Practice Model Expected Impacts on Attorney Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes and Behaviors**



**Figure 2. Attorney Behavior Expected Impact on Child Welfare Outcomes**



### Implementation and Evaluation Timeline

Table 1 presents a timeline for key events during the implementation and evaluation of the *QIC-ChildRep* intervention. Georgia and Washington State signed participation agreements in October 2011 (Georgia) and January 2012 (Washington State). During the next two to three months, approximately 250 lawyers in Georgia and Washington State who represented children in child welfare cases at the time were identified. Both state partners indicated in their proposals that attorneys would be required to participate as a condition of representation. As implementation began, Georgia state partners confirmed their views that the method they had proposed (required participation by judges) would yield higher participation rates in the intervention than informed consent. Washington State partners changed their view and decided that a recruitment and informed consent would deliver higher participation rates.

In Georgia, the partner organization for the study, the Georgia Supreme Court Committee on Justice for Children Court Improvement Program (J4C), sought and received agreement from presiding juvenile

court judges in participating jurisdictions throughout the state to require all attorneys practicing in those jurisdictions to participate in the demonstration. As a result, all attorneys practicing at the start of the study or who began to represent children in one of the Georgia evaluation jurisdictions during the recruitment period were automatically enrolled in the study. In Washington State, participation was based on a statewide recruitment and consent process conducted by the Center for Children & Youth Justice and the Washington Office of Civil and Legal Aid, two of the *QIC-ChildRep* partner organizations in Washington State. Staff from these partner organizations reported that, out of all the attorneys known to practice child welfare representation, fewer than 15 attorneys either did not respond or declined to participate.

Just before the attorneys were randomly assigned to control or treatment groups, they were asked to complete an attorney baseline survey which allowed tests of equivalence between treatment and control attorneys and provided important attorney information and contextual content. In the spring of 2012, the treatment group attorneys in both states received two days of training. Case assignment began in the first quarter of 2012 in Georgia and the second quarter of 2012 in Washington State. The first pod meetings and coaching sessions took place in July 2012 (Georgia) and September 2012 (Washington State). Quarterly pod meetings and coaching sessions lasted for approximately two and a half years, during which attorney activity data were collected for all the attorneys.

**Table 1. Timeline of the QIC Intervention and Evaluation**

<b>Study Event</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>WA</b>
Participation agreement	October 2011	January 2012
Finalization of Attorney/Jurisdiction Participation	October 2011– November 2011	January 2012– March 2012
Attorney baseline survey launch	November 2011	March 2012
Random assignment of attorneys	December 2011	March 2012
Intervention		
Initial two-day QIC best practice model training	March 2012	May 2012
First pod meeting and coaching session	July 2012	September 2012
Second two-day QIC best practice model training	March 2013	March 2013
Attorney survey data collection	October 2013–May 2015 <sup>3</sup>	July 2012– May 2015
Attorney baseline survey — repeat of selected questions from the initial baseline survey	March 2015	March 2015

<sup>3</sup> Survey data collection began later in Georgia than in Washington. For the first 15 months following the *QIC-ChildRep* initial six core skills training, Georgia partners sought to capture data for all of the time attorneys spent on child representation cases, by child and activity type using Georgia’s Court Process Reporting System or CPRS. Compliance and data accuracy issues with CPRS data collection led to a decision to replace it with survey-only data collection system in October 2013.

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## **Overview of the report**

The chapter on methods, describes the evaluation design, the samples, data sources and analytic strategy. The next chapter describes the legal and policy context in the two sites for both attorneys and children. That is followed by a description of the implementation of the intervention with the treatment group, including participation data, and provides a description of the program in each site. Finally, attorney behavior and child outcomes for each state are described in the results chapter.

Several appendices that contain additional details on the study are included. Appendix A offers a general overview QIC-ChildRep Best Practices Model initial two-day training. Appendix B provides biographical sketches of QIC-ChildRep intervention providers. Appendices C, D, and E provide additional detail on the pod and coaching part of the intervention. Appendix C is a copy of the protocol that was the model for the QIC coaching and pod meetings. Appendix D provides a sample of coaching session notes. Appendix E provides a sample pod meeting agenda. Appendix F provides additional information on methods. Appendices G and H contain additional information on attorney activity surveys: Appendix G describes the survey process and Appendix H contains selected questions from attorney activity surveys. Appendix I provides a view of the attorney behavior results by state. These results are the same as those presented in Chapter 6 but are instead grouped by state.

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# Methods

This chapter presents the methodology used for the *QIC-ChildRep* evaluation including the research design, data sources and data collection mechanisms, data samples used in different sets of analyses, and the analytic methods.

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## Research Design

The primary objective of the evaluation was to assess the impact of the *QIC-ChildRep* intervention on attorneys' behaviors and consequent case-level outcomes, compared to attorneys who did not receive the intervention. In order to develop valid estimates of these impacts, the evaluation design needed to (1) ensure that attorneys assigned to treatment or control groups were as equivalent as possible with respect to their individual characteristics and circumstances in which they practiced dependency law and (2) mitigate the extent to which attorneys assigned to the control group were exposed to the intervention.

### Multisite Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial

The evaluation used a multisite cluster randomized control design<sup>4</sup> at the attorney level to make a statistically unbiased judgment of the effect of *QIC-ChildRep* intervention on attorney behavior and child outcomes (Bloom, 2005). This design was the most efficient and practical design for judging the impact of the treatment (Wijekumar, Hitchcock, Turner, Lei, & Peck, 2009). With random assignment, any statistically significant differences in attorney behaviors or case outcomes could be attributed to the intervention with treatment attorneys.

Attorneys were randomly assigned within separate jurisdictions to control or treatment groups based on the firms or legal offices in which attorneys practiced (if an attorney was a solo practitioner, she or he was treated as a one-person firm when conducting the random assignment). For example, if a jurisdiction

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<sup>4</sup> Within each state, judicial jurisdictions were the sites and attorneys representing children were the clusters. For example, in Washington, where about 30 percent of attorneys practiced in firms, attorneys practicing within firms were the clusters.

contained eight attorneys working within four distinct offices, each of these offices would be assigned as a whole to the treatment or control group. This type of randomization design, known as cluster randomized control design, ensured that the two groups of attorneys were, in expectation, statistically equivalent, while also helping to mitigate the extent to which control group attorneys were exposed to the *QIC-ChildRep* intervention materials.<sup>5</sup>

At the child level, the evaluation design also contained procedures so that the children assigned to each group of attorneys would be statistically equivalent. Evaluators interviewed case assigners in each jurisdiction with regard to the processes they used to determine case assignments. In most cases, assignments were made using rotational lists or some other arbitrary process. For the three years of the evaluation, case assigners agreed to follow a rotational list provided by evaluators and, where the case assignment deviated from that list, to indicate the reason. While deviations from the list did occur, assigners reported it was primarily due to attorneys not being available. Over the course of the study, evaluators were in conversation with case assigners on many occasions, and there was no indication of any systematic differences between the cases assigned to treatment attorneys or to control attorneys. More detail about the random assignment of attorneys and the standardized rotational assignment procedures is in Appendix F.

### **Intent-to-Treat Analysis**

The impact of the *QIC-ChildRep* intervention on attorney behaviors and case outcomes was based on differences between attorneys assigned to treatment and control groups and the cases served by the two groups, regardless of program participation among treatment attorneys. This type of comparison is known as an intent-to-treat analysis. Results derived from intent-to-treat analyses provide estimates of the impact of being offered the intervention. The intent-to-treat approach conformed with the expectation for implementing a program like the *QIC-ChildRep* intervention, where a jurisdiction would want to understand the impact of a program where all attorneys in a given jurisdiction would be offered the program.

The chapter on the implementation of the *QIC-ChildRep* intervention describes participation in each of the components of the intervention so the findings can be interpreted in light of participation. Few treatment attorneys—only five in Georgia and two in Washington State—missed the initial two-day training and subsequent pod and coaching sessions.<sup>6</sup> However, following the intent-to-treat approach,

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<sup>5</sup> Detailed description of procedures for replacement of attrited attorneys could be found in Appendix F.

<sup>6</sup> Attorneys who missed the initial 2-day training were not offered pod or coaching sessions. Project partners decided that trying to “catch up” these attorneys would compromise the experience for attorneys who began the intervention with the 2-day training.

attorney survey and child outcome data for these attorneys were included with other treatment attorneys, not with control attorneys.

### **Statistical Power**

Power analysis is used to estimate the appropriate sample size that allows a difference between the treatment and control groups to be detected. Evaluators conducted power analyses to estimate the number of attorneys and cases needed for the study based on the hypothesis of a moderate effect size (Cohen, 1988) and estimates of correlation of observations between attorneys and within firms and jurisdictions. One power analysis was conducted for the RFP seeking partners, so states could judge whether or not they would be eligible for the demonstration. A second power analysis was conducted using estimates from the Washington Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) of the number of cases each prospective attorney might have over the course of the study and within which jurisdictions those cases might occur. These estimates incorporated the reality that some attorneys would serve relatively few cases and some would serve more than 100, and yielded sufficient power (more than 80%) to detect a moderate effect size for a continuous outcome. A more detailed description of the power analysis is presented in Appendix F.

### **Attorney Incentives**

Most treatment and control attorneys were given \$1,500 per year as a professional honorarium for participation in general, and for the time associated with data collection in particular.<sup>7</sup> Three organizations in Washington State precluded their attorneys from receiving stipends directly at any point in the project as a matter of professional ethics. In January 2014, two additional organizations became part of county government and, as a result, additional Washington attorneys stopped receiving direct compensation.

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## **Data Sources**

Data was collected for the implementation study from intervention partners, from administrative data sources, and from attorney surveys. Each is described below.

### **Intervention Data**

Evaluators collected the following data during the project for the implementation study:

- Written materials distributed and used for initial two-day training
- Attorney attendance at initial two-day trainings
- Initial two-day training evaluations completed by attorneys at the end of the training

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<sup>7</sup> For the quarter beginning October 1, 2013, the UM QIC and Georgia state partners decided to change the incentive structure in response to the low participation in pod meetings and coaching. The letter to attorneys announced an increase in stipends – from \$1,500 to \$2,000 for treatment attorneys and from \$1,500 to \$1,700 for control attorneys – saying “associated with this increased stipend is a stronger expectation for full participation in data collection, coaching and pod meetings. Partial participation will result in partial stipends.” Incentive payments were reduced for attorneys who did not participate in pods or coaching in those final three quarters.

- Quarterly pod meeting attendance by attorneys and which of the six core skills were covered in each meeting
- Quarterly coaching session participation by attorneys and which of the six core skills were covered in each session
- Random sample of coaches' notes from 10 coaching sessions per quarter per site
- Notes from UM QIC attorney and stakeholder interviews in 2013 (UM QIC conducted interviews with randomly selected treatment attorneys in both states to ask, among other subjects, about their views of the coaching and pod meetings)
- Interviews with project partners in Fall 2014 (the Chapin Hall evaluation team conducted interviews in the fall of 2014 with team members in each state to obtain their observations and reflections about the coaching and pod meetings)

A member of the evaluation team also observed each initial two-day training and members of the evaluation team attended selected intervention team meetings (for UM QIC and state teams). A member of the evaluation team also attended the last in-person Georgia pod meeting.

### **Administrative Data**

In Washington State, records of attorneys' appointments as legal counsel for children in dependency cases were obtained from the Washington Administrative Office of the Courts' SCOMIS database. These records were supplemented by lists of appointments provided by local juvenile courts.<sup>8,9</sup> SCOMIS data was used to determine the date of attorney appointments and the dates of children's legal milestones, including disposition and termination of parental rights. In Georgia, there was no statewide administrative data source for appointments of attorneys or legal milestones. Instead, a system was set up whereby staff from each participating jurisdiction provided information about each appointment on a monthly basis to Chapin Hall and over the course of the evaluation these records were compiled into a database of assignments and dates of assignment. Neither state had data that captured the ending dates of appointments. As a result, once an attorney was associated with a child, all placement experiences for that child were associated with that attorney.

Data about children's substitute care histories, permanency outcomes, and demographic characteristics were obtained from Chapin Hall's Multistate Foster Care Data Archive. In Washington State, these child-level data were derived from extracts provided by the Washington State Department of Social and Health

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<sup>8</sup>The monthly SCOMIS data served as the primary source of data for the appointment of attorneys to specific children. Due to the limitation of the court administrative data (for example, data was not entered on time each month), not all cases were captured by SCOMIS in a timely fashion, and the data collected from each jurisdiction provided useful supplementation to fill the gap. Each month, Chapin Hall conducted a data crosscheck on the SCOMIS data and the collected individual jurisdiction data, and included the cases that did not appear in SCOMIS but in the jurisdiction tracking files to the study sample. Approximately 8 percent of the cases in the study sample were from the individual jurisdiction tracking system. In addition, staff from the Washington State Office of the Courts conducted monthly data review to identify data entry mistakes and notify the local court staff to correct those errors in order to ensure the data's high quality.

<sup>9</sup>For case appointments obtained from SCOMIS data, the date of assignment was either determined by the filing date (i.e., the case was just opened), or decided by the midpoint between data extracts (i.e., if the case was a preexisting case). For case appointments acquired from local courts, we had the exact date of appointment entered by the local judicial clerks.

Services, Children's Administration based on records maintained in their FAMLINK data system. In Georgia, these data were obtained from extracts provided by the Georgia Department of Human Services based on records maintained in their SHINES data system.

Neither the assignment data from Washington State's SCOMIS data system nor the information collected from Georgia jurisdictions shared a child identifier with the state's administrative data, and as a result, did not share an identifier with Chapin Hall's Multistate Foster Care Data Archive. The process for linking assignment data to child outcome data differed in the two sites. For the Washington data, the AOC provided a linking file to Chapin Hall on a quarterly basis, using a set of procedures developed by the AOC staff. The linking file included name, date of birth and appointment jurisdiction. For the Georgia data, matching was done by the Georgia AOC based on files provided by Chapin Hall on a quarterly basis. Only the child's first and last name and the appointment jurisdiction were available for matching. Approximately 10 percent of Georgia assignments and 5 percent of Washington assignments did not match to the foster care administrative data.

## **Attorney Survey Data**

### **Baseline Survey**

The first set of surveys, referenced as the baseline survey, was administered to attorneys prior to the inception of the evaluation. Certain questions were asked again three years later during the final month of the evaluation. The questions on the baseline survey covered a number of different domains, including attorney demographic characteristics, practice tenure, contract arrangements with counties, income, caseload size, and continuing legal education and experience in different areas of the law. The baseline survey also contained several questions about attorneys' opinions concerning the level of responsibility that child representatives should assume over various dependency case tasks and the importance of various tactics and objectives vis-à-vis dependency court outcomes. Finally, the survey contained questions concerning attorneys' job satisfaction and perceived impact as child representatives. A complete listing of the survey questions is in Appendix G. The response rates for the first baseline survey were 86 percent ( $n = 123$ ) in Georgia and 93 percent ( $n = 117$ ) in Washington State.

### **Child-Specific Attorney Surveys**

A second set of surveys, referred to as "the milestone surveys," was provided to attorneys through a website where attorneys clicked on links to answer questions for a particular child. Surveys were triggered based on the attorneys' appointment as legal counsel and continued approximately every six months thereafter. For example, a child that stayed in substitute care for at least a year after being appointed an attorney would have a survey generated at two, seven, and thirteen months after the date of their attorney's appointment. Also, in Washington State, attorneys were asked to complete additional

milestone surveys when children experienced certain legal or service milestones, such as dispositional order, termination of parental rights order, and exit from substitute care.<sup>10</sup>

To reduce the burden on attorneys, not every appointment generated a survey. Attorneys were asked to complete milestone surveys for a randomly selected subsample of child cases ( $n = 1,442$ , including 524 in Georgia and 918 in Washington State).<sup>11</sup> The administration of these surveys began in July 2012 in Washington State and in October 2013 in Georgia. The overall response rate for the milestone surveys was 89 percent in Washington State and 82 percent in Georgia.

The milestone surveys contain a number of questions about individual child dependency cases, including the frequency of children's visitation with family members, frequency of contact between attorneys and various parties to a case (e.g., child clients, children's family members), amount of time devoted by attorneys to various case-related activities (e.g., legal case preparation, service advocacy), quality of attorneys' relationships with child clients, and the attributes of children's dispositional hearings and order. A full listing of questions included in the milestone survey is provided in Appendix H.

Chapin Hall will prepare de-identified datasets based on the attorney baseline survey and attorney activity surveys. These datasets and documentation will be provided to the National Data Archive of Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) where they will be archived and available for future use.

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## Samples

There are two important dimensions to the samples used for *QIC-ChildRep* evaluation. The first is numeric: how much data was available to answer evaluation questions and how was it distributed across attorneys and jurisdictions? The second is contextual: who were the attorneys who participated in the study and what was their operating context? And who were the child welfare clients represented—their ages and their child welfare experience prior to appointment? The remainder of the Methods chapter presents the samples by number and the next chapter, “Context of the *QIC-ChildRep* Intervention,” describes those contextual dimensions of the attorneys and children who were a part of the intervention and evaluation.

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<sup>10</sup>The occurrence of these milestones was determined from the monthly SCOMIS extracts.

<sup>11</sup>In Washington, the random selection process of assignments followed a few conditions: (1) a maximum of 3 cases per quarter per attorney; (2) a maximum of 12 open cases per attorney; (3) a maximum of total number of 15 cases per attorney. In Georgia, the assignment selection conditions included a combination of the three criteria applied in Washington with slight change in the first condition – a maximum of 2 cases per month per attorney, and an additional condition which was randomly selecting one child from sibling group.

## Attorney Sample

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

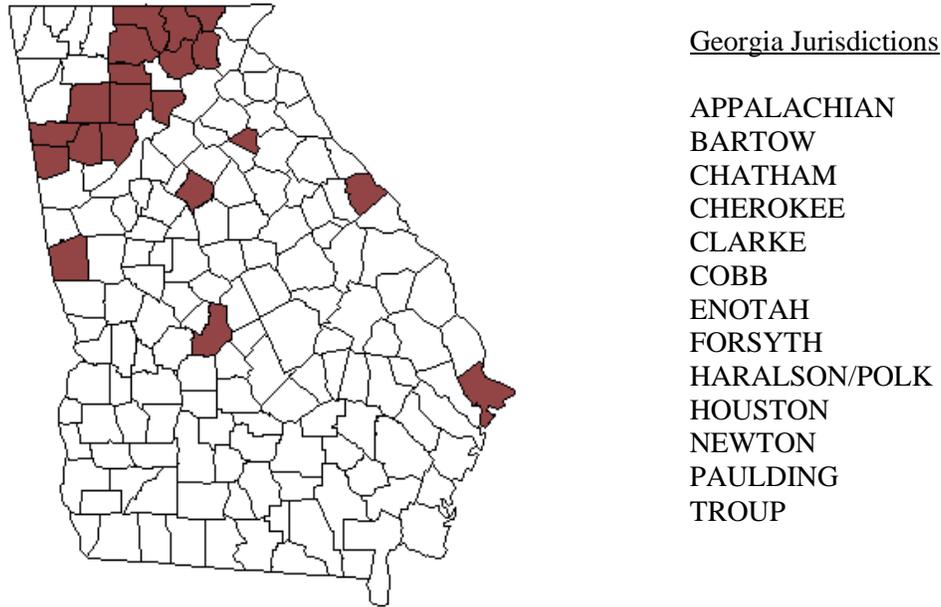
In Georgia, the partner organization for the study, Georgia Supreme Court Committee on Justice for Children Court Improvement Program (J4C), sought and received agreement from presiding juvenile court judges in 13 judicial circuits, covering 20 counties (see Figure 3).<sup>12</sup> These counties represented 26 percent of Georgia's general child population. These judges agreed to require all attorneys practicing in those jurisdictions to participate in the demonstration.<sup>13</sup> As a result, all attorneys representing children at the start of the study or who began to represent children during the study were automatically enrolled ( $N = 146$ ). Judges had provided written agreement to participate in the study to the J4C, and J4C provided official notification to the attorneys about the study and their judges' agreement to require their participation.

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<sup>12</sup> The Appalachian judicial circuit contains 3 counties (Fannin, Gilmer and Pickens); the Enotah judicial circuit contains 4 counties (Lumpkin, Towns, Union and White); and Haralson/Polk are two counties that comprise the Tallapoosa judicial circuit.

<sup>13</sup> In Cobb County, two out of four judges agreed to participate. The two largest Georgia counties (DeKalb and Fulton) were excluded from the project because attorneys in those two counties practiced primarily as staff attorneys in large legal offices, and random assignment of attorneys to treatment and control groups within the same organization would not have been feasible.

**Figure 3. Counties in Georgia Judicial Jurisdictions Participating in the Intervention and Evaluation**

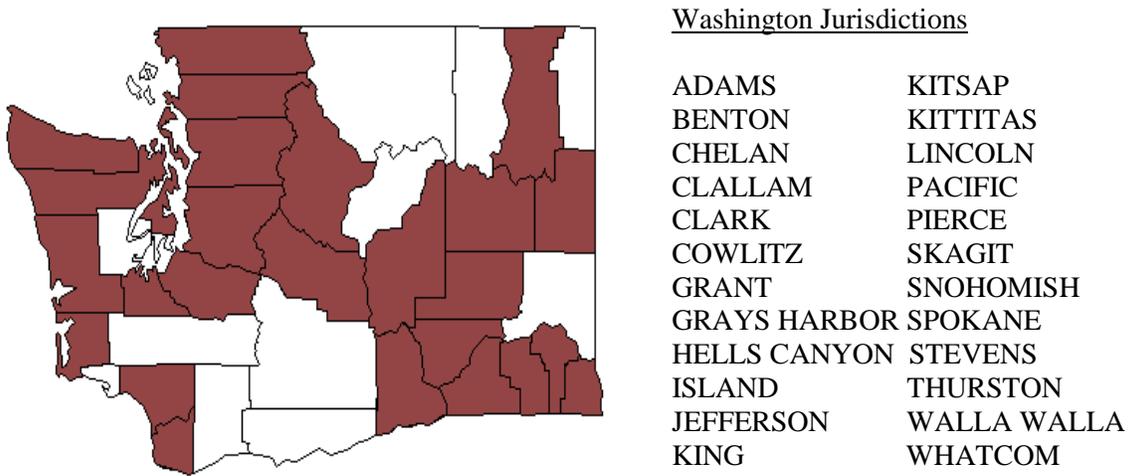


In Washington State, participation was based on a statewide recruitment and informed consent process conducted by the Center for Children & Youth Justice (CCYJ) and the Washington Office of Civil and Legal Aid (OCLA), two of the *QIC-ChildRep* partner organizations in Washington State. In January 2012, staff from these partner organizations made initial contact with all attorneys known to be receiving dependency case referrals from county courts or government agencies. In early 2013, the end of the first year of the study, a second round of reaching out efforts occurred ( $N = 128$ ).<sup>14</sup> Based on the assessment of CCYJ staff members, several of whom had extensive contacts within the child welfare legal community in Washington State, nearly all of the attorneys known to have been actively serving as child representatives in the participating counties at the time of the sample were contacted by CCYJ or OCLA staff. Among the 128 attorneys that were contacted, 114 agreed to participate. These attorneys were working in 24 judicial jurisdictions, including King (Seattle), Pierce (Tacoma), Clark (Vancouver), Spokane, and a number of medium- and small-sized counties (see Figure 4). Together, these 24 judicial jurisdictions represented 89 percent of Washington’s child population.

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<sup>14</sup> Lists of known attorneys were obtained from the Washington Center for Children & Youth Justice.

**Figure 4. Counties in Washington Judicial Jurisdictions Participating in the Intervention and Evaluation**



The final attorney evaluation sample included a total of 146 attorneys within 13 jurisdictions in Georgia and 118 attorneys affiliated with eight legal firms or offices operating in 24 jurisdictions in Washington State. These attorneys participated in the intervention as either a treatment or control attorney.

To evaluate whether random assignment resulted in statistically equivalent groups of attorneys, the treatment and control attorneys were compared on responses to the baseline survey prior to the intervention. Using mixed-effect models with jurisdiction and attorney levels, statistically significant differences were found on six items in Georgia and nine items in Washington State among 80 different variables from the baseline survey. This is consistent with the proportion of differences one would expect to find by chance.

**Child Sample**

Children became a part of the evaluation by virtue of having a treatment or control attorney appointed as their legal representative. All children whose attorneys were participating in the project during the study period were considered part of the study. Depending on their placement status at the time or subsequent placement, children were included in the analysis of out-of-home care outcomes or were a part of the attorney behavior analysis (or both). In Georgia, since nearly 30 percent of children who were represented

were never placed, the two analysis samples were somewhat different. The attorney behavior sample included children who were never a part of the out-of-home care outcome analysis. In Washington State, a much smaller proportion of children were never placed (14%), so almost all the children about whom attorneys were surveyed were also part of the placement analysis. Between the two analyses, a total of 4,274 children in two states (2,318 children in Georgia and 1,956 children in Washington State) were included.

### **Evaluation Samples**

From among the attorney and child samples described above, two evaluation samples could be created, each of which had a certain number of attorneys and a certain number of children. One sample was used for the attorney behavior analysis and another for the child outcome analysis.

Two dynamics of the samples should be noted. The child outcome analysis is about children who were assigned legal counsel during placement or who experienced an out-of-home placement after being assigned counsel. Because not all children represented by project attorneys had an associated out-of-home care placement during the study period, not all children represented by project attorneys were part of this analysis. Each child and their attorney was included in the out-of-home care placement analysis whether or not the attorney responded to one or more surveys about that child.

### **Attorney Behavior Analysis Data Sample**

With respect to the analysis on attorney behaviors reported by attorneys, a total of 3,787 survey records of the randomly selected cases associated with 198 attorneys were used in the analysis (see Table 2).

Detailed listings of the number of attorneys and their completed surveys by treatment and control group, and by completed year, are presented in Tables 3, 4, and 5 respectively.

Tables 2 and 3 show the data samples for the attorney behavior analysis in terms of numbers of attorneys and numbers of surveys. In Georgia, fewer treatment attorneys were in the analysis (47% versus 53% of total attorneys; Table 2). However, treatment attorneys contributed a larger proportion of surveys (53% versus 47% of total surveys; Table 3). On average, treatment attorneys in Georgia completed more surveys than control attorneys. In Washington State, more treatment attorneys were in the analysis (55% versus 45% of total attorneys; Table 2) and the split of surveys included across the two groups was similar (Table 3). On average, treatment and control attorneys in Washington State completed the same number of surveys.

**Table 2. Number and Percent of Attorneys Whose Surveys Were Used in the Attorney Behavior Analysis**

State	# of Attorneys			% of Attorneys		
	Treat.	Control	Total	Treat.	Control	Total
GA	45	50	95	47%	53%	100%
WA	57	46	103	55%	45%	100%
Total	102	96	198	52%	48%	100%

**Table 3. Number and Percent of Completed Surveys Used in Attorney Behavior Analysis**

	# of Surveys			% of Surveys		
	Treat.	Control	Total	Treat.	Control	Total
GA	506	441	947	53%	47%	100%
WA	1,592	1,248	2840	56%	44%	100%
Total	2,098	1,689	3787	55%	45%	100%

Table 4 breaks down the total number of completed surveys by state, year and group. Because Georgia was still using the state’s Court Process Reporting System to track the attorney activity data in 2012 and the first three quarters of 2013, no survey data was collected during that period of time for Georgia. Washington State started the online survey data collection in the last quarter of 2012 and continued for two and a half years until the end of first quarter of 2015.

**Table 4. Total Number of Surveys Completed in Each Study Year**

	Surveys completed by treatment attorneys				Surveys completed by control attorneys				Total
	2012*	2013	2014	2015	2012*	2013	2014	2015	All Years
GA		100	345	61		61	309	71	947
WA	131	604	708	149	92	486	510	160	2,840
Total	131	704	1,053	210	92	547	819	231	3,787

\*GA switched from CPRS data collection system to online survey in October 2013.

The number of surveys completed by each attorney over the course of attorney activity data collection varied (Table 5). Survey data collection operated for more than a year longer in Washington State than in Georgia, so fewer attorneys in Washington State had only 1-3 surveys to be analyzed (8% versus 24%; Table 5).

**Table 5. Number and Percent of Study Attorneys by Number of Surveys Completed**

		# of Attorneys			% of Attorneys		
		Treat.	Control	Total	Treat.	Control	Total
GA	1-3 surveys	8	17	25	18%	34%	26%
	4-10 surveys	16	18	34	36%	36%	36%
	11-25 surveys	18	11	29	40%	22%	31%
	26+ surveys	3	4	7	7%	8%	7%
GA Total		45	50	95	100%	100%	100%
		Treat.	Control	Total	Treat.	Control	Total
WA	1-3 surveys	2	6	8	4%	13%	8%
	4-10 surveys	15	4	19	26%	9%	18%
	11-25 surveys	11	10	21	19%	22%	20%
	26+ surveys	29	26	55	51%	57%	53%
WA Total		57	46	103	100%	100%	100%

**Child Outcome Analysis Data Sample**

Tables 6 shows the data samples for the child outcome analysis in terms of numbers of attorneys. In Georgia, fewer treatment attorneys were in the analysis (45% versus 55% of total attorneys; Table 6). In Washington State, about the same number of treatment attorneys were in the analysis (52% versus 48% of total attorneys; Table 6).

**Table 6. Number and Percent of Attorneys in Study with Associated Out-of-Home Care Placement**

	# of Attorneys			% of Attorneys		
	Treat.	Control	Total	Treat.	Control	Total
GA	62	75	137	45%	55%	100%
WA	59	55	114	52%	48%	100%
Total	121	130	251	48%	52%	100%

Table 7 breaks down the number of children who have been in out-of-home care placement and were represented by project attorneys by state, year and group. Across three years, the numbers of children represented by treatment and control attorneys were more or less equal in Georgia, whereas in Washington State, treatment attorneys represented more children than control attorneys in each year.

**Table 7. Total Number of Children Represented by Project Attorneys with Associated Out-of-Home Care Placement**

	Children represented by treatment attorneys			Children represented by control attorneys			Total
	2012*	2013	2014**	2012*	2013	2014**	All Years
GA	261	268	389	265	177	417	1,777
WA	220	400	424	162	249	332	1,787
Total	481	668	813	427	426	749	3,564

\*Data collection started in February 2012 in Georgia and in May 2012 in Washington State. \*\*Data collection ended in November 2014.

The distribution of the number of children whom attorneys represented over the course of the study is shown in Table 8. The overall distributions of attorneys by the number of represented children from the two states were similar - more concentrated in the middle and lower at the two ends. Approximately 61% of the Georgia attorneys represented less than 11 children during the study while a smaller percentage 54% of the Washington State attorneys were in the same category. When looking at the numbers by treatment and control status, the distributions in Washington State were more or less equivalent between the two groups, which was not the case in Georgia. In Georgia, a much lower percentage of treatment attorneys represented 11 or less children than control attorneys over the course of the study, while a significantly higher percentage of attorneys represented 11 or more children.

**Table 8. Number and Percent of Study Attorneys by Number of Children Represented with Associated Out-of-Home Care Placement**

		# of Attorneys			% of Attorneys		
		Treat.	Control	Total	Treat.	Control	Total
GA	1–3 children	10	20	30	16%	27%	22%
	4–10 children	20	34	54	32%	45%	39%
	11–25 children	22	11	33	35%	15%	24%
	26+ children	10	10	20	16%	13%	15%
GA Total		62	75	137	100%	100%	100%
WA		Treat.	Control	Total	Treat.	Control	Total
	1–3 children	11	12	23	19%	22%	20%
	4–10 children	21	18	39	36%	33%	34%
	11–25 children	16	15	31	27%	27%	27%
	26+ Children	11	10	21	19%	18%	18%
WA Total		59	55	114	100%	100%	100%

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## Impact Analyses Methods

As described above, the research design took into account the hierarchical or nested structure of the system in which attorneys operated and children were represented. Attorneys operated within different child welfare and judicial jurisdictions and some attorneys operated in firms or non-profits with other attorneys representing children. Similarly, the impact analyses methods took into account the nested structure of the resultant data by using multilevel models with random effects. In both the attorney behavior and child outcome analyses, random effects models took into account that child-level data were nested within attorneys and attorneys were nested within jurisdictions.<sup>15</sup> These models have the effect of comparing the behaviors and case outcomes of treatment and control group attorneys within each attorney and jurisdiction and estimating the results over the treatment and control group samples. All analyses were done separately for each state. Additional detail about impact analyses methods can be found in Appendix F.

### Attorney Behavior Outcomes

Dependent variables in the attorney behavior analyses fell into three categories. The majority of responses were ordinal scales, where the attorney selected one of four or five values. The second type of response was binary, where the attorney indicated whether or not something had been done or had happened. The third type was a continuous variable created by averaging ordinal scales across common response types. In each case, multilevel models were used to estimate the treatment effect with treatment status as a single covariate and random effects at the attorney and jurisdiction levels.<sup>16</sup>

For each question, one model was estimated for over all survey types, one model for assignment surveys, and one model for review surveys. Because not every assignment generated a survey, cases were weighted based on the inverse of the probability of being selected for a survey within the case group of each attorney.

### Child Outcomes

Dependent variables in the child outcome analyses fell into two categories. In models of the likelihood of movement and the likelihood of placement with kin, the dependent variable was binary, indicating

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<sup>15</sup> Some attorneys in Washington were also nested in firms. The inclusion of firm as a level did not change the results, so this level was dropped from the final models. Similarly, primarily in Georgia, some children were nested within cases. Models at the case level that chose a random child from each case did not yield different results, so this level was also not included in the final models.

<sup>16</sup> For survey questions with binary responses, models were estimated with the glimmix procedure in SAS. For survey questions with ordinal scales and average scales the models were estimated, respectively, using the gllamm and xtmixed procedures in Stata.

whether or not the child moved since assignment to a treatment or control attorney or was placed with kin at or after assignment.

For the permanency outcome, discrete time hazard models were used, with a binary dependent variable indicating whether or not the child had achieved permanency. The discrete time hazard model accommodated differences in the timing of assignment to an attorney (see Figure 5). Two models were run. The first model evaluated the average treatment effect on permanency for the complete sample, including all assignment timings. The second model included two covariates: one that evaluated the interaction between the treatment effect and the likelihood of permanency within six months and one that evaluated the interaction between the treatment effect and the likelihood of permanency after six months.

In addition to the treatment effect, child outcome models included covariates for gender, age, and placement type. In addition, to correct for any potential imbalance in the treatment and control sample, inverse probability weights were calculated based on the same child-level covariates and included in the models.

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# Context of *QIC-ChildRep* Intervention

Understanding the context of the *QIC-ChildRep* intervention is important to interpreting the take-up of the intervention by treatment attorneys and the impact on attorney behavior and placement outcomes. The findings are more likely to have external validity in jurisdictions that are similar to the jurisdictions evaluated in the study.

This chapter describes the children who were studied in the evaluation: what circumstances governed appointment of attorneys, the type of representation received, the distribution of age and placement status at the time of appointment, and other descriptive data about the children studied. Information about attorneys is also presented, including employment setting, characteristics, previous training, compensation, and advocacy context.

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## Child Representation

### Circumstances of Representation

At the start of the evaluation, each state's laws addressing the circumstances under which children were provided attorneys in dependency cases differed; these laws also changed during the evaluation.

Georgia's statutes in 2012 made representation of the child discretionary with the court except for termination of parental rights proceedings (First Star & Children's Advocacy Institute, 2014).<sup>17</sup> If a child's representative was appointed, state law allowed jurisdictions the discretion to assign an attorney as

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<sup>17</sup> Even though Georgia statutes in effect in 2012 (Ga. Code Ann. § 15-11-6(b)) entitled a child to legal representation at all stages of the proceedings, separate counsel was only specifically required for proceedings terminating parental rights (Ga. Code Ann. § 15-11-98(a)). Georgia case law had established that in all other proceedings, when children are placed in the custody of the Department of Human Resources and the Department is represented by counsel, such representation "also constitute[s] representation by counsel on behalf of the children" (Williams v. Department of Human Resources, (1979) 150 Ga. App. 610, 611.).

counsel for the child or assign either a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) or an attorney to fulfill the Guardian ad litem (GAL) best interests role. Participating jurisdictions in Georgia varied on whether attorneys were used to fulfill the GAL role. Half of the jurisdictions reported that attorneys were assigned for children in all cases and the remainder assigned an attorney upon request or only as required by state law (in termination proceedings). In Washington State in 2012, the appointment of an attorney was not mandated at any point in the case for any child. State law provided that “if the child requests legal counsel and is age twelve or older, or if the guardian ad litem or the court determines that the child needs to be independently represented by counsel, the court *may* appoint an attorney to represent the child’s position.”<sup>18</sup> Local court practice varied, but the majority of courts at least provided for the appointment of a client-directed attorney upon request for children entering or already in out-of-home care at the age of 12 or older.

During the evaluation, state laws changed in both states, expanding the number of children for whom jurisdictions were required to appoint attorneys for children in child welfare cases. On January 1, 2014, almost two years into the intervention, a new law went into effect in Georgia requiring every child in any dependency case to have an attorney.<sup>19</sup> Jurisdictions’ response to the new law varied, but overall, the number of appointments to both treatment and control attorneys went up in Georgia starting in 2014. In Washington State, as of July 1, 2014, state law required that all children who were legally free (i.e., those whose parent’s parental rights had been terminated), or who became legally free after July 1, 2014, must be appointed a client-directed attorney.<sup>20</sup> This change resulted in a modest increase in appointments to studied attorneys, especially among children who had been in care for three or more years. (See Table 8 in the Methods section for numbers of children appointed to project attorneys by year.) Because attorneys were assigned within jurisdictions, different responses to these changes in state laws were not problematic for the evaluation since the changes were expected to affect treatment and control attorneys within each jurisdiction equally.

### **Timing of Representation**

Washington attorneys almost always represented children already placed, whereas in Georgia, almost one-third of appointments were made while a child was not in placement.<sup>21</sup> Looking only at children who were placed at some point after assignment, the timing of assignment relative to the beginning of placement is shown in Figure 5. Almost three-quarters of appointments in Georgia were made before or

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<sup>18</sup> See Rev. Code Wash. § 13.34.100(6)(f).

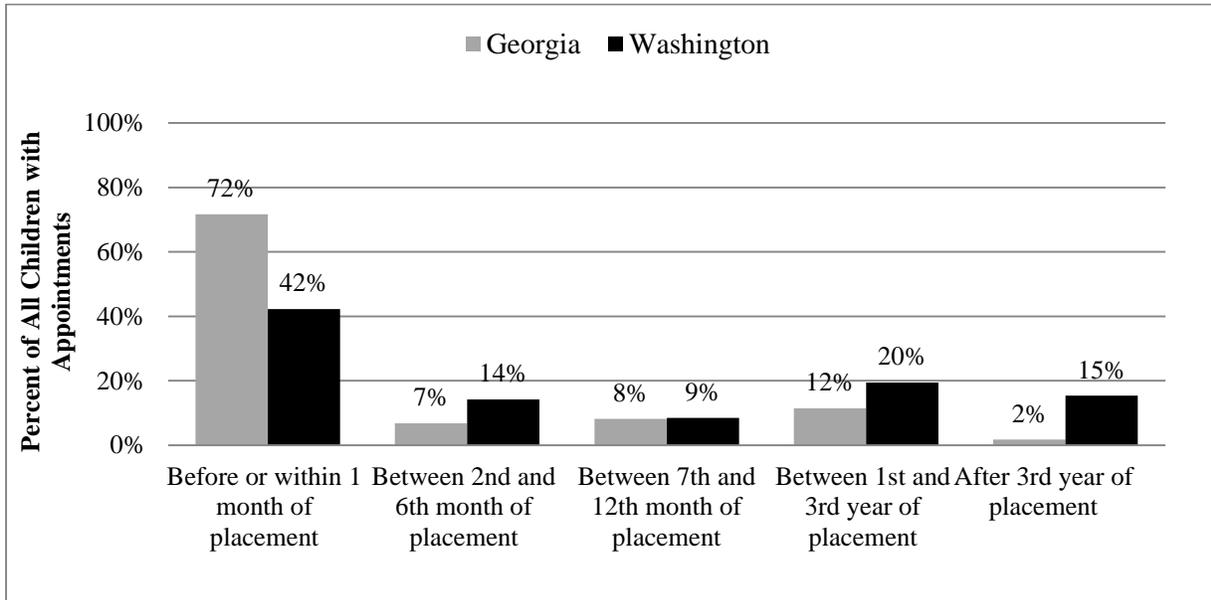
<sup>19</sup> See Ga. Code Ann. § 15-11-104(c).

<sup>20</sup> The law is recorded, for the most part, in Rev. Code Wash. § 13.34.100(6)

<sup>21</sup> Of children who were appointed attorneys when not in placement, 85 percent were never placed as of the end of the observation period (March 31, 2015).

within a month of placement (72%). Of children in the Washington sample, 42 percent were appointed before or within a month of placement. On the other end of the distribution, 14 percent of the Georgia and 35 percent of the Washington sample had an attorney appointed after at least a year in placement.

**Figure 5. Timing of Attorney Appointment for Children Placed**



### Children’s Age at Appointment

Characteristics of represented children reflected differences in state laws. For children who were placed in out-of-home care, the median age of receiving an attorney was 6 years in Georgia and 11 years in Washington State. Figure 6 shows the distribution by age at placement. Just under half of the sample of children in Georgia had an attorney appointed for them at age 5 or under. The sample of children for Washington State included very few infants (3%) and few children under age of 5 (12%). Almost half of the sample (48%) were children appointed attorneys at age 13 or older.

**Figure 6. Distribution of Age of Child at the Time of Attorney Appointment for Children Placed**

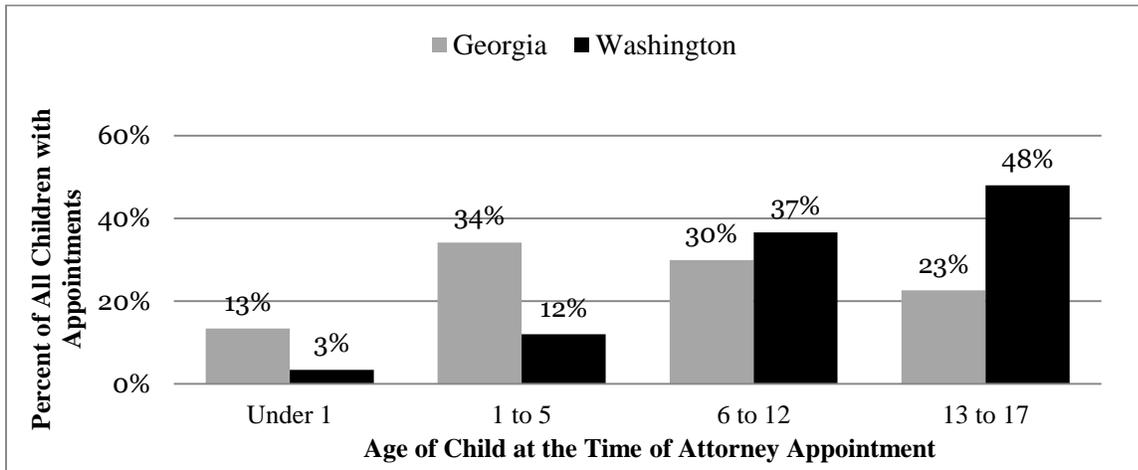


Figure 7 shows how age at appointment and timing of appointment were related in the two samples. In Georgia, where the age of the child entering care did not have a relationship to attorney appointment, children for whom an attorney was appointed in the first six months had a similar age-at-placement distribution to those who were appointed an attorney later. In Washington State, however, there was a distinct sub-sample of children who were both older at placement and had an attorney appointed early: Among children for whom an attorney was appointed within the first six months, 68 percent of these children were 12 years old or over (Figure 7). Notably, in Washington State, the distribution by age among those appointed an attorney later in placement was similar to the distribution in Georgia.

**Figure 7. Proportion of Children Placed Under and Over 12 Years Old by Assignment Timing**

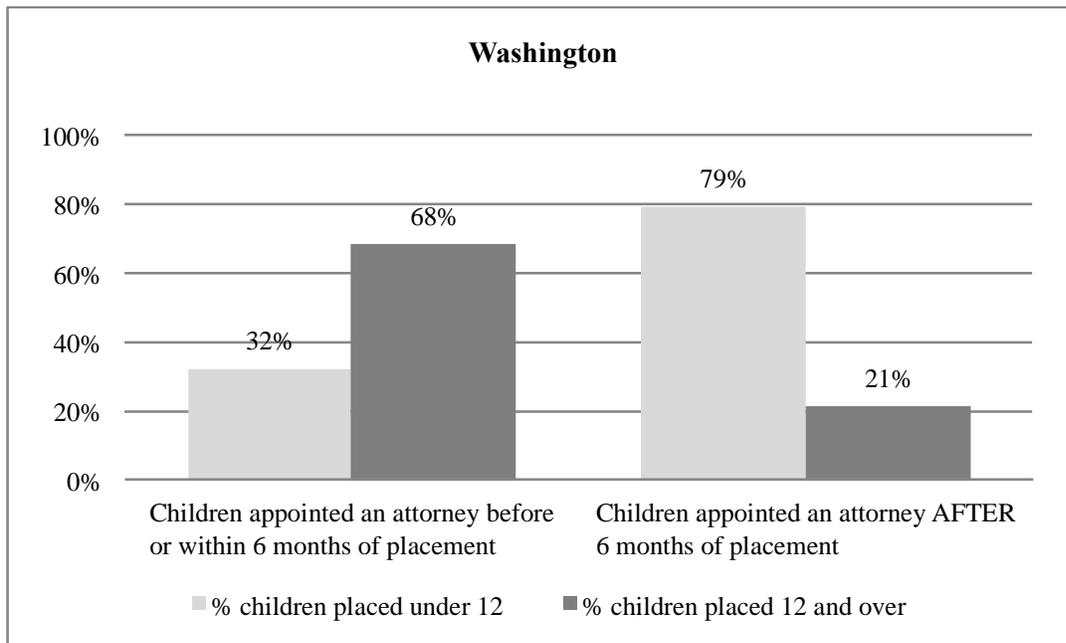
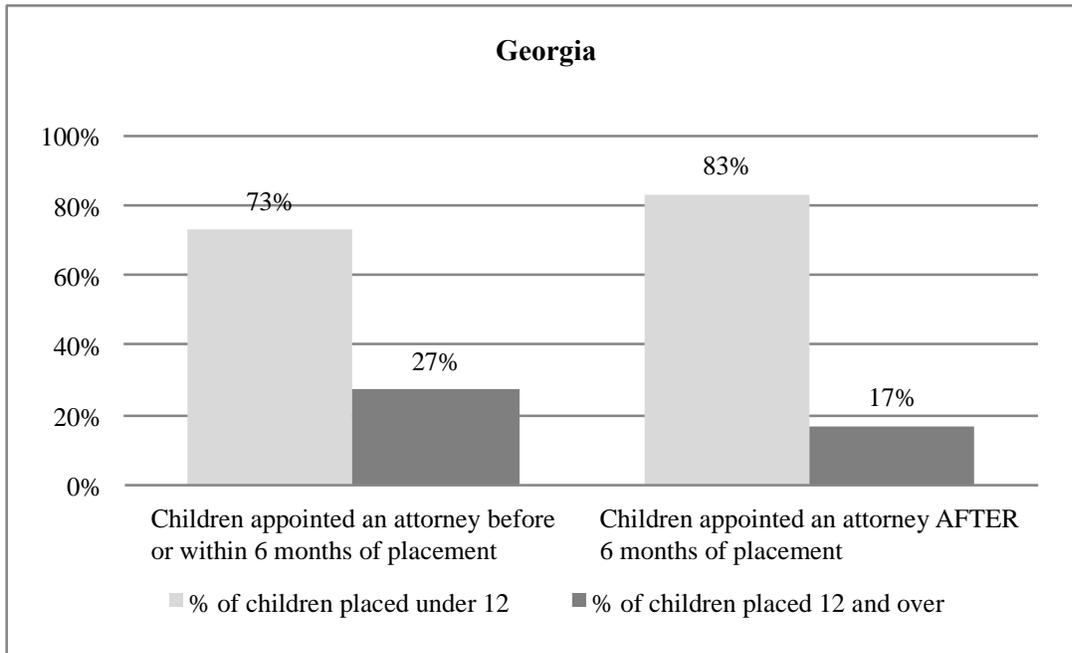


Table 9 summarizes the child context in the samples in the two states and provides some additional contextual information. In Washington State, fewer children who were part of sibling groups were represented, and fewer sibling groups were represented by one attorney. Most children in both states were in some type of family-based care (foster home or relative home) at the time an attorney was appointed.

Thirteen percent of children in Georgia and 12% of children in Washington State were in congregate care placement at the time of appointment.

**Table 9. Child Context Comparison**

Sample characteristic	Georgia	Washington
% of children with attorney appointed within 6 months of the start of placement	79%	56%
Median age at assignment (years)	6	11
Median age at assignment, assigned in first 6 months (years)	6	13
Median age at assignment, assigned after first 6 months (years)	4	8
% of assignments while child not in out-of-home placement	31%	14%
% of children in first placement experience	90%	77%
% children associated with sibling group	55%	21%
% of sibling groups represented by one attorney	95%	64%
% of children in family-based care (foster or kinship)	82%	76%
% of children in congregate care	13%	12%

### **Type of Representation Received**

Determining whether the attorney was charged with a GAL or “substitute-judgment” role or with a role to represent the child’s “expressed wishes” differed in the two states at the time of study (First Star & Children’s Advocacy Institute, 2009). In Washington State, when an attorney was assigned, the attorney’s role was almost always to represent the child’s expressed wishes. In Georgia, by contrast, even though the legal authority and practice was quite ambiguous and unsettled throughout the study period, attorneys were commonly, although not always, appointed to serve both roles at once, or in a “dual role.” That is, the attorneys served in a substitute-judgment, GAL role unless there was a conflict between the attorney’s view of the child’s best interests and the child’s wishes. If and when that occurred, the attorney was obligated to inform the court and an expressed wishes counsel for the child would be appointed.<sup>22</sup>

Reliable administrative data on the type of representation for which attorneys were appointed was not available in either state. Attorney surveys, however, had a question about the type of representation the child was receiving. According to the attorney survey data, 44 percent of represented children in Georgia received client-directed representation, 23 percent received Guardian ad litem representation and the

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<sup>22</sup> In 2012, the Georgia Supreme Court approved a formal advisory opinion of the State Bar, ruling that a dual role attorney, confronted with a conflict between the child’s expressed wishes and the attorney’s considered opinion of the child’s best interest, must withdraw as GAL, and seek appointment of a separate GAL without disclosing the reasons for her withdrawal. The attorney was permitted to continue as the child’s (client-directed) attorney, or to withdraw entirely if the conflict was severe. State Bar of Georgia (Formal Advisory Opinion 10-2, upheld Ga. S.Ct. Docket No. S11U0730.)

remainder were being represented by attorneys serving a dual role (32%). In Washington State, children received client-directed representation exclusively.

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## Attorney Context

### Attorney Organization

The experimental evaluation of the *QIC-ChildRep* was focused explicitly on states where a large number of attorneys practiced either independently as solo practitioners or in small firms, or in small numbers (under 10 attorneys representing children) in nonprofit legal aid organizations.

In the Georgia jurisdictions, all attorneys practiced alone as child representatives, even those who were employed by a private law firm. In Washington State, 30 percent of attorneys practiced in private nonprofits, and the majority of these organizations were in King County (see Table 10). The number of attorneys in private nonprofits ranged from four to nine.

**Table 10. Number of and Percent of Responding Attorneys by State and Employment Setting**

	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Washington</b>
<b>Employment setting</b>	Freq. (Pct.)	Freq. (Pct.)
Solo practitioner	95 (77%)	59 (50%)
Employed by a private law firm	27 (22%)	19 (16%)
Employed by private, nonprofit organization	0 (0%)	35 (30%)
Employed by county office	1 (1%)	4 (3%)
<b>Total</b>	123 (100%)	117 (100%)

In January 2014, about halfway through the evaluation, King County (Washington State) decided to transition away from contracting for attorneys to a county attorney model. At that time, attorneys practicing in four nonprofit organizations became county employees. This transition took place over time, and attorneys continued to function largely in their original treatment or control groups throughout the rest of the study.

### Attorney Characteristics

Attorneys in both states had many similar characteristics (Orlebeke, Zinn, Duquette, & Zhou, 2015). They were almost all white and had no graduate degrees other than a law degree. Attorneys were normally distributed by age, and the lawyers in both states were experienced, with an average of 13.5 years of practice. Just over half had experience as a biological, foster, or adoptive parent and about a third reported they had worked with children in some other capacity. Almost two-thirds of attorneys found their job as child representatives rewarding and most thought they had a significant impact on outcomes. Child representation practice constituted under 20 percent of legal work and income for most attorneys.

Attorneys were practicing in a number of different fields of law, including divorce and paternity, private adoption, truancy, and juvenile justice. In the six months prior to the study, one-third of the attorneys had represented five or fewer cases. Most thought their compensation was somewhat or very inadequate. Two-thirds of the attorneys did not have psychologists or psychiatrists with whom they could consult.

### **Attorney Training**

Training requirements in these two states were minimal. In Georgia, the minimum requirement to be appointed as a GAL was to take an in-person or online 7 CLE-credit course approved by the Georgia Office of the Child Advocate. This CLE course did include a child development and a child well-being segment.<sup>23</sup> However, attorneys who had practiced as GALs in juvenile court deprivation proceedings for three or more years and had demonstrated a proficiency in child representation were exempt (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2011).<sup>24</sup> In Washington State, attorneys acting as client-directed attorneys for the child were not required to have any special training. While Washington State statute directed the Administrator of the Courts to develop a curriculum for GALs with specific topic areas addressed (child development, child sexual abuse, child physical abuse, child neglect, domestic violence, clinical and forensic investigative and interviewing techniques, family reconciliation and mediation services) this training was not required for client-directed attorneys.<sup>25</sup> Table 11 shows the training topics that attorneys indicated they had covered in the two years prior to the beginning of the intervention.

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<sup>23</sup> See <http://www.iclega.org/programs/webcast/8620.html>

<sup>24</sup> This exemption was deleted in the new Georgia Juvenile Code, as of January 1, 2014.

<sup>25</sup> WA § 2.56.030(15)

**Table 11. Percent Participating in Continuing Legal Education in Prior Two Years**

	All (%)	Georgia (%)	Washington (%)
<b>Child welfare law and policy</b>			
Racial disproportionality	60%	99%	18%
State child welfare (i.e., deprivation) law	53%	46%	60%
State case law updates affecting child welfare	51%	47%	55%
Permanency planning	33%	18%	49%
Aging out of foster care	23%	14%	32%
Federal & state requirements for foster care cases	19%	10%	27%
Indian Child Welfare Act	18%	9%	27%
<b><i>Any of the above (excluding racial dispro.)</i></b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>Child representation practice</b>			
Alternative dispute resolution (ADR)	63%	99%	25%
Child representation practice	59%	63%	54%
Trial practice in child abuse and neglect cases	34%	30%	38%
Expert witnesses	28%	15%	42%
Interviewing and counseling the child	22%	17%	28%
<b><i>Any of the above (excluding ADR)</i></b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Child and family well-being</b>			
Child development	33%	18%	49%
Child maltreatment	33%	22%	44%
Mental health treatment for children and families	27%	18%	37%
Family dynamics in child maltreatment	22%	14%	31%
<b><i>Any of the above</i></b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>Other issues</b>			
Domestic violence	43%	33%	53%
Substance abuse	37%	24%	50%
Educational rights of children	16%	15%	17%

### Attorney Compensation

Local jurisdictions determined both compensation arrangements and the level of compensation for child representation. Jurisdictions provided information about their typical compensation arrangements, but project partners reported that payment of attorneys was idiosyncratic, even in counties where attorneys bill by the hour. Sometimes payments were capped or certain costs were disallowed. Local court personnel reported, however, it was rare for attorneys to not be fully compensated according to the payment stipulations.

The most common compensation arrangement was a submission of a voucher with hours, where the attorney was paid an hourly rate without official limits on the number of hours. A few attorneys were paid an hourly rate with a jurisdiction-imposed maximum payment amount. It was more common for Washington attorneys to be paid a monthly amount negotiated as part of an annual contract for handling a certain number of open cases per month. And in Georgia jurisdictions, as discussed previously, none of the attorneys representing children were staff attorneys either in a government or nonprofit agency. In a

few jurisdictions, more than one contract type was possible within the same jurisdiction. For example, one jurisdiction used the Office of the Public Defender (a salaried attorney) but, if all public defender attorneys had conflicts, the jurisdiction used an outside “conflict attorney” paid by the hour based on a submitted voucher (see Table 12).

**Table 12. Types of Compensation in Study Jurisdictions**

Compensation arrangement	Number of jurisdictions	
	Georgia	Washington
Hourly rate based on voucher	8	12
Hourly rate based on voucher with limits	2	3
Contract for a monthly or annual payment	1	5
<i>Combination</i> voucher and contract attorneys	2	1
<i>Combination</i> voucher and salaried attorneys	0	2
<i>Combination</i> voucher, salaried and contract attorneys	0	1
Total jurisdictions	13	24

Payment levels were similar in the two states, though a few Washington jurisdictions paid attorneys more. In Georgia jurisdictions, most hourly rates were \$45 per hour out of court and \$60 per hour in court (see Table 13). In Washington jurisdictions, the most common hourly rate was between \$60 and \$65 per hour.

**Table 13. Compensation Levels in 2012 by State and Jurisdiction**

<b>Georgia jurisdictions<sup>26</sup></b>		<b>Washington jurisdictions<sup>27</sup></b>	
<i>Compensation level</i>	<i>Number of jurisdictions</i>	<i>Compensation level</i>	<i>Number of jurisdictions</i>
\$45/hour out of court; \$60/hour in court	6	\$45/hour	2
\$55/hour out of court; \$65/hour in court; \$300 minimum per case	1	\$50/hour	2
\$65/hour out of court; \$75/hour in court	1	\$60-65/hour	5
\$50/hour in or out of court	2	\$70-\$75/hour	3
\$65/hour in or out of court	1	\$80-\$85/hour	1
\$2,250-\$2,500 /month	2	\$90-\$100/hour	3
		\$600 per case through fact-finding hearing	1
		\$125 per month for non-sibling and first sibling cases and \$62.50 per month for each sibling case	1

It was recognized that attorneys practicing according to the *QIC-ChildRep* Best Practice Model would most likely spend more time than control attorneys on cases. However, it was not known how much more time they would spend or whether this would create issues for the jurisdictions in which they practiced. Since most attorneys billed by the hour, it was expected that there would be some room for increasing time spent on cases without the need to adjust existing compensation methods. In Georgia, specific conversations about this issue took place in the months prior to implementation, and it was agreed among the Georgia partners that if costs for local courts went up, local courts and the Georgia partners would negotiate how to share increased costs among treatment attorneys, courts, and the Georgia Court Improvement Program. However, over the course of the study, Georgia partners did not raise increased costs as an issue. In Washington State, no explicit effort to address the potential increase in hours per case was made.

<sup>26</sup> Two Georgia jurisdictions did not provide detailed payment information.

<sup>27</sup> Detailed information about six payment types was not available from Washington jurisdictions.

### Attorney Advocacy Context

Attorneys are one of several actors in making complex child welfare decisions and interact with at least two other attorneys (agency attorney and parent attorney) seeking to influence a case. The degree to which attorneys would need to influence the course of a case depends in large part on how often the attorney determines that the case is going in a direction that is either not in the child’s best interests, against their wishes, or both. Attorney surveys included two questions intended to gauge how often attorneys were working towards the same or different goals as other parties involved in the case, notably attorneys from the public agency and parent attorneys (see Table 14).

**Table 14. Attorney Advocacy Context**

Survey Question	Georgia	Washington
How often attorney advocacy during survey period was in agreement with positions taken by public agency <sup>28</sup>	89%	85%
How often attorney advocacy during survey period was in agreement with positions taken by parent attorney(s)	not asked	67%

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<sup>28</sup> On Georgia surveys this question was only asked when the case was closed, whereas it was asked on all surveys for Washington.

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# Implementation of *QIC-ChildRep* Intervention

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## Introduction

This chapter describes the three elements of the *QIC-ChildRep* intervention (initial two-day training, quarterly coaching, and quarterly pod meetings), how each element was delivered in each site, and participation by the treatment attorneys. The *QIC-ChildRep* intervention was designed by the UM QIC in collaboration with state partners to train attorneys to incorporate the six core skills of *QIC-ChildRep* Best Practice Model into their practice. The first page of this report lists the project partners and their roles in implementing the intervention. Appendix B provides information about the background and qualifications of individuals who trained, designed and led pod meetings, and provided coaching.

The first part of this chapter describes the initial two-day training, where implementation closely matched the treatment design and was the same in both sites. The second part describes the quarterly coaching and quarterly pod meetings, where the actual implementation varied significantly in the two sites.

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## Intervention: Initial Two-Day Model Training

The QIC model with the six core skills was presented to the treatment attorneys in a two-day training block, lasting approximately eight hours each day. The training team included UM QIC, both state training attorneys, and a child psychologist.<sup>29</sup> At the conclusion of each training session the attorneys were asked to complete an evaluation rating the importance of the child representative's tasks (core skills), the effectiveness of the training in providing new information and skills, the degree to which the

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<sup>29</sup> Training staff biographies can be found in Appendix B.

training met the participant's expectations and objectives, and their confidence that they could use and implement the core skills. The majority of the attorneys in both states were positive about the training.

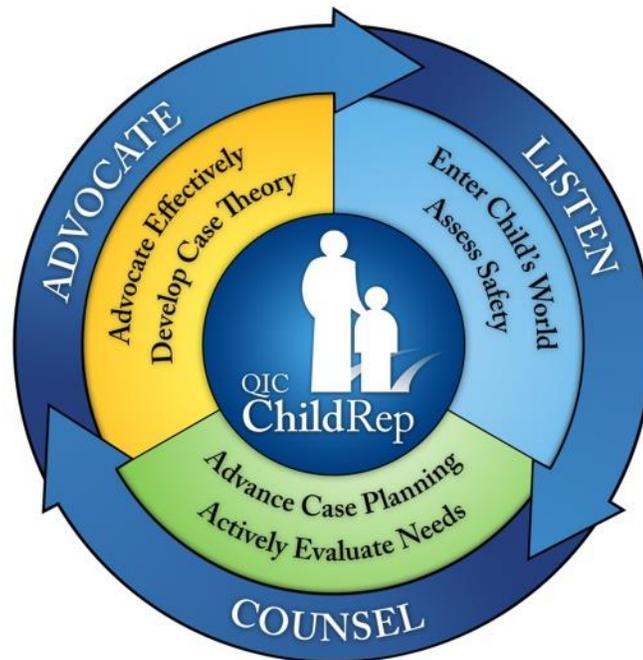
The training curriculum and materials were designed by a team comprised of UM QIC, a child psychologist, and each state's training attorney. (See Appendix A for a summary of the training curriculum and materials.) All training sessions, regardless of the state or date of training, had the same agenda and content.

In the first year of the study there were three regional trainings, strategically located across each state, so that the attorneys could conveniently attend the meeting. In the second year of the study, there was one two-day training in each state to present the information to those treatment attorneys who were unable to attend any of the initial trainings or were enrolled into the study after the initial training was provided.

### **Model Training Curriculum**

The training introduced the attorneys to the QIC six core skills and model of practice (see Figure 8). The first skill, entering the child's world, focused on the attorney developing expertise in areas of child development and the effect of trauma on development, understanding how to engage with the child client to learn about their life and needs, and understanding how to counsel them. To apply this skill, the QIC model encouraged the child representative to accommodate the child's expressed wishes according to the child's age and maturity and to the extent allowed by state law. The second core skill was for the attorney to learn how to assess child safety and ensure the child is protected, learning strategies to reduce the likelihood that the child would need to be removed from their home. The third skill was becoming proficient in actively evaluating needs, which involves facilitating an appropriate assessment of the child and family to learn their needs and thus define the problem presented. The fourth skill, advance case planning, was intended to help the attorney participate meaningfully in developing an appropriate case plan. Another skill, develop case theory, was intended to give direction to lawyer advocacy by constructing an "active and forward looking" case theory. The lawyers were asked to generate alternative theories of the case that explained what was occurring in the family based on the available evidence and information. The last core skill, advocate effectively, concentrated on specific "advocacy corollaries" that included nonadversarial methods and problem solving that could help meet the child's needs, in addition to the traditional litigation approaches. These core skills emphasize listening (entering the child's world and assess child safety), counseling (evaluating evaluations and advance case planning), and advocating (develop case theory and advocate effectively).

**Figure 8. QIC-ChildRep Best Practice Model**



On the first day of training, attorneys became familiar with the first two skills - entering the child's world and assessing safety. This was accomplished using content to help the attorney understand and appreciate children's developmental stages, key features, and associated behaviors. They covered these stages beginning with infants and toddlers and going through preschool, school age, middle childhood, and adolescence. Content also included strategies for the attorneys to work with these different age groups. Additional topics for the day included the impact of trauma and loss on child development, interviewing child clients, counseling children to accommodate their wishes in setting case goals, and child safety decision making.

On the second day of training the attorneys received an introduction to the other core skills. These included recognizing the need for a mental health evaluation, investigation strategies, identifying needs of the child and family, increasing the case plan's likelihood of success, monitoring well-being, aging out of care, and permanency planning.

### **Model Training Format**

The training team was guided by adult learning theory; the two days of training included a variety of approaches to engage and educate the participants about the skills and model. There were a few formal lectures, most notably by the child psychologist who described the developmental stages of childhood.

More common were presentations that involved substantial interaction between the trainer and the attorneys.

A variety of exercises were employed, including paper and pencil exercises for individuals and small groups, role-playing exercises, and exercises that required the participants to get out of their chairs and move around the room to perform an action. Also, a video of a case scenario with a child client was used at various stages of the training to facilitate discussion about the child's perspective and to highlight the application of the core skills in a child representation practice.

Every attorney received a binder that contained materials for each section of the agenda to allow for taking notes and ease in following the trainers' presentations. This included PowerPoint presentations, other visuals used by the trainers, all exercises, and some supplemental handouts. All of the materials were identical for each training regardless of the state, except for the handout that explained specific state child welfare laws and cross-references to Federal law.

At the beginning of the training the attorneys also received a flash drive containing all of the materials they received in their binders and a copy of the NACC "Red Book," *Child Welfare Law and Practice* (Duquette & Haralambie, 2010).

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## **Intervention – Quarterly Coaching and Pod Meetings**

As fundamental elements of the intervention, the treatment attorneys in each state were provided with supplemental training in the form of group meetings ("pod meetings") with a lead attorney trainer and individual discussions ("coaching") with a resource or coach attorney. These two elements of support were considered essential to reinforce the two-day training that introduced the QIC model and six core skills and to provide one-on-one guidance with the model implementation in their maltreatment cases. In education field, previous research showed that coaching, following initial training, would result in much greater transfer than would training alone (Joyce & Showers, 1995). The purpose of the pod meetings and coaching was to maximize the attorneys' retention of the six core skills and to ensure fidelity to the intervention model through frequent and continuous contacts. In the spring of 2012, the UM QIC collaborated with the state trainers and coaches to design the key features and processes of the coaching and pod meetings for the duration of the project.

The design of the coaching relied on adult learning theory that was intended "to avoid dogmatic and authoritarian approaches which tend to elicit resistance from adults and thus not work as well as a less directive learner-centered approach" (Brookfield, 1986). (See "Protocol: QIC Coaching and Supplemental Trainings" in Appendix C.) The coach was to initiate a personal or telephone conversation with each treatment attorney at least once per quarter until the end of the project. In that conversation, the coach

would “gradually and naturally” elicit how the attorney was engaging with the model in their own practice. This “more organic, less structured, generative approach” was considered more likely to obtain a sense of what the attorney was actually experiencing and to be less threatening to them. The coach was expected to reinforce the model skills, not by acting as an authority, but by guiding the attorney to utilize the appropriate core skills for the circumstances of the case. The goal was that the attorney would eventually be able to generalize implementation of the skills from a specific case to their practice more broadly. A coaching contact reporting template was developed to systematically capture the coaches’ interactions with the attorneys and to learn how the attorney was applying the model to his or her practice. (See template in Appendix D.)

As described in the protocol, the supplemental training, known as a “pod meeting,” was designed “to both maintain a common understanding of the model and provide an opportunity for group reflection on the implementation of its components.” It also was intended that the meetings would help build “enduring communities of [child representation] practice” that would support the attorneys as they continued in their practice after the end of the study. The training pods, consisting of groups of treatment attorneys, were to be organized around jurisdictions and geographic proximity to facilitate access to the meetings and the development of local “learning” communities. Each pod would meet once every quarter until the end of the project period, with the expectation of at least one in-person meeting per year. The other quarterly meetings could be in person or virtual, “depending on the logistics and preferences of the participants.” In-person meetings were considered important early in the intervention for the team to build relationships and trust with the attorneys.

Each pod meeting lasted 60 to 90 minutes, with both the lead trainer and coach participating. The trainer would confer with the coach to ascertain which topics were most salient for the treatment attorneys and then design a pod program of training and conversation around one or more of the six core skills of the model. Although the pod meetings were intended to be more directive and structured than the coaching discussions, it was expected that they would allow for some amount of “organic” interaction. It was also decided that there would not necessarily be the same content at each pod meeting within the state because of the diversity of the jurisdictions and a variety of circumstances, but it was believed that eventually there would be repetition of content in each pod as the need arose. However, it was emphasized in the design that the pod meetings had to be “explicitly tied” to the treatment attorneys’ actual experiences utilizing the six core skills. This would occur through discussions at the meetings using prompts such as “How is it going? What is going well? What are the challenges or impediments? What successes have you had?” It was expected that the trainer would have an agenda and goals for each meeting, but would take into consideration to “Start where your [attorney] is.”

Generally, the pod meeting format included a check in with the attorneys on their experiences with the model during the quarter, one or more QIC core skills being discussed in-depth, an exercise(s) for the individual or small group discussion with learning shared with the full pod, case scenarios to facilitate knowledge and skill development with the model, and/or information on child-related subjects. Each meeting allowed for attorney comments pertaining to their cases. (See Appendix E for an example of a Pod Meeting agenda.)

Each state team assigned treatment attorneys to their pods with the concurrence of UM QIC and the Chapin Hall evaluation team. These assignments were made primarily with consideration of jurisdiction and geographic area. Free Continuing Legal Education credits were available to the treatment attorneys that attended a pod meeting.

Upon request from the state teams, a listserv and bulletin board were developed for each state that could be used for communication from coaches and trainers to the treatment attorneys, and from the treatment attorneys to the coaches, trainers, and one another. The coaches were assigned primary responsibility for managing them. However, over the project period in Georgia there were only nine posts with replies and views, and Washington State did not use the listserv or bulletin board at all.

There was documentation of each pod meeting by the trainer or a supporting staff member, and a random selection of ten coaching sessions by the Chapin Hall evaluation team that was documented by the coach for each quarter of the project. A description of the state experiences with these intervention components follows below.

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## **Attorney Participation in Intervention**

Treatment attorney participation in the three elements of the *QIC-ChildRep* intervention was voluntary.<sup>30</sup> Compensation was provided primarily as a strategy to incentivize participation in data collection for both treatment and control attorneys and was not linked to attorney participation in pods or coaching, except in the last three quarters the intervention was offered in Georgia jurisdictions.<sup>31</sup> Most treatment and control attorneys were given compensation of \$1,500 per year as a professional honorarium for participation in

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<sup>30</sup> As described in the Methods section, Georgia attorneys were not asked if they wanted to participate. Instead, they were notified by the Georgia Administrative Office of the Courts that the judges in the jurisdiction where they practiced had agreed to require participation in the evaluation and, in the case of attorneys assigned to the treatment group, in the intervention. However, no Georgia attorney was penalized for not participating. Washington attorneys were recruited to participate voluntarily.

<sup>31</sup> For the quarter beginning October 1, 2013, the UM QIC and Georgia state partners decided to change the incentive structure in response to the low participation in pod meetings and coaching. The letter to attorneys announced an increase in stipends—from \$1,500 to \$2,000 for treatment attorneys and from \$1,500 to \$1,700 for control attorneys—saying “associated with this increased stipend is a stronger expectation for full participation in data collection, coaching and pod meetings. Partial participation will result in partial stipends.” Incentive payments were reduced for attorneys who did not participate in pods or coaching in those final three quarters.

general, and for the time associated with data collection in particular.<sup>32</sup> It was expected that treatment attorneys would find value in the coaching and pod meetings and would not need incentives to participate in those aspects of the demonstration. Attorneys received CLE credits for attending the introductory two-day training. Attorneys were also able to get CLEs for pod meetings.

After the two-day training, the dosage of the intervention through coaching and pod meetings throughout the remaining two and a half years of the project varied. Data collected on attorney participation in pods and coaching sessions was used to characterize the distribution of these official (not casual) contacts (hereafter “touches”) per attorney and the number of times each of the six core skills was covered.

The first part of this section describes the initial two-day training, where implementation closely matched the treatment design and was the same in both sites. Participation information about quarterly coaching and quarterly pod meetings are presented separately by site, because the actual implementation varied significantly in the two sites.

### **Initial Two-Day Training**

Nearly all attorneys assigned to the treatment groups in both Georgia and Washington State attended the initial two-day training, either at the first or second opportunity. As shown in Table 15, 63 out of 68 Georgia attorneys assigned to the treatment group attended a training and 61 out of 63 Washington attorneys attended a training. As result, over the course of the intervention period, among all 131 treatment attorneys practicing in any given quarter, 124 of them had received the training, and only 7 of them (5 from Georgia and 2 from Washington State) did not end up participating in the initial training, and they were included as part of intent-to-treat impact analyses.

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<sup>32</sup> As described in the Methods section, three organizations in Washington State precluded their attorneys from receiving stipends directly at any point in the project as a matter of professional ethics. As of January 1, 2014, two additional organizations became part of county government and, as a result, 13 more attorneys stopped receiving direct compensation.

**Table 15. Initial Two-Day Training Attendance of Treatment Attorneys**

	All Treatment	Attended Training 1	Attended Training 2	Total Trained	Total Not Trained
<b>Number (Percent)</b>					
Georgia	68 (100%)	53 (78%)	10 (15%)	63 (93%)	5 (7%)
Washington	63 (100%)	53 (84%)	8 (13%)	61 (97%)	2 (3%)
<b>Total</b>	131 (100%)	106 (81%)	18 (14%)	124 (95%)	7 (5%)

**Coaching and Pod Meetings: Georgia****Participation**

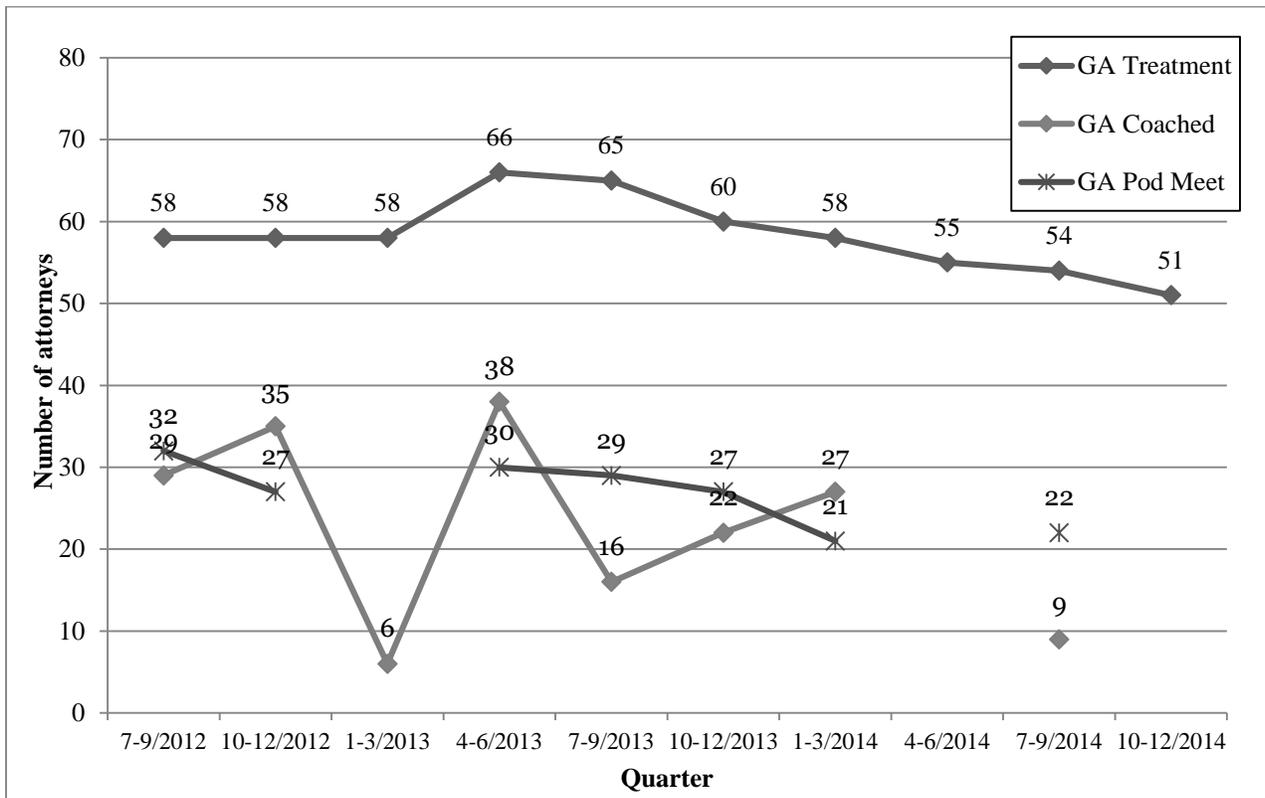
Participation in coaching and pod meetings is characterized in three ways. The first view characterizes the subset of treatment attorneys practicing in each quarter who participated in pod meetings and coaching. This view is shown in Table 16 and graphically in Figure 9.

Table 16 presents the number of active treatment attorneys in each quarter and the treatment attorneys who participated in offered pod meetings and coaching sessions as the percentages of the total active treatment attorneys by quarter. As shown in the table, pod meetings and coaching sessions were not offered for certain quarters due to factors such as scheduling conflicts or staff on leave. The participation rate of both pod meetings and coaching sessions did not reach 50 percent for most of the quarters. Compared to the participation rate of the pod meetings, more variation was seen among coaching sessions in different quarters (shown in Figure 9 as sharp ups and downs.).

**Table 16. Quarterly Percentages of Attorneys Participating in Pod Meetings and Coaching (Georgia)**

Quarter	Treatment Attorneys Active in Quarter ( <i>n</i> )	Participated in Offered Pod Meeting (%)	Participated in Offered Coaching Session (%)
07–09/2012	58	55%	50%
10–12/2012	58	47%	60%
01–03/2013	58	Not offered	10%
04–06/2013	66	45%	58%
07–09/2013	65	45%	25%
10–12/2013	60	45%	37%
01–03/2014	58	36%	47%
04–06/2014	55	Not offered	Not offered
07–09/2014	54	41%	17%
10–12/2014	51	Not offered	Not offered

**Figure 9. Number of Practicing Treatment Attorneys (All) and Attorneys Who Participated in Pods and Coaching (Georgia)**



The second view, shown in Table 17, characterizes attorney participation over the two-and-a-half-year period by the cumulative number of “touches” of pod meetings and coaching sessions. Each treatment attorney in Georgia had the opportunity to participate or be “touched” by the pod meeting intervention seven times and by the coaching intervention eight times.

**Table 17. Percent and Cumulative Percent of “Touches” (Georgia)**

Pod Meetings				Coaching			
Total Number of Meetings	Number of Attorneys	Percent of Attorneys	Cumulative Percent	Total Number of Sessions	Number of Attorneys	Percent of Attorneys	Cumulative Percent
0 Mtngs	14	21%	21%	0 Sess.	10	15%	15%
1-4 Mtngs	36	53%	74%	1-4 Sess.	47	69%	84%
5-7 Mtngs	18	26%	100%	5-8 Sess.	11	16%	100%
Total	68	100%		Total	68	100%	
Median Number of Meetings: 3				Median Number of Sessions: 3			

Table 17 shows that slightly over half of the treatment attorneys were “touched” by pod meetings between one and four times, about a quarter of the treatment attorneys were “touched” by pod meetings between five and seven times, and the remaining 21 percent of the treatment attorneys never participated in any pod meeting. It is a similar story for participation in coaching sessions, except that a higher percentage (69%) of treatment attorneys fell into the middle category (“touched” by coaching sessions between one and four times), and lower percentages of treatment attorneys fell into the two ends (15 percent never participated in any coaching sessions, and 16 percent were “touched” by between five and eight coaching sessions). The median number of both pod meetings and coaching sessions attended by treatment attorneys was three.

Evaluators also collected data from attorneys about which core skill or skills were discussed in each pod meeting or coaching session. The third view of intervention participation, shown in Table 18, indicates the percent of Georgia attorneys for whom each core skill was covered at least three times over the course of the post-training period. About two-thirds of attorneys had covered the core skill “enter the child’s world” at least three times. About half had covered the core skills “evaluate needs”, “advocate effectively”, and “assess safety” at least three times and half had not reached this threshold. Most attorneys had not had at least three discussions with state team staff about advance case planning and develop case theory.

**Table 18. Six Core Skills – Frequency of Discussion post initial two-day training (Georgia)**

Core skill	Percent of all treatment attorneys discussing skill at least three times
Enter child’s world	68%
Evaluate needs	52%
Advocate effectively	56%
Assess safety	47%
Advance case planning	27%
Develop case theory	14%

### **Implementation**

In Georgia, all of the coaching sessions were conducted by individual telephone conversations except during the last quarter. Although the expectation in the design of the coaching component was that the coach would have at least one session with the attorney each quarter, the actual numbers of attorneys that were coached fell short of the goal in most quarters. While the coaches reported reaching out to contact each attorney at least once for most quarters, many attorneys did not respond with a return call or e-mail. As a result, the number of attorneys coached in each quarter ranged from six to 38, while the number of treatment attorneys practicing ranged from 54 to 66. For at least one quarter the coach took a leave of

absence and the state partner secured another coach to fill in with the attorneys. This additional coach remained with the project for its last several quarters. Even with the availability and efforts of two coaches in at least the final year, the number of attorneys responding to the coaching invitation each quarter remained low. Because of concerns about attorney participation and the coaching content, UM QIC decided to end the practice of inviting attorneys to schedule coaching calls after the first quarter of 2014 and changed the format to invited lunches for small groups of attorneys for one more quarter (July-September 2014). Nine attorneys participated in coaching lunches.

The coaching sessions' documentation varied in its content as it related to the model. Some reports made use of the coaching template headings and gave the details of the attorney's case with or without a mention of the utilization of the core skills, described advice provided by the coach that did not regularly include suggestions for appropriate application of the model, and noted follow up needs or concerns of the coach that were inconsistent in how they referenced the model. Other notes were short summaries primarily focusing on the details of the attorney's case, but with little or no description of the nature of the coaching or how a particular core skill, even though it was identified, could be employed by the attorney.

In Georgia there were a total of 12 pod groups and each pod was comprised of between four and ten attorneys. Some of the meetings were scheduled in pod group clusters such that there was a range of six to nine actual pod meetings in a quarter. Pod meetings began in July 2012 and ended in July 2014. During the first quarter, all of the meetings were face to face. Thereafter, the meetings were held by webinar/teleconference until the last pod meeting cycle, which returned to the original design of in-person meetings with an expanded reconfiguration of the pod group clusters so that there were three final meetings for treatment attorneys in the July to September 2014 quarter. In the first quarter of 2013, there were no pod meetings held due to scheduling difficulties.

As shown in Figure 9, the total attendance for a quarterly meeting cycle ranged from 21 to 32 participants, and the total number of treatment attorneys in the same period ranged from 54 to 66. These attendance numbers were considered much lower than anticipated in the design of the pod meeting intervention. The decision to change the format from in person to a virtual meeting was made to address the fact that there was only a total of 32 attendees at the first quarter meetings and to minimize the amount of travel time for the state team and for the attorneys. With this modification, the team hoped that more participants would be able to attend the pod meetings using the convenience of technology. However, as it turned out, the first quarter's meeting had the highest number of attendees of any quarter during the project period.

The planning and production of each round of meetings was supposed to include the trainer, coach or coaches, and team staff. Each was to have a role in the meeting. In practice, the participation of the coaches was not always consistent. Each round of meetings focused on one or more QIC skills; other

informational materials on child-related topics such as trauma-informed advocacy, case scenarios for discussion, state specific law and policies affecting children; and included some open time for attorneys to raise their individual case issues. The UM QIC convened two joint phone conferences with both state teams to provide them the opportunity to share successes and challenges with each other. Both times, the Georgia team borrowed Washington State's approaches in their next round of pod meetings. For the last round of pod meetings, Georgia employed a strategy used in Washington State and invited a former foster child to speak to the attorneys to describe her experiences with her lawyer while in the child welfare system.

The implementation of coaching and pod meetings in Georgia was also influenced by the findings from qualitative interviews with treatment attorneys conducted by the UM QIC. Based on these interviews and attendance data, the UM QIC worked with the Georgia team to make changes to the coaching and pod meetings starting in the second quarter of 2014. It was at that time that it was decided that coaching would be voluntary, would be done during in-person lunches, and that the pods would be combined for one more, in-person, longer meeting in three locations to conclude pod meetings.

### **Coaching and Pod Meetings: Washington**

#### **Participation**

Table 19 presents the percentages of the treatment attorneys who participated in the offered pod meetings and coaching sessions by quarter. The participation rate was consistent and usually ranged from 70 percent to 80 percent for both pod meetings and coaching sessions for the majority of the quarters. The high level and stability of the participation in coaching and pod meetings is shown in Figure 10 as relatively flat lines.

**Table 19. Quarterly Percentages of Attorneys Participating in Pod Meetings and Coaching (Washington)**

Quarter	Treatment attorneys active in quarter (n)	Participated in offered pod meeting (%)	Participated in offered coaching session (%)
07-09/2012	54	85%	83%
10-12/2012	54	72%	80%
01-03/2013	54	74%	83%
04-06/2013	61	61%	69%
07-09/2013	61	70%	70%
10-12/2013	61	74%	75%
01-03/2014	59	71%	73%
04-06/2014	54	80%	80%
07-09/2014	53	75%	75%
10-12/2014	50	66%	72%

**Figure 10. Number of Practicing Treatment Attorneys (All) and Attorneys Who Participated in Pods and Coaching (Washington)**

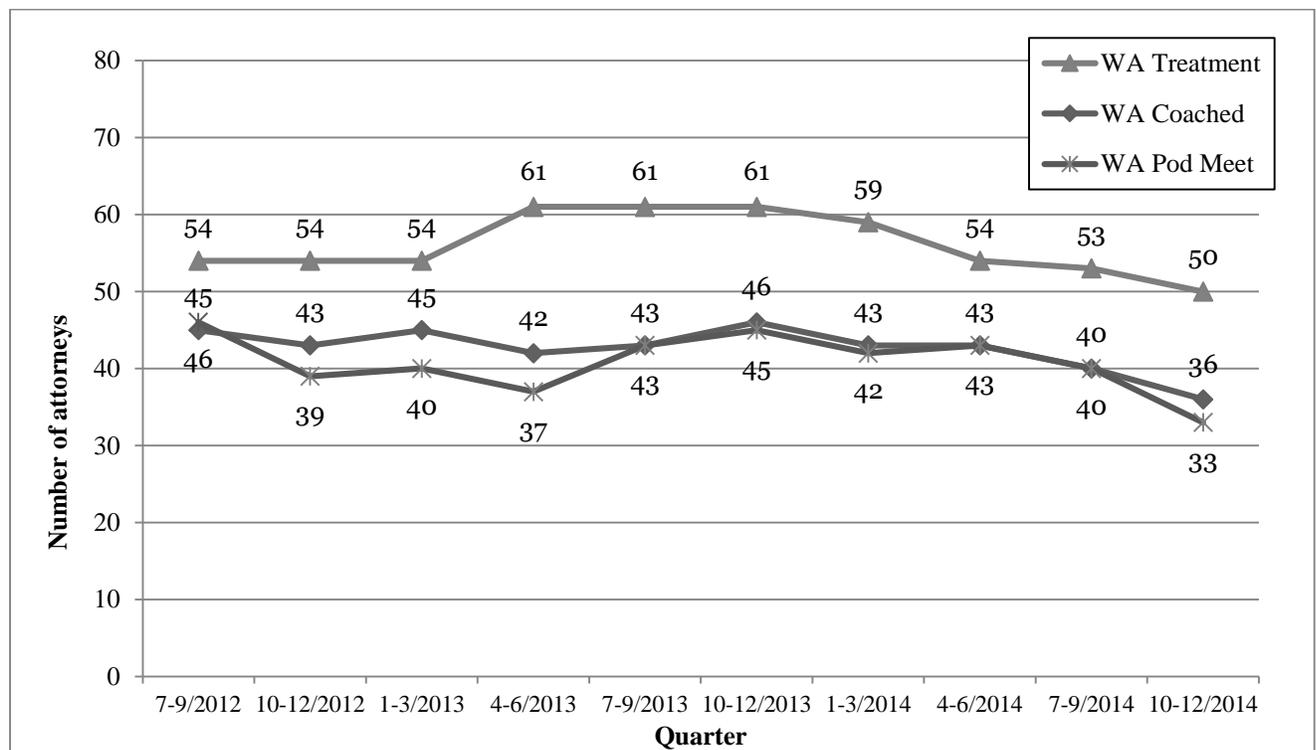


Table 20 shows that close to 80 percent of the treatment attorneys were “touched” by at least half (between 5 and 10) of the 10 pod meetings offered. Only 3 percent of the treatment attorneys never participated in a pod meeting. The median number of pod meetings attended by attorneys was seven. Close to three-fourths of the treatment attorneys were “touched” by at least half of the coaching sessions,

and the majority of those participated in eight to ten coaching sessions. The median number of coaching sessions that treatment attorneys attended was nine.

**Table 20. Number and Cumulative Number of “Touches” (Washington)**

Pod Meetings				Coaching Sessions			
Total Number of Meetings	Number of Attorneys	Percent of Attorneys	Cumulative Percent	Total Number of Sessions	Number of Attorneys	Percent of Attorneys	Cumulative Percent
0 Mtngs	2	3%	3%	0 Sess.	10	16%	16%
1-4 Mtngs	11	17%	21%	1-4 Sess.	7	11%	27%
5-7 Mtngs	21	33%	54%	5-8 Sess.	8	13%	40%
8-10 Mtgs	29	46%	100%	8-10 Sess.	38	60%	100%
Total	63	100%		Total	63	100%	
Median Number of Meetings: 7				Median Number of Sessions: 9			

**Table 21. Six Core Skills – Frequency of Discussion post initial two-day training (Washington)**

Core Skill	Percent of All Treatment Attorneys Discussing Skill at Least 3 Times
Enter child’s world	92%
Evaluate needs	89%
Advocate effectively	89%
Assess safety	78%
Advance case planning	89%
Develop case theory	79%

Table 21 shows that all six core skills were widely and consistently discussed among the majority of the treatment attorneys—either at a pod meeting or a coaching session—for at least 3 times throughout the study. The percentage of all treatment attorneys discussing a particular core skill at least 3 times ranged from 78 percent to 92 percent.

### Implementation

The implementation of the coaching sessions and pod meetings for the treatment attorneys was consistently strong in Washington State. This was demonstrated by the retention of attorneys for coaching sessions and as participants at the pod meetings. The state team adhered to the tenets of the coaching and pod designs in their planning and implementation of these interventions, as well as in their interactions with the attorneys. Further, the relationship between the coach, trainer, and support staff remained cohesive and unified in purpose and process throughout the course of the project.

The coaching began in July 2012 and ended in March 2015. As designed, the goal for the coaching was to provide each attorney with at least one coaching session each quarter. As shown in Figure 10, the actual number of attorneys that participated in the quarterly rounds of coaching ranged from 36 to 46, while throughout the course of the project, the number of treatment attorneys ranged from 50 to 61. As in the Georgia site, the coach initiated contact with each attorney each quarter, but in some cases, the attorney did not respond to the invitation. For each session the coach used the topics in the reporting template and described any comments the attorney made about their engagement with the model in that quarter. The coach also described the advice or guidance they gave, particularly towards the attorney developing a deeper understanding of a core skill or making suggestions on application of a core skill to the specifics of a case. Throughout the documentation there was an emphasis on keeping the attorneys focused on the aspirations and principles of the model, understanding the purpose of their role as a child representative, and the importance of good standards of practice. Even when an attorney mentioned the barriers of time and resources in employing the model, the coach would continue to advocate for utilization of the model skills, but would mention specific activities that could be undertaken given the attorney's limited time and resources. Generally, the coach documented that the attorney had something specific to use from the model by the end of each coaching session that would support the goal of behavior change of the attorney. There were nine pods created in Washington State and each pod was comprised of between six and eleven treatment attorneys. All pod meetings were in person. As shown on Figure 10, the actual number of attorneys that participated in the quarterly rounds of pod meetings ranged from 33 to 46. Throughout the course of the project, the number of treatment attorneys ranged from 50 to 61. The pod meetings began in July 2012 and ended in March 2015.<sup>33</sup>

The content for the July 2012 through December 2013 meetings was created one round at a time, partly to have the flexibility to plan the content for each quarterly meeting and partly to be able to respond to issues raised during the prior quarter's pod meetings and coaching calls. The format began with training that demonstrated what the attorneys needed to learn in order to incorporate the core skills into their practice. The meeting content included a review or check-in or both about the model and core skills, with in-depth discussions and exercises to assess and support application of the model in the attorneys' practice, and activities that included small groups of attorneys talking with each other. Even when there were discussions about new laws or policies affecting child representation, the focus remained on new approaches and ways to look at the six core skills.

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<sup>33</sup> Starting in the fourth quarter of 2013, the three King county pods were merged into one pod. There were usually 2 pod meetings held for those attorneys so that they could choose which meeting to attend based on their schedules. In the last quarter of 2014, there was only one scheduled pod meeting for this group.

In December 2013, the coach and trainer met to plan a curriculum of pod meetings that would last until the end of the project. As a result of questions and issues that arose in earlier pod meetings, characterized by the team as “an unskilled response to a basic skill of the job” and “needing to get right about what their role was,” they decided to use the remaining meetings to “work toward more core understanding of the [attorney] role in an effort to help attorneys answer some of these questions themselves.” The curriculum included a former foster youth in each pod meeting to help the attorneys understand the youths’ experience entering and being in the child welfare system, development of learning tools to help the attorneys understand their behavior and the importance of their role and practice skills, and open discussions about the attorneys’ analysis of their practice and how they would improve it in realistic and incremental steps, while still emphasizing the model’s six skills.

They also decided that the last quarter’s curricula would explicitly focus on the development of “Communities of Practice,” which would sustain and support the shared values and standards of practice (emphasizing the six core skills) that had emerged from the project’s pod meetings. Planning for these meetings shifted from exclusively being the responsibility of the trainer and coach to include volunteer treatment attorneys from the pods who would also take responsibility for leading the discussions. Although by this time there had been a gradual shift in the amount of leadership by the trainer and coach to the attorneys at the meetings, the plan for these final gatherings underscored that the attorneys had to take responsibility for their learning and to their ability to create an enduring community of youth attorneys.

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# Results

This chapter presents experimental evidence addressing the two impact questions: Did treatment attorneys change the way they handled their at-risk cases, compared to attorneys who continued to practice as usual? Did children served by treatment attorneys experience different outcomes than children served by control attorneys? The questions about attorney behavior were analyzed using responses to child-specific attorney surveys. Questions about outcomes were analyzed with links to state administrative data systems. The evaluation had sufficient power to detect moderate effects. See the chapter on methods, and Appendix F, for more information.

Depending on their placement status at the time or subsequent placement, children were included in either the attorney behavior analysis, the analysis of out-of-home care outcomes, or both. In Georgia, since nearly 30 percent of children who were represented were never placed, the two samples were somewhat different: the attorney behavior sample included children who were never a part of the out-of-home care outcome analysis. In Washington State, a much smaller proportion of children were never placed (14%) so almost all of the children about whom attorneys were surveyed were also part of the placement analysis. The numbers of children and attorneys in each analysis are presented in the methods chapter.

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## Attorney Behavior Results

Whether, and how, attorney behavior changed as a result of the intervention was measured with child-specific surveys of attorneys. The surveys contained questions addressing the hypothesized links in attorney behavior to child outcomes that could be reasonably measured through surveys. Surveys were triggered based on the attorneys' appointment as legal counsel and continued at approximately six-month intervals thereafter. In Washington State, attorneys were asked to complete additional milestone surveys when children experienced certain legal or service milestones, such as dispositional order, termination of parental rights order, and exit from substitute care.

Forty-nine attorney opinions and behaviors were analyzed with child-specific surveys. Each question was analyzed over all survey types and separately for assignment surveys and review surveys.<sup>34</sup> In addition, common response types for questions about communication events and questions about time spent on various activities were averaged and analyzed.

## Response Rates

Response rates for child-specific surveys ranged between 68 and 97 percent depending on the state, group, and survey type (see Table 22). Overall response rates for Washington attorneys were higher (89%) than for Georgia attorneys (82%).

**Table 22. Attorney Response Rates for Child-Specific Surveys: Number of surveys assigned and completed by survey type**

	Treatment			Control			All		
	assigned	completed	%	assigned	completed	%	assigned	completed	%
<b>Washington</b>	#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%
Assignment	510	498	98%	433	392	91%	943	890	94%
Disposition	201	194	97%	182	160	88%	383	354	92%
Review1	392	341	87%	338	266	79%	730	607	83%
Review2	241	205	85%	187	144	77%	428	349	82%
TPR	27	26	96%	22	15	68%	49	41	84%
Exit	183	177	97%	133	119	89%	316	296	94%
Total	1,554	1,441	93%	1,295	1,096	85%	2,849	2,537	89%
<b>Georgia</b>	#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%
Assignment	346	286	83%	272	230	85%	618	516	83%
Review1	204	149	73%	174	147	84%	378	296	78%
Review2	78	65	83%	66	62	94%	144	127	88%
Total	628	500	80%	512	439	86%	1,140	939	82%

## Results

Attorney behavior results are grouped in four domains: questions relating to the frequency of contact with individuals related to the case (see Tables 23 and 24), time spent on selected activities (see Tables 25 and 26), frequency of occurrence of certain events (see Table 27), and relationship and advocacy activities (see Table 28, 29, and 30). The analysis of the surveys showed some differences between treatment and control attorneys across all of these domains.

<sup>34</sup> For Washington, questions from the assignment and review survey were included in the dispositional order, termination of parental rights order, and exit from substitute care surveys. These responses were included in the analysis of all surveys, but not in the analysis of review surveys. Review surveys include only the surveys completed at six month intervals.

**Table 23. Odds Ratio (OR): Treatment effect on times attorney met in person, spoken on the phone, e-mailed, or texted with. . .**

Type of Individual	Georgia			Washington		
	All Surveys	Assignment	Review	All Surveys	Assignment	Review
	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR
Biological parent or original caregiver				1.48†	1.16	1.84†
Mother	1.45	1.18	2.16†			
Father	1.62*	1.89**	1.06			
Siblings				0.90	0.97	0.67
Other individuals related to this child (e.g., grandparent)	1.36	1.40	1.20	1.27	1.13	1.61
Foster parent or substitute caregiver	1.69*	1.92*	1.64	1.59*	1.62**	1.92*
Caseworker(s)	1.80*	1.64	1.97	1.34	1.18	1.51
Attorneys	1.25	0.98	2.32*			
Attorney for this child's parent's				1.16	0.89	1.70
Other attorneys or legal professionals				1.64†	1.19	3.22*
CASA	1.46	1.82	1.95†	1.40†	1.09	1.43
Teacher or other education professional	1.47*	Δ	2.36	1.23	1.41	1.05

\*\* *p*-value < 0.01, \* *p*-value < 0.05, † *p*-value < 0.1, Δ Not estimable.

**Table 24. Average Scales: Treatment effect (Beta or B) on times attorney met in person, spoken on the phone, e-mailed, or texted with. . .**

Average Scales	Georgia			Washington		
	All Surveys	Assignment	Review	All Surveys	Assignment	Review
	B	B	B	B	B	B
Family Members	0.12*	0.09	0.12	0.04	0.00	0.05
Proximate Collaterals <sup>a</sup>	0.22*	0.19†	0.28*	0.17†	0.05	0.31
Distal Collaterals <sup>b</sup>	0.06	0.10	0.08	0.06	0.02	0.08

\*\* *p*-value < 0.01, \* *p*-value < 0.05, † *p*-value < 0.1, Δ Not estimable.

<sup>a</sup> Includes caseworkers, other attorneys, and foster parents.

<sup>b</sup> Includes teachers, CASA, and health professionals, and other service providers.

Georgia treatment attorneys were more likely to communicate with fathers near the time of assignment ( $p < 0.01$ ) and were more likely to communicate with mothers at the time of review ( $p < 0.1$ ). More communication occurred with proximate collaterals at all survey points ( $p < 0.01$ ). Differences were also observed for contact with CASA at review ( $p < 0.1$ ). Across all surveys, the differences observed between the treatment and control attorneys were communication with fathers, foster parents, and caseworkers, and teacher or other education professional ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Washington treatment attorneys were more likely to communicate with a biological parent or original caregiver ( $p < 0.1$ ), foster parent or substitute caregiver ( $p < 0.05$ ), other legal professionals ( $p < 0.1$ ) and CASA ( $p < 0.1$ ) across all surveys. More communication occurred with proximate collaterals at all survey points ( $p < 0.1$ ). In addition, differences were also observed for contact with other legal professionals at review ( $p < 0.1$ ). The largest differences observed between the treatment and control attorneys were for communication with foster parent or substitute caregiver at the time of assignment ( $p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 25. Odds Ratio (OR): Treatment effect on time spent involved in the following activities in furtherance of this child’s case**

Activity	Georgia			Washington		
	All Surveys	Assignment	Review	All Surveys	Assignment	Review
	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR
Developing the theory of the case	2.34*	2.64†	2.28	1.90**	2.1**	2.81*
Legal research	2.38	2.35	2.89	0.98	1.08	1.28
Consulting or negotiating with other parties to the case	2.72**	2.85*	2.14†	1.19	0.85	1.76
Obtaining / reviewing this child's court file	1.13	0.93	1.21	0.79	0.80	0.85
Obtaining / reviewing third-party records	1.72†	1.40	2.09			
Reviewing this child's school records				0.88	1.00	0.97
Reviewing this child's medical records or assessments				1.07	1.17	1.18
Reviewing other evaluations and assessments				0.96	0.86	1.22
Conducting interviews or reviewing interview notes	2.55**	2.54**	2.64†	0.91	0.83	1.20
Drafting and filing pleadings, motions, and court orders	2.18	1.99	3.24*			
Assessing this child's safety with respect to removal or return to their home of origin	1.43	1.49*	1.56	1.35	1.20	1.70
Reassessing this child's safety with respect to home of the original care taker				1.19	0.96	1.92
Assessing this child's safety with respect to current placement	1.69*	1.46†	3.14**	1.01	0.92	1.41
Reassessing this child's safety with respect to current placement				1.33	0.90	1.87†
Reviewing, assessing or seeking to influence this child's case plan	1.87†	2.11*	1.58	1.14	0.94	1.69

\*\* *p*-value < 0.01, \* *p*-value < 0.05, † *p*-value < 0.1, Δ Not estimable.

**Table 26. Average Scales: Treatment effect on time spent involved in the following activities in furtherance of this child’s case**

Average Scales	Georgia			Washington		
	All Surveys	Assignment	Review	All Surveys	Assignment	Review
	B	B	B	B	B	B
Legal Case Preparation <sup>a</sup>	0.25*	0.24†	0.21	0.03	0.00	0.14
Investigation & Document Review <sup>b</sup>	0.25*	0.21*	0.29†	-0.04	-0.06	0.05

\*\*  $p$ -value < 0.01, \*  $p$ -value < 0.05, †  $p$ -value < 0.1, Δ Not estimable.

<sup>a</sup> Includes developing strategy of the case, consultation and negotiation, drafting pleadings and other court documents, reviewing court file, and seeking to influence child’s case plan.

<sup>b</sup> Includes third-party record review, witness interviews, and assessing safety.

Georgia treatment attorneys responded in the hypothesized direction in most of the activity measures. The QIC intervention seems to have had the strongest impact on consulting or negotiating with other parties to the case ( $p < 0.01$ ) and conducting interviews or reviewing interview notes ( $p < 0.01$ ) across all surveys. Differences were also observed for developing the theory of the case ( $p < 0.05$ ) and assessing child’s safety with respect to current placement ( $p < 0.05$ ). In addition, treatment attorneys were more likely to review the child’s case plan ( $p < 0.1$ ) and third-party records ( $p < 0.1$ ); perform more drafting and filing pleadings, motions, and court orders for treatment attorneys at the time of review ( $p < 0.05$ ); and assessing the child’s safety with respect to removal or return to their home of origin right after the time of assignment ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Although there were not many statistically significant findings in time spent on various activities, the robust difference in time spent developing a theory of the case was notable. It showed that Washington treatment attorneys were more likely to spend time developing the case theory at different points of the surveys ( $p < 0.01$ ). At the time of review, treatment attorneys were also more likely to spend time reassessing their client’s safety with respect to the placement ( $p < 0.1$ ).

**Table 27. Odds Ratio (OR): Treatment effect on whether attorney participated in the following events since the last survey**

Event	Georgia			Washington		
	All Surveys	Assignment	Review	All Surveys	Assignment	Review
	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR
Mediation	0.70	1.10	3.19	1.81	1.48	Δ
Family team or treatment team meeting	2.83*	Δ	1.32	1.27	0.81	2.08**
Other judicial, administrative, or educational proceedings	1.35	2.00	0.90	0.81	0.81	0.87
Hearing on placement change				0.91	0.89	1.14
Pre-trial hearing/settlement conference	1.85	2.88*	1.29			
Motion hearing (non-reunification, placement change, etc.)	0.98	Δ	1.11	1.17	0.90	1.78*

\*\*  $p$ -value < 0.01, \*  $p$ -value < 0.05, †  $p$ -value < 0.1, Δ Not estimable.

Georgia treatment attorneys participated more in family team or treatment team meetings across all surveys ( $p < .05$ ), and attended more pretrial hearing/settlement conferences near the time of assignment ( $p < .05$ ).

Washington treatment attorneys participated more in family team meetings at the time of review ( $p < 0.01$ ). Also at the time of review, a difference was observed in motion hearings ( $p < 0.05$ ) in the hypothesized direction.

**Table 28. Odds Ratio (OR): Treatment effect on relationship and advocacy activities**

Activity	Georgia			Washington		
	All Surveys	Assignment	Review	All Surveys	Assignment	Review
	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR
Number of times spoken, emailed or text with child	2.47†	2.19†	3.13*	1.03	0.94	1.26
Number of times met in person with child	2.18*	2.69*	1.68	1.04	1.04	1.31
Met child in their home or placement	1.87	1.26	2.56†	1.17	1.18	1.50
Have you made any efforts to initiate a non-adversarial case resolution process	1.84	2.24	2.06	2.09*	1.62	2.94*
Did you argue for, or make other concerted efforts to change, the array of services provided to this child	2.35*	2.32*	2.62†	1.22	1.26	1.31
Did you argue for, or make other concerted efforts to change, the array of services to this child's family	2.15*	2.34*	2.57*	1.36	1.29	1.64
Quality of relationship with child	1.46	1.28	1.87	1.04	1.09	1.04
Level of understanding of goals and objectives	1.61	1.61	2.65	0.79	0.75	0.81
Your advocacy agreed with child's wishes				0.60†	0.70	0.73

\*\*  $p$ -value < 0.01, \*  $p$ -value < 0.05, †  $p$ -value < 0.1, Δ Not estimable.

Georgia treatment attorneys were more likely to speak, e-mail or text the child client ( $p < 0.1$ ), and meet in person with the child at all survey points ( $p < 0.05$ ) than control attorneys. Differences were also observed for arguing for or making other concerted efforts to change, the array of services provided to the child ( $p < 0.05$ ) and the child's family ( $p < 0.05$ ) in the hypothesized direction. It was also shown at the time of review that Georgia treatment attorneys were more likely to meet the child outside of the court ( $p < 0.1$ ).

In comparison to control attorneys, Washington treatment attorneys initiated nonadversarial case resolution process ( $p < 0.05$ ) more frequently both across all surveys and at review. However, their advocacy was less likely to agree with the child's wishes ( $p < 0.1$ ).

**Table 29. Odds Ratio (OR): Treatment effect on whether child’s dispositional order agrees with the goals of the child for his or her case**

Goals of the child for his or her case with respect to...	Georgia	Washington
	OR	OR
Permanency plan goal	0.75	0.60
Services for his/her parents	0.51	0.67
Visitation plan with his/her parents	2.05	1.39
Placement or living arrangement	0.98	1.71
Other services for this child	0.77	0.77
School placement	1.01	0.76
Other educational issues	1.56	0.41

\*\*  $p$ -value < 0.01, \*  $p$ -value < 0.05, †  $p$ -value < 0.1, Δ Not estimable.

There were no statistically significant differences in either state between treatment and control attorneys’ assessment of the degree to which dispositional orders agreed with the goals of the child.

**Table 30. Odds Ratio (OR) of treatment effect on relationship with child at case closing (Georgia)**

Over the course of the case...	Georgia
	OR
Did your relationship with the child help you reach decisions in this case?	2.67†
To what extent did you share information with the child about child's case?	1.80
Did child generally express his or her wishes?	2.88
How much weight did you attach to child's wishes?	1.74
Did your recommendations to the court reflect child's wishes?	0.46
Did you ever request an evaluation of the child's health, mental health, or educational needs?	1.60
Did you ever request an evaluation of a parent or caregivers health or educational needs?	0.89

\*\*  $p$ -value < 0.01, \*  $p$ -value < 0.05, †  $p$ -value < 0.1, Δ Not estimable.

The sample for the questions in Table 30 was closed cases.<sup>35</sup> It appeared that Georgia treatment attorneys were more likely to feel that the relationship with the child helped in the handling of the case ( $p < 0.1$ ) but there was a lack of differences between treatment and control attorneys on other relationship questions asked at case closing.

## Child Outcome Results

To be included in the child outcome sample, a child must have had a treatment or control attorney assigned to represent them at some point prior to leaving out-of-home care. Every child in the out-of-home care sample was represented by an attorney at some point. (Figure 5 shows the distribution of the timing of an assignment to an attorney.) Using this sample, the evaluation addressed the question of whether children assigned to attorneys who received the intervention experienced differences in permanency outcomes, rates of kinship placement, and rates of movement within one year of assignment compared to children assigned to control attorneys. Data was analyzed for two other placement outcomes, siblings placed together and reentry from placement, but there were insufficient numbers to support a comparison of these outcomes between treatment and control attorneys.

<sup>35</sup> In the Georgia surveys, the relationship questions in Table 30 were only asked once, when the attorney indicated the case had closed. Over the course of survey data collection, case closing questions were completed for 274 surveys (141 were completed by treatment attorneys and 133 were completed by control attorneys).

## Permanency Outcomes

Permanency outcomes were analyzed as of March 31, 2015, when study data collection ended. Table 31 shows the exit outcomes observed (or not yet observed) as of March 31, 2015 for the child outcome sample for all assignment timings. Slightly less than half of the sample had experienced a permanent exit (45% in Georgia and 41% in Washington State) and about half of the children represented were still in care as of March 31, 2015 (49% in Georgia and 52% in Washington State). Of children who experienced a permanent exit, most children were discharged to immediate families or other relatives. A small proportion exited to guardianship and adoption, though in Washington State, adoption exits represented 13 percent of observed exits.

**Table 31. Exit Status from Out-of-Home Care by Permanent and Other Exit Types for All Assignments to Project Attorneys (Observed through March 31, 2015)**

Exit Type	Georgia		Washington	
	#	%	#	%
Exit to family/relative	652	37%	451	25%
Guardianship guar	90	5%	51	3%
Adoption	64	4%	225	13%
<b>All Permanency Exits</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>727</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>Other Exits</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Still in care on 3/31/2015</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>926</b>	<b>52%</b>
Total	1,777	100%	1,787	100%

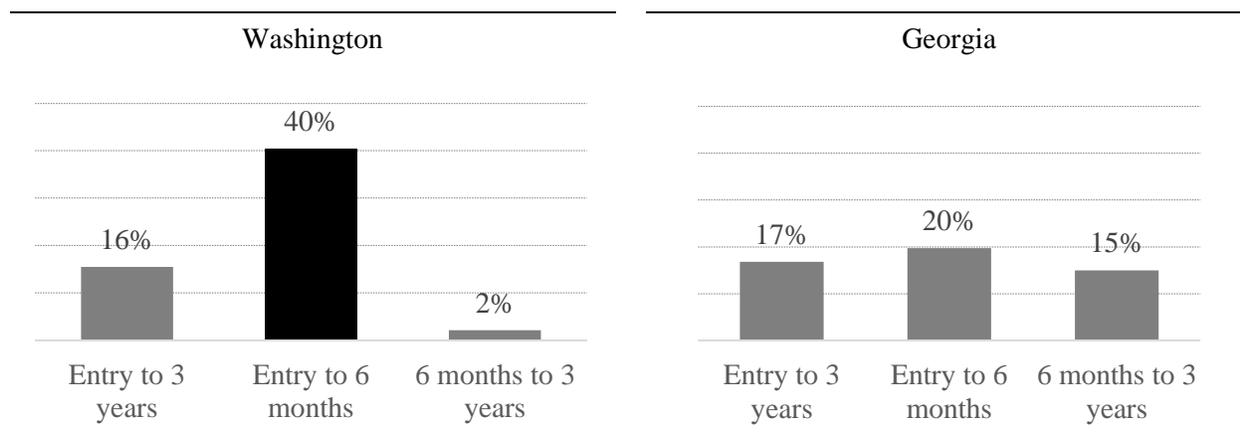
For the permanency outcome, two discrete time hazard models were used, with a binary dependent variable indicating whether or not the child had achieved permanency as of March 31, 2015. The first model evaluated the average treatment effect on permanency to date for the complete sample, including all assignment timings. The second model included two covariates, one that evaluated the interaction between the treatment effect and the likelihood of permanency within six months and one that evaluated the interaction between the treatment effect and the likelihood of permanency after six months. Table 32 and Figure 11 present the results for the two models groups for each state.

**Table 32. Estimated Hazard Ratios of Exit to Permanence for Children Represented by QIC vs. Control Group Attorneys**

State	Observation Period	H.R.	Sig.
Washington	Model 1: First 3 years after entry to care	1.16	0.2994
	Model 2: First 6 months after entry to care	1.40	0.0318*
	Model 2: 6 months to 3 years after entry to care	1.02	0.8861
Georgia	Model 1: First 3 years after entry to care	1.17	0.2027
	Model 2: First 6 months after entry to care	1.20	0.1980
	Model 2: 6 months to 3 years after entry to care	1.15	0.2808

H.R. = Hazard ratio. Hazard ratio of greater than 1 indicates faster permanency during observation period.  
 Sig = *p*-value

**Figure 11. Percent Difference in Hazard of Exit to Permanence between QIC and Control Groups By State and Observation Period**



*Note: Black column represents statistically significant difference.*

All treatment effects were in the expected direction; only one was statistically significant. Children represented by treatment attorneys in Washington State were 40 percent more likely to experience permanency within six months of placement than children represented by control group attorneys. In Georgia, the likelihood of permanency within six months of placement was not statistically different for children represented by treatment attorneys versus children represented by control attorneys. In both states, no significant differences in permanency were found for children who stayed in care for longer than six months, though more than half of this group were still in care as of the end of the study (March 31, 2015).

## Placement Moves and Placement with Kin

Children represented by treatment or control attorneys did not appear to have different experiences of placement moves or placement with kin (see Table 33). Among Georgia children studied, 17 percent of children were placed with kin at placement or as the next placement after assignment to a treatment or control attorney. Among Washington children studied, 17 percent of children were placed with kin at or as the next placement after assignment to a treatment or control attorney. Among Georgia children studied, 61 percent of children did not experience a placement move within a year after assignment to a treatment or control attorney (or prior to exiting care, whichever came first). Among Washington children studied, 69 percent of children did not experience a placement move within a year after assignment to a treatment or control attorney (or prior to exiting care, whichever came first).

**Table 33. Estimated Hazard Ratios of Placement with Kin and Movement**

State	Outcome	H.R.	Sig.
Washington	Placement with kin	0.75	0.18
	No placement move within 1 year of assignment	1.21	0.19
Georgia	Placement with kin	1.05	0.84
	No placement move within 1 year of assignment	1.32	0.14

H.R. = Hazard ratio. For kinship analysis, hazard ratio of greater than 1 indicates greater likelihood of placement with kin. For movement analysis, hazard ratio of greater than 1 indicates greater likelihood of a stable placement (no movement).

Sig = p-value

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## Summary of Findings

This study was designed to answer one main question. Would attorneys representing at-risk children, after the attorneys were exposed to a certain set of skills over a certain period of time, help their child clients reach better outcomes? As with any study, during the course of it, by implication, further questions would arise as corollaries to the main question. Would the outcomes in the two states be different or the same? Which factors would influence these similar or different outcomes?

The interventions piloted in the counties of Georgia and Washington State were developed to teach and reinforce The *QIC-ChildRep* Best Practice Model. Almost all attorneys participated in initial two-day training to introduce the six core skills, and to varying degrees, participated in the quarterly opportunities to boost their skills over the next two and a half years. Qualitative data from observation, coaching notes, and interviews with project staff and some attorneys indicated that many treatment attorneys were challenged to think and practice in different ways and gained a new understanding of their work in the

context of a community of practice of other attorneys also representing at-risk children. Quantitative analysis of attorney activities showed that across multiple dimensions, attorneys in both states changed their practice as a result of the interventions.

The post initial two-day training elements of the intervention unfolded differently in the two sites. The Georgia site provided important information about one model of an ongoing effort to reach attorneys and reinforce the core skills. There, the initial presentation of the intervention and its evaluation as a requirement may have negatively affected attorney participation. In hindsight, a “community of practice” may have been difficult to form without initial attorney assent. But it is also possible that lower participation was a result of attorneys’ judgment about the relevance of what was being offered. In either case, the Georgia experience serves as a reminder that attorney participation in offered professional development can be an important barometer of attorney buy-in and relevance.

With respect to the question about the impact of the intervention as it was implemented, child welfare outcomes were limited to those available in administrative data and to those experienced by a large enough number of children. Placement stability and placement with kin were the only service outcomes included in the final analysis. Reducing the amount of time a child would spend in foster or group care away from a permanent family was the only well-being outcome that was included. Other outcomes that were available in the administrative data did not pertain to enough children to yield a large enough sample size. Most lawyers were not appointed before placement, so the sample available to examine the differential impact of the intervention on the likelihood of placement was small. Similarly, many children did not enter with siblings at the same time, and most children who entered care as siblings were placed together, whether or not they were represented by either a treatment or control lawyer.

In answering the question of a general impact of the intervention on permanency, the most challenging element in both sites was variation in the timing of attorney appointment. For this reason, in addition to examining permanency across all children in the study, children who were appointed an attorney before or within six months of placement were analyzed as a group distinct from children appointed an attorney after six months in placement.

The experience in the Georgia counties illuminates an important challenge of studying the impact of child representation on permanency. The proportion and the case circumstances of children among all child welfare cases that were appointed counsel (and were thus evaluated in the study) varied across counties and spanned the full range of children’s ages. This variation may have presented a challenge for the study. Opportunities for Georgia treatment attorneys to influence permanency may not have occurred often enough in enough counties studied for the contributions of a *QIC-ChildRep* trained attorney to appear in an evaluation designed to detect a moderate, average effect.

In the real world, neither site's results fit neatly into the original logic model where treatment would lead to changes in attorney behavior and those changes in behavior would lead to changes in outcomes. Georgia treatment attorneys had a lower "dose" of the model, showed more differences in behaviors, but the experiences of the children represented by these attorneys were not different when subjected to standard tests of statistical significance. Washington treatment attorneys received a higher dose of the model, showed fewer clear differences in behaviors, but achieved on average, a statistically-significant positive difference in early permanency. These results point to the unavoidable aspect of evaluating the impact of a professional development intervention in the real world, when the intervention being tested manifests in a variety of ways through people like attorneys (or doctors, teachers or foster parents), when the dosage of the intervention varies and type of client served varies. In the end, the evaluation paints these broad strokes: In two separate pilots in two different state contexts, there was an appetite among largely independent and isolated attorneys for learning from experts and from each other. The program was not intensive but it was ongoing, and it changed attorney behaviors to be more in alignment with a nationally recognized best practice model. And for one subgroup of children – older children – client-directed attorneys who were trained to practice in this model achieved, on average, more permanency within six months for their clients.

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# Appendix A. QIC-ChildRep Best Practices Model Initial Two-Day Training Agenda

## DAY ONE:

- 1) Appreciating Differences in Race, Class and Culture: “Culture Circle” Exercise
- 2) Entering The Child’s World
  - Understanding the Child’s Developmental Level
  - Rephrasing Exercise
  - Adolescent Development
  - Effects of Trauma and Loss on Child Development
  - Treatment Needs
- 3) Interviewing the Child Client
- 4) Counseling the Child: Accommodating the Child’s Wishes in Setting Case Goals
- 5) Child Safety Decision-Making
- 6) Group Reflection on the Day

## **DAY TWO:**

- 1) Discussion of Marco's Case Part 1 (a 10-page hypothetical case): Marco and Lily at Preliminary Hearing
- 2) Discussion of Danny's Case (a 1.5 page hypothetical case):
  - Actively Evaluate Needs
  - Develop a Forward-looking Theory of the Case
  - Non-adversarial Case Resolution
- 3) Increasing the Case Plan's Likelihood of Success: "Solutions-Based Casework"
- 4) Marco's Case Part 2: Exercise in Case Planning and Disposition
- 5) Monitoring Well-being; Aging Out
- 6) Marco's Case Part 3: Exercise in Permanency Planning Options
- 7) Introduce Reflective Practice Tool Checklist

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## Appendix B. *QIC-ChildRep* Intervention Staff

**Donald N. Duquette** founded the Child Advocacy Law Clinic in 1976, which is the oldest such clinic in the U.S. His 1990 book, *Advocating for the Child in Protection Proceedings*, formed the conceptual framework for the first national evaluation of child representation as mandated by the U.S. Congress. His most recent book, *Child Welfare Law and Practice: Representing Children, Parents and State Agencies in Abuse, Neglect and Dependency Proceedings* (Bradford Legal Publishers, Second Edition, 2010), defines the scope and duties of a new legal specialty in child welfare law and prepares experienced lawyers for a national certifying examination. Duquette collaborated with the National Association of Counsel for Children to develop the national certification program, gaining American Bar Association accreditation in February 2004. Child Welfare Law Specialty certification is now available in 30 U.S. jurisdictions. In October 2009 the U.S. Children’s Bureau made a \$5 million, five-year grant to the University of Michigan (UM) Law School to serve as the National Quality Improvement Center on the Representation of Children in the Child Welfare System with Duquette as Director. He is a graduate of Michigan State University and was a social worker specializing in child protection and foster care prior to earning his J.D. at UM in 1974. Before joining the UM law faculty, he served as an assistant professor of pediatrics and human development at Michigan State University College of Medicine.

**Melissa Carter** is a member of the Emory Law faculty and Executive Director of the Barton Child Law and Policy Center. The Barton Center was founded to promote and protect the legal rights and interests of abused, neglected and court-involved children through legislative advocacy, policy development, and holistic representation and to develop dedicated and knowledgeable juvenile law professionals. Prior to joining the law faculty, Melissa served as the appointed state Child Advocate, leading the staff of the Office of the Child Advocate in the fulfillment of the executive agency’s statutory mandates to provide independent oversight of the child welfare system and coordination of activities related to child injury and fatality review and prevention. Ms. Carter formerly practiced with the law firm of Claiborne, Outman & Surmay, P.C., representing clients in adoption, assisted reproductive technology, and juvenile court cases and was previously affiliated with Emory Law as Barton’s 2002 post-graduate fellow. She was selected as a 2009 Marshall Memorial Fellow, has received awards for service to the State Bar, and serves as an advisor to the Supreme Court Committee on Justice for Children and as a member of the Board of Directors of VOICES for Georgia’s Children.

**Jane Okrasinski** has served as the Executive Director of the Georgia Association of Counsel for Children (GACC) since 2006. GACC is a membership organization providing training and support for attorneys who represent children and families in juvenile court proceedings including abuse and neglect, child in need of services, and delinquency cases. In that role, she has contributed to a variety of efforts to clarify and improve the legal representation of children in Georgia. Prior to joining GACC, she represented children or their interests in federal and state litigation concerning policies and practices in Georgia's child welfare system, and served as the original local counsel for the plaintiffs in Kenny A. v. Barnes, a class action on behalf of children in the custody of Fulton and DeKalb counties.

**Darice M. Good, J.D., CWLS** is a solo practitioner in Georgia. She is a Steering Member of the Parents Representation Project of the American Bar Association and the President of the Georgia Parent Attorney Advocacy Committee. She co-authored the Adjudication chapter for the first Parent Attorney Representation book for the ABA. She drafted the Gwinnett County Parent's Attorney Manual. Mrs. Good is nationally certified as a Child Welfare Law Specialist (CWLS) by the National Association of Counsel for Children. Mrs. Good is also a member of the CWLS section of the Georgia Supreme Court Committee on Justice for Children. She is a certified trainer for the National Institute of Trial Attorneys. And, she serves pro-tempore in the Juvenile Court of Fulton County. She formerly served as a Fellow for the Georgia Supreme Court Committee on Justice for Children Cold Case Project, Vice President of the Georgia Association of Counsel for Children, Advisory Member of the Metro Youth Detention Center and as the co-chair of the Juvenile Law Section of the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia. She obtained her Bachelor's Degree from the University of Washington, her Juris Doctorate from Mercer University Walter F. George School of Law and is certified in Legal Writing by Mercer University Walter F. George School of Law.

**Tim Jaasko-Fisher** is the Senior Director of Curriculum and Program Development at the Robert's Fund. Mr. Jaasko-Fisher works with people and organizations to explore how individuals exercising leadership can promote a more civil workplace, community, and society. He engages people through interactive workshops designed to promote wellbeing within the individual, enhance productivity, and improve outcomes. During the QIC project, Tim was the director of the Court Improvement Training Academy (CITA) at the University of Washington School of Law. As a part of this role, he consulted with courts across Washington State to improve their response to child abuse and neglect. Using a systems-based approach, he helped court communities engage in meaningful conversations across disciplines to improve their process, relationships, and outcomes. In 2010, he was awarded the Lee Ann Miller Individual Award for outstanding leadership in furthering the goals of the Washington State Children's Justice Act and led the Court Improvement Training Academy to receive the Lee Ann Miller Team award in 2014. He worked as an Assistant Attorney General for 11 years, leading litigation teams, including one that won the Attorney General's "Outstanding Team Award" in 2004. The Washington State Attorney General awarded Tim the "Outstanding Diversity Advocate" award in 1999. He has litigated at all levels of the justice system in Washington State, including administrative tribunals, the Superior Court, the Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court. Tim serves as the Director of Internal Capacity Building for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau's Center for Capacity Building for Courts. He presents nationally and internationally on issues relating to leadership, civility, and engaging groups in complex problem solving.

**Rob Wyman** is the Director of the Court Improvement Training Academy (CITA) at the University of Washington School of Law where he works with judges, commissioners, attorneys, social workers, CASA, and other stakeholders in child welfare to evolve leadership to promote justice in child welfare. CITA uses data to inform strategic planning and facilitates the process of innovation and change in child welfare systems, and delivers training to judges, attorneys, and other stakeholders. Rob is also an attorney consultant with the Judicial Engagement Team of the National Center for State Courts, a program of Casey Family Programs, currently working in Maricopa County Juvenile Court to further the goal of

safely reducing the number of children and youth in the foster care system. At the time the QIC study began, Rob was working as a children's attorney. During the QIC study, Rob became the co-director of CITA. Rob spent five years after college working in the juvenile corrections systems in Washington and Oregon States in many capacities. He then went to the University of Denver to attain an MSW and JD, specializing in the representation of children and youth in the foster care system. After graduation, Rob worked at The Defender Association in Seattle for 12 years, where he supervised attorneys representing parents and youth in its dependency division for eight years.

#### Additional Faculty for Two-Day Training:

**Kate Rosenblum**, PhD, is a clinical and developmental psychologist and an Associate Research Scientist at the University of Michigan's Center for Human Growth and Development and a Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry. Her research and clinical work focus on trauma and relationship disruptions in early childhood, interventions to support parent-child relationships, and the special needs of infants and young children in the context of military families, adoption, and foster care. In the Department of Psychiatry, Dr. Rosenblum co-directs the Parent-Child Relational Clinic, a training clinic that provides assessment and intervention for children under 6 years old and their families, and she leads the Strong Families Program that is part of the Military Support Programs and Networks (M-SPAN) initiative. Dr. Rosenblum has developed an attachment-based intervention designed to support high-risk parent-child dyads, and is currently involved in dissemination and evaluation efforts across the state of Michigan. Her interests include improving systems of care for infants and young children in the child welfare system, and she is involved in training professionals both locally and nationally on topics related to infant and early childhood mental health.

**Fran Lexcen**, Ph.D., is the Director of Forensic Services at the Child Study & Treatment Center (CSTC) in Lakewood, Washington and a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Washington. CSTC is the state psychiatric hospital for children ages six to 17 who require long-term inpatient care. There, Dr. Lexcen conducts outpatient evaluations and provides diagnostic and intervention consultation to treatment teams working with residential patients. She coordinates the didactic and research components of a Post-Doctoral Fellowship, and clinically supervises Post-Doctoral Psychology Fellows, Pre-Doctoral Psychology Interns and Psychiatry Residents who specialize in child and adolescent mental health. Prior to working in Washington, she served as Project Director for the MacArthur Foundation's study of juvenile competence to stand trial at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. She has published peer-reviewed articles on mental health and forensic assessments with children and adolescents. She regularly provides consultation to judges and lawyers in the juvenile and family court systems in Washington and California.

**Frank E. Vandervort** is Clinical Professor of Law at the University of Michigan Law School where he teaches in the Child Advocacy Law Clinic and the Juvenile Justice Clinic. Professor Vandervort is the legal consultant to the University of Michigan School of Social Work's Family Assessment Clinic. He is currently a consultant on two federally funded projects to improve the handling of child welfare cases in the nation's courts: the National Quality Improvement Center on the Representation of Children in Child Welfare Cases and the Trauma Informed Child Welfare System Reform. He serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children. He has written and spoken extensively on child welfare issues.

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# Appendix C. QIC Coaching And Supplemental Trainings Protocol

*In the spring of 2012, the UM QIC collaborated with the state trainers and coaches to design the key features and processes of the coaching and pod meetings for the duration of the project. These were documented in the following protocol which constituted the “model” for the quarterly pod and coaching contacts.*

Revised  
April 24, 2012

## **PROTOCOL: QIC COACHING AND SUPPLEMENTAL TRAININGS**

### **PURPOSE**

Coaching and supplemental training are essential elements of the intervention we are testing. We aspire to have the lessons from our two day training actually be reflected in the behavior of the trained QIC groups. It is a big challenge since people rarely retain significant amounts of what they are exposed to in the typical CLE course. We aim to better support actual change in behavior through individual coaching sessions and through quarterly supplemental trainings.

The essential purpose of both the coaching and supplemental trainings is to facilitate “fidelity to the model” by the trained lawyers and to create a forum for participants to address barriers to implementation in their community. These are essential to a fair and robust test of the QIC model.

Coaching: The coaching process we will use is rooted in adult learning theory. We will facilitate and guide the trainees in their implementation of the QIC approach. But it is our intent to avoid dogmatic and authoritarian approaches which tend to elicit resistance from adults and thus not work as well as a less directive learner-centered approach.

Supplemental training: The essential purpose of the supplemental trainings is to provide boosters of the original 2-day training to both maintain a common understanding of the model and provide an opportunity for group reflection on the implementation of its components. One goal of the supplemental training is to build enduring communities of practice that support each other both during and following the study.

## **ORGANIZATION**

### **1. Assign Trainees to Pods**

Each state team, in consultation with U of Michigan and Chapin Hall, will assign trainees to pods of 4 to 6 attorneys. Preferably the members of each pod will be practicing in the same locale so they might see one another and get some reinforcement from informal contact. Rather than spreading pods over several jurisdictions, we determined that the advantages of informal contact, convenience in setting up formal meetings and the secondary effect of building a sustainable learning community that might survive after we finish the project tipped the scale to the more localized pod organization. Although we are not going to formally organize the trainees in learning pairs, we are going to encourage them to pair off and regularly talk with their partner/buddy about their experiences implementing the QIC model. Pods will serve as the learning communities to which the quarterly supplemental trainings will be provided.

### **2. Send Coaching and Supplemental Training Plan to Trainees**

Our next step is for Don to send a message to all the trainees thanking and encouraging them, passing on links to materials we said we would provide, and spelling out the details of the plan.

### **3. Coaching Structure**

Jane Okrasinski and Rob Wyman are the lead coaches in Georgia and Washington respectively. Jane and Rob will make direct contact with each of the trainees in person or by phone, at least once per quarter. Trainees will be encouraged to email questions to their coaches without divulging identities of the clients. Coaches will respond to those questions, perhaps also posting them on the QIC Bulletin Board or circulating on the listserve. These questions also are a barometer as to what issues, concerns, obstacles – and successes – the trainees are facing and can inform the focal topics of the quarterly pod meetings.

In their personal contacts with the trainees, the coaches will take an adult learning, organic approach to identifying topics for discussion. That is, we think the topics for discussion can be developed gradually and naturally without being forced or contrived. The coach would ask questions along the lines of: “How is it going? What is going well? What are the challenges or impediments? What is going well with the QIC model implementation? What successes have you had?” We would have them identify the successes and challenges in session. The coach will ask and reinforce a central question: “Do you need anything from us?”

The reasons for this more organic, less structured, generative approach include that this is more likely to get to where their heads are, rather than us imposing an agenda. This may allow us to better evaluate the strengths and weaknesses. It may also be less threatening to the trainees.

Once questions are identified the coach has several options for how to proceed. Ideally we would ask the attorneys to tell how they have handled a particular problem, and the coach would give his/her opinion primarily to reinforce the QIC model. Only if folks are completely lost and can't be guided to a correct position, would the coach act as authority. The coaches would come to some understanding as to how the attorney would apply whatever response they have generated to an issue. That is, how will they generalize

implementation of whatever they are working on as opposed to simply addressing an issue in a single case?

In the second or third contact with the trainees the coaches will ask for a self-assessment of their implementation of the six core skills and use that as a basis for conversation. The coaches, trainers, and UMich/Chapin will develop the brief self-assessment tool together.

#### **4. Supplemental Trainings Structure**

Melissa Carter and Tim Jaasko-Fisher will be the lead trainers in Georgia and Washington respectively and will be responsible for the pod meetings. Melissa and Tim, with assistance from their teams, will schedule quarterly pod meetings. We anticipate two pod meetings before October 1, 2012. At least one pod meeting per year will be live, perhaps with lunch or coffee provided by the project. The other pod meetings could be virtual or live, depending on the logistics and preferences of the participants. Some are more comfortable with technology than others and some prefer the physical/live meetings and we would balance the live/virtual meetings accordingly. Live meetings are more important early in the process. It is important to get to know the lawyers personally and earn some trust.

Pod meetings will be about 60-90 minutes. The coach and trainer will participate. The lead trainers will consult with the coaches to see what topics program attorneys are raising and will devise a guided conversation around one or more of the six model components. The pod meetings will be more directed than the individual contacts, but will still allow for organic conversation. The discussion would be couched in the real experiences the attorneys are having implementing the model. “How is it going? What is going well? What are the challenges or impediments? What successes have you had?” We would have them identify the successes and challenges in session. The trainers will have an agenda and goals, but will remain as faithful as possible to the adage, “Start where your client/student is”.

We considered and rejected an approach where each pod would address the same topic with a consistent agenda in each given quarter. Different counties may have different implementation issues at different times requiring different and nuanced responses from us. We should not try to impose the same structure on all of them. We achieve consistency of intervention by focusing our efforts on implementing the six core skills. However, the coaches and trainers would develop a bank of “mini-lessons” that would be a collection of materials or approaches used to address specific issues. These could be posted on the bulletin board depending on the topic and general applicability and could be made available to the other QIC state. Over time we expect there will be some repetition among the pods – even if they don’t have the exact same need at the exact same time.

Nonetheless, we expect the pod meetings will be more structured than the one-on-one coaching contacts. The trainer, in consultation with the coach, will identify the topic or topics for discussion. He or she could provide a reading in advance or perhaps a case scenario or a common dilemma or success faced by those particular pod members. The trainer could provide a set of questions in advance. The pod meeting would be explicitly tied to their experience implementing the six core skills.

#### **5. Documentation, Compliance and Communication**

We will document the name of the lawyer and the date of contact for each coaching session and pod meeting. To count as a session, we expect that there will be some meaningful communication between the lawyer and coach or pod trainer. That is, we expect there will be communication about the six core skills or the lawyer’s success or lack of success in implementing the QIC Model in the jurisdiction. If lawyers fail to cooperate with the coaching or the pod meetings we will follow up with them individually. Ultimately it could affect whether they qualify for the incentive payment. Because our chief goal is

gaining their full cooperation, we will use insistent persuasion as our first line of gaining compliance and escalate only as needed.

Coaches and trainers will also document questions and issues received or perceived, the responses given and recommendations, if any, for any response by the QIC group. The documentation will not identify the specific lawyers raising the questions and will be shared with the trainer, the state team and UMich/ChapinHall. The questions, concerns and successes are very valuable indications of the effect of our training intervention.

Don will have an ongoing role in the coaching and supplemental trainings. He will stay in close touch with the coaches and trainers and have occasional direct communication with the lawyers on implementation issues.

We will schedule regular check-in conference calls to maintain good coordination among the follow-up individuals. The calls would likely be separate for GA and WA.

## **6. Listserve and Bulletin Board**

After some deliberation we have decided to implement a listserv and bulletin board for each state to be used by the trainee group. Robbin Gonzalez will coordinate with each state to set these up. The coaches in each state would have primary responsibility for managing the listserv and bulletin board which could potentially be good avenues of communication from coaches and trainers to the trainees and from the trainees to the coaches and trainers and one another.

## **7. Cohort Training**

For the first six months (two quarters), we will plan on using the pod structure for training. We may be able to communicate what we need through a combination of one on one contact with coaches, the quarterly pod meetings and the listserv/bulletin board. But we are leaving open for now the possibility of organizing a more substantial supplemental training for combined pods or even the original training cohorts. While the cohort training has the disadvantage of costing both time and money, it has the real advantage of making the pods less insular and giving the trainees a broader view of what is going on. Also some emergent issue may require reaching all the trainees with a critical message. This remains to be settled and at present we are resolved to keep the question open while we gain experience. Much of this will evolve with our experience.

## **8. Evaluation of Coaching**

We will be conducting interviews of a smaller group of lawyers in the next year and perhaps that could help us evaluate the role and effectiveness of our ongoing contact with the attorneys. Does it help us achieve fidelity to our model? In what respects do the attorneys find the contacts helpful? Or not helpful? Interviews might reveal ways to modify our interactions with the attorneys. We also anticipate that Chapin Hall will ask similar questions of the coaches and trainers providing the intervention.

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# Appendix D. Sample Coaching Session Notes, Washington, January-March 2013 Quarter

*As part of the intervention, coaches were expected to keep notes for each coaching session for each attorney. Notes were to have three sections: Report, where the coach summarized the issues the attorney brought up for discussion; Advice, where the coach documented what the coach said; and Follow up /Concerns, where the coach noted any issues that need to be addressed between coaching sessions.*

*Each quarter, Chapin Hall selected a random sample of 10 coaching sessions and coaches provided their de-identified notes for those sessions. This coaching session took place in the Washington State site, for the January-March quarter of 2013, approximately 1 year into the intervention.*

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## Report

Attorney says training is helpful but the time to do things required by the model is difficult. Caseloads are high, and time is at a premium. In smaller counties there are few attorneys and we have to cover for each other. Attorney remembers and pays attention most to “entering the child’s world”, but is also cognizant of how that leads to better advocacy and being more involved in case planning. Attorney feels more able to bring the client’s interests into negotiation and hearings.

Attorney expresses difficulty knowing what services or help can be offered clients, especially older teens. “Seems like everyone wants kids to do counseling. Clients hate it, and it always seems like a chore to get them to go, and when they don’t it becomes a huge problem.” Attorney has conflict in herself as well about those clients who don’t want to do anything therapeutic, and just want to be left alone. Attorney is sympathetic with the client, but also understands that the

client needs to do some work to get beyond the problems from their home life. Teen years are so late to be intervening in kid's lives. Attorney wishes that appointments and interventions could be earlier in kids' lives.

### **Advice**

Coach gives attorney feedback that she is talking about her practice; and that makes me think the attorney understands the model and is making an effort to incorporate the skills into her practice. This is particularly true because attorney expresses understanding of the linkage between developing that good relationship with the client – entering the child's world – and the rest of the skills and the case.

We talked for several minutes about the constraints on attorney's practice. We agreed that the model puts pressure on exactly the areas that are most difficult in the practice – making more time to meet with clients and develop stronger relationships, being more involved in case planning, understanding for yourself the client's needs or knowing how to determine that with professionals (but not just taking the social worker's assessment at face value). Attorney says the most help she can get at pod meetings are practical tools she can use to more efficiently do the work outlined by the model. We talked for a few minutes about the agenda for the upcoming meeting and whether those are the kinds of tools she is talking about. Attorney is not sure: tool sounds unusual, and it is difficult to understand it over the phone. Coach says that several attorneys have responded in this way, and we will keep it in mind as we go forward with pod meeting as well.

Coach talks about past studies that have demonstrated that individual counseling is not effective for addressing some behavior with teens. These studies were addressing violence intervention, but they showed more effective intervention when addressing the family system rather than the individual child/youth. The working theory behind the study result was that youth are often barometers of problems in the family, and so addressing the youth alone often leaves the core problem in place while the youth is being pressed to change within the environment. Coach agrees to work on this issue for next round of pod meetings.

### **Follow Up/Concerns**

None.

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# Appendix E. Sample Pod Meeting Agenda, Washington, January-March 2014 Quarter

## Part 1 (30 Minutes)

Topic	Goals	Methods
What "gaps" exist between youth client and the system that lawyers can address?	Provide participants with a personal story from a youth about the "gaps" between youth and the "system" how the youth's lawyer addressed these issues.	Rob Wyman does "Celebrity Interview" with invited guest, a former foster youth

## Part 2 (45 Minutes)

Topic	Goals	Methods
Why are lawyers uniquely situated to "bridge the gaps" and as a lawyer, how do you help?	Develop concrete ways, unique to lawyers, that we can help dependency youth address the gap between them and the system.	Tim Jassko-Fischer leads "5 Whys & 10 Hows" exercise

## Part 3 (30 Minutes)

Topic	Goals	Methods
Open topics	Provide lawyers an opportunity to consult with peers on issues and concerns with implementing the QIC model	Three rounds of modified TROIKA consulting: "Client" spends 2 minutes describing issue, group spends 5 minutes discussing with the "client" silent, then 3 minutes discussing with participant involved.

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# Appendix F. Additional Methods Information: Power Analysis, Random Assignment, and Multilevel Models

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## Power Analysis

Chapin Hall conducted an initial power analysis in 2011 to be included in the RFP for the project. The purpose of the power analysis was to estimate the sample size necessary to detect a difference between the treatment and control groups. Data were expected to be clustered within a nested/hierarchical structure. Cases would be nested within attorneys, attorneys would be grouped within a firm or office, and firms/offices would be clustered in each jurisdiction. Given the nested structure of the subjects, the power analysis used a random effects model, assumed that randomization would take place at the firm/office level, and assumed that the effect size of the intervention would be moderate (Cohen, 1988).

Table F-1 shows the results from the initial power analysis, where the likelihood of detecting a moderate effect was set to 0.8, or 80 percent power. Clustering decreases power, so the more clustered attorneys were in firms, a higher the number of attorneys would be needed for 80 percent power. For example, if attorneys were practicing mostly independently (1 attorney per firm), 126 attorneys would be needed to detect a moderate effect, each serving at least 4.5 cases over the course of the study. As shown in the table, more attorneys would be needed if there was more clustering within firms/offices. Additionally, the number of cases required per attorney decreased as the number of attorneys increased.

**Table F-1. Requirements for Number of Attorneys and Cases by Firm Size in Original RFP**

Number of Attorneys Per Firm	Total Number of Firms	Total Number of Attorneys	Cases Per Attorney
1	126	126	4.5
4	58	232	3
10	44	440	1

In the Washington site, using a statewide court administrative data system (SCOMIS) system, state partners were able to identify the number of attorneys nested within which jurisdiction and firm who were representing dependency cases at the time, and to estimate the number of cases each prospective attorney might have over the course of the study. Using that information, the evaluators conducted another round of the power analysis.

Table F-2 shows the assumptions of cases per attorney, the number of attorneys and the number of cases used for the second power analysis.

**Table F-2. Number of Attorneys and Caseload Size in Final Power Analysis for Washington**

# Represented	Attorneys	Percent	Total Children
3 Children	22	18%	
6 Children	50	34%	
9 Children	16	27%	
10+ Children	37	18%	
Total	125	100%	1,749

Using these data, the estimated power generated from the power analysis was 0.83 with the following assumptions built into the multilevel model:

- 70 percent response rate.
- Treatment effect is at half of treatment standard deviation of response (moderate).
- Variance in effect size at one-fourth of of treatment standard deviation of response (one half of the treatment effect).
- Intraclass correlations between clusters:
  - 0.30 = Correlation among children within each attorney
  - 0.20 = Correlation among attorneys within each firm
  - 0.20 = Correlation among firms/officers within a county/jurisdiction

After 1,000 simulations from a normal distribution using the nested model, the program correctly detected a moderate treatment effect 830 times with significance level of 0.10, or 83 percent power. In addition, the analysis results showed the power to detect variability in the treatment effect was 62 percent.

Georgia did not have a statewide court administrative data system, so it was not possible to perform a power analysis specific to Georgia. The Washington power analysis served as a reasonable proxy for Georgia for two reasons. First, the structure of the child representative workforce and distribution of cases to attorneys in Georgia was similar to that in Washington. Second, where there were differences, they would have increased, not decreased power: Georgia had fewer jurisdictions and no attorneys practicing in firms.

As shown in the chapter on methods, the distribution of the actual numbers of attorneys and caseloads in Washington and Georgia was very close, though slightly under the assumptions shown in Table F-2. More attorneys served only one or two cases more than hypothesized in the power analysis.

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## Random Assignment of Attorneys

Attorneys (or firms of attorneys) were randomly assigned to treatment or control groups *within each jurisdiction*. The basic procedure was to assign random numbers to each participating attorney (or firm of attorneys) within a jurisdiction. Attorneys (or firms of attorneys) within each jurisdiction were then sorted based on the value of these random numbers, and assigned to alternating groups. The specific procedure used to assign attorneys varied somewhat depending on the number of attorneys in each jurisdiction, the number and the size of the firms in each county and the circumstances under which an attorney is added to the list of participating attorneys. Below there is a more detailed explanation of the assignment process.

### Assignment at the Start of Project

*Jurisdictions without firm(s) and with an even-number of attorneys:* Assign attorneys within each jurisdiction a random number using the “rand()” function in Excel. Assign attorneys to QIC and control groups in ascending order, based on the values of the attorney-level random numbers. Specifically, assign the first attorney to the QIC group, and then alternate assignments between the control and QIC groups. Table F-3 provides an example for a jurisdiction with 4 attorneys and without any firms.

**Table F-3. Random Assignment for Jurisdictions Without Firm(s) and With an Even Number of Attorneys**

AttyID	Juris	OddNum_Atty	RandomNum (OddJuris)	Solo/Firm	Firm	RandomNum (firm)	RandomNum (atty)	Group
1111	A	N	n.a.	SOLO	n.a.	n.a.	0.081073182	QIC
2222	A	N	n.a.	SOLO	n.a.	n.a.	0.427753327	Cn
3333	A	N	n.a.	SOLO	n.a.	n.a.	0.446881578	QIC
4444	A	N	n.a.	SOLO	n.a.	n.a.	0.571879995	Cn

*Jurisdictions without firm(s) and with an odd-number of attorneys:* Assign each of these jurisdictions a jurisdiction-level random number using the “rand()” function in Excel. Order these jurisdictions based on

the value of the jurisdiction-level random number. Assign attorneys to QIC and control groups in ascending order, based on the values of the attorney-level random numbers (see above). As result, for odd-numbered jurisdictions (based on the county-level ordering), assignment began with an assignment to the QIC group, and then alternate assignments between the control and QIC groups. For even-numbered jurisdictions, assignment began with an assignment to the control group, and then alternate assignments between the QIC and control groups. Table F-4 provides an example for two jurisdictions both with odd-number of attorneys and without firm.

**Table F-4. Random Assignment for Jurisdictions without Firm(s) and with an Odd Number of Attorneys**

AttyID	Juris	OddNum_Atty	RandomNum (OddJuris)	Solo/Firm	Firm	RandomNum (firm)	RandomNum (atty)	Group
1111	A	N	n.a.	SOLO	n.a.	n.a.	0.081073182	QIC
2222	A	N	n.a.	SOLO	n.a.	n.a.	0.427753327	Cn
3333	A	N	n.a.	SOLO	n.a.	n.a.	0.446881578	QIC
4444	A	N	n.a.	SOLO	n.a.	n.a.	0.571879995	Cn

*Jurisdictions with firm(s) (Washington only):* The general assignment plan involved randomly assigning firms (i.e., agencies, firms, or solo practitioners) within jurisdictions to QIC or control groups in a manner that ensured that (approximately) equal numbers of attorneys were assigned to each group (i.e., balance), both within jurisdictions and within the sample as a whole. There were seven total firms in the sample comprising 39 attorneys when the random assignment was conducted. In Washington, 33 attorneys in King County were practicing in four firms, two of which were assigned to the treatment group and the other two were assigned to the control group. In a few other jurisdictions, attorneys who worked in the same county office also got assigned to the same group. Table F-5 shows an example for a jurisdiction with 4 firms and a few solo practitioners.

**Table F-5. Random Assignment for Jurisdictions with Firm(s)**

AttyID	Juris	OddNum_Atty	RandomNum (OddJuris)	Solo/Firm	Firm	RandomNum (firm)	RandomNum (atty)	Group
20001	D	N	n.a.	FIRM	F1	0.074376394	n.a.	QIC
20002	D	N	n.a.	FIRM	F1	0.074376394	n.a.	QIC
20003	D	N	n.a.	FIRM	F1	0.074376394	n.a.	QIC
20004	D	N	n.a.	FIRM	F1	0.074376394	n.a.	QIC
20008	D	N	n.a.	FIRM	F2	0.65344928	n.a.	Cn
20009	D	N	n.a.	FIRM	F2	0.65344928	n.a.	Cn
20010	D	N	n.a.	FIRM	F2	0.65344928	n.a.	Cn
20011	D	N	n.a.	FIRM	F2	0.65344928	n.a.	Cn
20012	D	N	n.a.	FIRM	F2	0.65344928	n.a.	Cn
20016	D	N	n.a.	FIRM	F3	0.298487147	n.a.	QIC
20017	D	N	n.a.	FIRM	F3	0.298487147	n.a.	QIC
20018	D	N	n.a.	FIRM	F3	0.298487147	n.a.	QIC
20019	D	N	n.a.	FIRM	F3	0.298487147	n.a.	QIC
20022	D	N	n.a.	FIRM	F4	0.603423471	n.a.	Cn
20023	D	N	n.a.	FIRM	F4	0.603423471	n.a.	Cn
20026	D	Y*	n.a.	SOLO	n.a.	n.a.	0.166199717	QIC
20027	D	Y*	n.a.	SOLO	n.a.	n.a.	0.195456782	Cn
20028	D	Y*	n.a.	SOLO	n.a.	n.a.	0.263402987	QIC
20029	D	Y*	n.a.	SOLO	n.a.	n.a.	0.307067939	Cn

**Adding New Attorneys**

Only one attorney was added after the initial random assignment in Washington, and that attorney was assigned to the treatment group. The following explanation pertains to the situations that arose in Georgia. No new treatment attorneys were assigned in Georgia after April 1, 2013. All subsequent assignments were to the control group.

*If one attorney was being added, the new attorney was assigned to the group that was next in order. For example, if the last attorney in the jurisdiction had been assigned to the QIC group, the new attorney was added to the control group. If more than one attorney was being added, then these attorneys were assigned a random number, and assigned in order to alternating groups.*

*If the new attorney works for one of the firms, s/he was assigned to the same group of all other attorneys who work at the same firm.*

*If attorneys had attrited in the same period that a new attorney was assigned, two different types of attritions were dealt with in slightly different ways: If attorney(s) exited the study because s/he stopped*

representing children: if only one attorney was being added, assign the new attorney to the group in which the attrited attorney had been assigned. If more than one attorney was being added, assign a random number of each of them, sort them by ascending order, the first attorney (with the smallest random number) filled the spot that the attrited attorney was in, then the remaining attorneys should be assigned in order to alternating groups starting from what's next in order. If attorney(s) or a firm of attorneys pulled out from the study (for example, the attorney did not want to participate any longer in the study), the new attorney(s) was assigned to the group following the same procedure as if no attorneys had attrited.

#### *Standardized Rotational Assignment of Children*

In each jurisdiction, during the months leading up to the beginning of the project, evaluators interviewed case assigners from participating jurisdictions in both Washington (21 out of 24 jurisdictions) and Georgia (13 out of 13 jurisdictions). The purpose of the interviews was to learn about current case assignment procedures, to present the study, to request that the assigners follow a standard rotational assignment and note deviations, and to discuss the assigners' willingness/ability to comply with the request.

**Washington** – After the interviews, case assigners were provided with the rotational list of participating attorneys. Fifteen out of 24 case assigners were typically faithful about providing assignment data each month to the Washington project coordinator. Adams, Chelan, Clallam, Island, Kitsap, Kittitas, Lincoln and Walla Walla counties did not provide these data. As the project unfolded, these data were not a significant source of child assignments to attorneys. Each month, Chapin Hall checked the SCOMIS data from AOC against the jurisdiction data (where provided) and for the most part, the two sources agreed.

**Georgia** – As in Washington, case assigners were provided with the rotational list of attorneys and instructions on how to follow the list and what data to report to the Georgia project coordinator. All jurisdictions have provided these data on a monthly basis since the beginning of the project with a few exceptions.

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## **Multilevel Model**

Multilevel models were used to accommodate inter-correlation in the data at the attorney and jurisdiction level. Technically, the models took into account correlations in the data by allowing error structures to be correlated, thus generating more accurate standard errors for impact estimates. One example of the type of multilevel model used in the analysis is described below.

### Level 1 (child level)

$$Y_{ijk} = \alpha_{0jk} + \varepsilon_{ijk}$$

$Y_{ijk}$  is the outcome for child  $i$  represented by attorney  $j$  in jurisdiction  $k$ .  $\alpha_{0jk}$  is the average outcome of children represented by attorney  $j$  in jurisdiction  $k$ , is a random error associated with child  $i$  represented by attorney  $j$  in jurisdiction  $k$ , and  $\varepsilon_{ijk} \sim N(0, \sigma^2)$

### Level 2 (attorney level)

$$\alpha_{0jk} = \beta_{00k} + \beta_{01k}X_{jk} + \gamma_{0jk}$$

$\beta_{00k}$  is the average child outcome in jurisdiction  $k$ ,  $\beta_{01k}$  is the difference in child outcome between treatment attorney and the control attorney (treatment effect), and  $X$  is an effect indicator variable for the intervention that takes a value of 1 for a treatment attorney and 0 for a control attorney.  $\gamma_{0jk}$  is the random effects associated with attorney  $j$  in jurisdiction  $k$  on average child outcome, and  $\gamma_{0jk} \sim N(0, \tau_{\pi 00})$

### Level 3 (jurisdiction level)

$$\beta_{00k} = \gamma_{000} + \mu_{00k}$$

$$\beta_{01k} = \gamma_{010}$$

In this third level,  $\gamma_{000}$  is the average child outcome, and  $\mu_{00k}$  is the random effect associated with jurisdiction  $k$  on average child outcome  $\mu_{00k} \sim N(0, \tau_{\beta 00})$ .  $\gamma_{010}$  is the average treatment effect on child outcome.

### Combined model

$$Y_{ijk} = \gamma_{000} + \gamma_{010} X_{jk} + \mu_{00k} + \gamma_{0jk} + \varepsilon_{ijk}$$

A statistically significant positive value of  $\gamma_{010}$  would be the reason to reject the null hypothesis of no difference between treatment and control groups. It would be in favor of the alternative hypothesis that children who were represented by treatment attorney demonstrated a different outcome than their counterparts represented by control attorneys.

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# Appendix G. Attorney Activity Survey Process

This section provides a detailed description of the attorney activity survey process that took place in both Washington and Georgia.

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## Survey Participants and Scope

In order to gather information about attorneys' behavior in representing dependency cases over the course of the study, all participating attorneys were invited to fill out a series of web-based surveys. In Washington, all case assignments made between July, 2012 and November, 2014 were included in the pool to be selected for surveys. In Georgia, because the data collection instrument switched from CPRS to the web-based surveys in October, 2013, the cases that were eligible to be selected for surveys included open cases associated with attorneys in the project as of October 1, 2013; cases without a case closure survey in the CPRS; and all case assignments made since October, 2013 through November, 2014.

## Data Sources for Survey

For Washington, in order to integrate the case information for survey data preparation, Chapin Hall used court administrative data (from SCOMIS) as the main data source and the jurisdiction case assignment data collected from participating jurisdictions as the supplemental data source. SCOMIS data was usually provided in the first week of each month, and it contained data through the end of the previous month. The jurisdiction assignment data was normally shared with us in the middle of each month.

For Georgia, since the beginning of the survey process, case assignment data collected from all participating jurisdictions were the only data source for the attorney activity data collection. Case assigners reported case assignment information either directly to Chapin Hall or through J4C to Chapin Hall in the early part of each month.

## **Case Selection and Criteria**

On a monthly basis, the survey database was updated with new administrative data, and roughly 30 to 50 new cases were added to the survey site each month. As a general rule, Chapin Hall limited the maximum number of cases per quarter for survey data completion by each attorney to three in Washington and set the maximum number of cases per month for each attorney to two in Georgia. In addition, no new cases were selected to initiate any surveys if attorneys already had 12 or more open cases or a total of 15 cases at the time. These criteria not only prevented attorneys being overburdened with the data entry but also guaranteed a reasonable number of cases to maintain the power for analysis.

In Washington, the family structure information was not available in SCOMIS data or jurisdiction case assignment tracking data. As a result, sibling groups could not be identified and random selection of siblings could not be done within a case. In the Georgia data, the sibling information was identified and provided. Therefore, in Georgia, only one child from each sibling group was randomly selected as the basis for the survey.

## **Survey Types**

In Washington, there were 2 types of surveys which either corresponded to an important legal event of a case, such as disposition, termination of parental rights or child existing care, or were based on the timing of the case assignment. The initial assignment survey was usually open a month after the assignment; and every six months thereafter, the periodic review surveys were activated. Attorneys needed to complete approximately three to five surveys per case over the course of the study. A case assignment activated an assignment survey. Taking into account the lag time in data preparation, the assignment survey was generally posted for completion by the attorney a month after the actual case assignment. Disposition and TPR surveys might not be possible for some cases depending on the timing of the case assignment. The Review survey was generated independently from the Disposition or TPR survey, usually about six months, 12 months, 18 months, etc. after the assignment as long as the case stayed open. Two data sources contributed to the creation of the exit surveys: Exit information reported by attorneys in the Review survey and the quarterly administrative data (FAMLINK) from the Administrative Office of the Courts.

A set of rules for handling the [pre\_fill: reference\_event\_text] in many survey questions were designed and implemented in the surveys in Washington. Based on the different combinations of the date information, such as current date, the date reported by the attorney, and the date the survey was completed, the prefilled reference text varies in the questions, which in turn controlled the time frame during which the attorney should recollect and report their activities. Below the set of rules are listed:

Rules for values used for [pre\_fill: reference\_event\_text]

Milestone	rule	[reference_event_text]	Text example from actual online survey
Assignment	(current date - assignment date) <sup>36</sup> ≤ 180 days	since you were assigned to this child's dependency case	"Have you participated in any of the following hearings or events that have occurred in this child's deprivation/dependency or termination case since you were assigned to this child's dependency case?"
Assignment	(current date - assignment date) > 180 days	during the last 6 months	"Approximately how much time have you spent involved in the following activities in furtherance of this child's case during the last 6 months?"
Disposition Review TPR	[dt_prior_survey] <sup>37</sup> = missing and (current date - assignment date) ≤ 180 days	since you were assigned to this child's dependency case	
Disposition Review TPR	[dt_prior_survey] = missing and (current date - assignment date) > 180 days	during the last 6 months	
Disposition Review TPR	[dt_prior_survey] ≠ missing and (current date - [dt_prior_survey]) ≤ 180 days	since the last time you completed a QIC survey for this child ([dt_prior_survey])	"Have any of the following hearings or events occurred in this child's dependency or termination case since the last time you completed a QIC survey for this child (1/1/2015)?"
Disposition Review TPR	[dt_prior_survey] ≠ missing and (current date - [dt_prior_survey]) > 180 days	during the last 6 months	

Since Georgia launched the web-based survey much later, their surveys were a more simplified version of the Washington surveys. There were an initial assignment survey and six-month period review surveys with separate modules of questions regarding disposition, TPR, and exit events built into the surveys. Those modules were triggered when attorneys answered "yes" to the question, "Whether the disposition/TPR/exit event occurred?"

<sup>36</sup> [pre\_pre\_fill: reference\_event\_text: docket\_date] associated with assignment (i.e., docket\_cd = assign)

<sup>37</sup> Date of the most recently completed survey for a specific child by a specific attorney

### **Monthly Survey Update and Reminder**

Usually in the middle of each month, the survey database was updated with new cases that were selected for attorneys to complete surveys.

A reminder e-mail went out to all attorneys who were assigned new surveys as well as to attorneys who still had outstanding surveys from the previous month. Attorneys could choose to fill out the survey at any time at their convenience before the quarter ended. The state partners evaluated the quarterly compliance in January, April, July, and October of each year. Depending on the response rate, the quarterly deadline was extended.

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# Appendix H. Excerpts from Attorney Activity Survey

*Responses to the following questions from the attorney activity surveys were used for the attorney activity analyses presented in this report. In some cases, the wording and timing of questions was different in the two states, and this is noted where applicable.*

<b>Current Status Of This Child's Dependency Or Termination Case</b>	<b>Response</b>
<p>GA: Have you <u>participated</u> in any of the following hearings or events that have occurred in this child's deprivation / dependency or termination [pre_fill: reference_event_text]?</p> <p>WA: Have any of the following hearings or events <u>occurred</u> in this child's dependency or termination case since [pre_fill: reference_event_text]?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 72-hour / probable cause hearing</li> <li>• Adjudication hearing</li> <li>• Disposition hearing</li> <li>• Review hearing of any type (i.e., case plan, compliance, citizen panel)</li> <li>• Permanency hearing</li> <li>• Termination proceeding/hearing</li> <li>• Hearing on placement change</li> <li>• Pre-trial hearing/settlement conference</li> <li>• Motion hearing (non-reunification, placement change, etc.)</li> <li>• Mediation</li> <li>• Family team or treatment team meeting</li> <li>• GA: Other judicial, administrative, or educational proceedings</li> <li>• WA: Other judicial or administrative proceedings</li> <li>• None of the above</li> </ul>	Yes; No
<b>Nature And Frequency Of Your Contacts With This Child</b>	<b>Response</b>
<p>Approximately, how many times have you spoken on the phone, emailed, or texted with this child [pre_fill: reference_event_text]?</p>	None / N.A.; 1 time; 2-3 times; 4-5 times; More than 5 times
<p>Approximately how many times have you met in person with this child [pre_fill: reference_event_text]?</p>	None / N.A.; 1 time; 2-3 times; 4-5 times; More than 5 times
<p>At which of the following locations did you meet with this child?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your office or firm</li> <li>• The county court building</li> <li>• This child's foster home or placement</li> <li>• This child's school</li> <li>• DFACS office</li> <li>• Visitation center</li> <li>• Other community setting (e.g., park, restaurant)</li> <li>• Other location</li> </ul>	Yes; No

<b>Contact with other parties to the case</b>	<b>Response</b>
<p>Approximately, how many times have you met in person, spoken on the phone, emailed, or texted with the following individuals [pre_fill: reference_event_text]?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caseworker(s)</li> <li>• Biological parent or original caregiver</li> <li>• Mother</li> <li>• Father</li> <li>• GA: Foster parent(s), including relative foster parent</li> <li>• WA: Foster parent or substitute caregiver</li> <li>• Siblings</li> <li>• GA: Other relatives</li> <li>• WA: Other individuals related to this child (e.g., grandparent)</li> <li>• Attorneys</li> <li>• Attorney for this child's parent's</li> <li>• Other attorneys or legal professionals</li> <li>• GA: Teacher(s)</li> <li>• WA: teacher or other education professional</li> <li>• CASA</li> <li>• Mental Health professional(s) (therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist)</li> <li>• Doctors or other medical or health professionals?</li> <li>• Other service provider</li> </ul>	<p>None / N.A.; 1 time; 2-3 times; 4-5 times; More than 5 times</p>

<b>Case-Related Activities</b>	<b>Response</b>
<p>Approximately how much time have you spent involved in the following activities <u>in furtherance of this child's case</u> [pre_fill: reference_event_text]?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GA: Developing your strategy for the case WA: Developing the theory of the case</li> <li>• Legal research</li> <li>• GA: Consulting or negotiating with other parties to the case WA: Negotiating with other parties to the case</li> <li>• GA: Obtaining / reviewing this child's court file WA: Reviewing this child's court file</li> <li>• Obtaining / reviewing third-party records (e.g., educational, medical, psychological)</li> <li>• Reviewing this child's school records</li> <li>• Reviewing this child's medical records or assessments</li> <li>• Reviewing other evaluations and assessments (psychological, mental health, educational)</li> <li>• GA: Conducting interviews or reviewing interview notes WA: Reviewing witness interview notes</li> <li>• Drafting and filing pleadings, motions, and court orders</li> <li>• GA: Assessing this child's safety with respect to removal or return to their home of origin (i.e., assessing threats, vulnerabilities, and protective factors) WA: Assessing this child's safety with respect to a permanent home (parent, relative, or third party custody) For example, assessing threats, vulnerabilities, protective factors</li> <li>• Reassessing this child's safety with respect to home of the original care taker</li> <li>• GA: Assessing this child's safety with respect to a relative, foster, adoptive or permanent placement other than their home of origin WA: Assessing this child's safety with respect to current placement</li> <li>• Reassessing this child's safety with respect to current placement</li> <li>• Reviewing, assessing or seeking to influence this child's case plan</li> </ul>	<p>GA: None; A half hour or less; About an hour; Several (2 to 4) hours; Many (5+) hours</p> <p>WA: None; A half hour or less; About an hour; Several hours; Many hours</p>

<b>Case-Related Activities, continued</b>	<b>Response</b>
GA: Have you made any efforts to initiate a non-adversarial case resolution process (e.g., negotiation, mediation, case conferences) on behalf of this child?  WA: Have you made any substantive efforts to initiate or maintain a <u>formal</u> alternative dispute resolution process on behalf of this child?	Yes; No
<b>Service Advocacy</b>	<b>Response</b>
Have there been substantive changes in the services ordered for, or provided to, this child [pre_fill: reference_event_text]?	Yes; No
Did you argue for, or make other concerted efforts to change, the array of services provided to this child [pre_fill: reference_event_text]?	Yes; No
Have there been substantive changes in the services ordered for, or provided to, this child's <u>family</u> [pre_fill: reference_event_text]?	Yes; No
Did you argue for, or make other concerted efforts to change, the array of services provided to this child's family [pre_fill: reference_event_text]?	Yes; No
<b>Your Relationship With, And Advocacy For, This Child</b>	<b>Response</b>
Currently, how would you describe the quality of your working relationship with this child?	Very poor or none; Poor; Fair; Good; Very good
Currently, how would you describe your level of understanding of this child's own goals and objectives concerning his / her deprivation / dependency or termination case?	Little or no understanding; Limited understanding; Somewhat unclear understanding; Fairly clear understanding; Very clear understanding
To what extent does the safety plan for this child address the specific safety threats that prevent this child from returning home?	Very little or not all; To a slight extent; To a moderate extent; To a great extent; There is no safety plan for this child

<b>Child's Dispositional Order</b>	<b>Response</b>
Does this child have a dispositional order?	Yes; No; Don't know
In your opinion, to what extent do the following aspects of this child's dispositional order agree with his/her goals and objectives concerning his/her deprivation / dependency or termination case: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanency plan goal</li> <li>• Services for his/her parents</li> <li>• Visitation plan with his/her parents</li> <li>• Placement or living arrangement</li> <li>• Other services for this child</li> <li>• School placement</li> <li>• Other educational issues</li> </ul>	Mostly in disagreement; Substantial disagreement; Substantial agreement; Almost complete agreement; N.A.
<b>Case Closure Questions (GA)</b>	<b>Response</b>
To what extent did your relationship with the child help you reach decisions in this case? (Please respond by choosing a number between 1 and 5, with 1 indicating very small extent and 5 indicating a very large extent)	1 2 3 4 5 Very little                      Very great
To what extent did you share information concerning his/her case with this child? (Please respond by choosing a number between 1 and 5, with 1 indicating very small extent and 5 indicating a very large extent)	1 2 3 4 5 Very little                      Very great
Did the child generally express his or her wishes about the decisions over the course of the case?	Yes; No; Child does not have the capacity to express his or her wishes
In general, how much weight did you attach to the child's wishes over the course of this case? (Please respond by choosing a number between 1 and 5, with 1 indicating very low weight and 5 indicating a very high weight)	1 2 3 4 5 Very little                      Very high
In general, over the course of this case, to what extent did your recommendations to the court differ from the stated wishes of the child? (Please respond by choosing a number between 1 and 5, with 1 indicating very small extent and 5 indicating a very large extent)	1 2 3 4 5 Very little                      Very great  <i>Or</i> Child does not have the capacity to express his or her interests
In general, over the course of this case, to what extent did your recommendations to the court differ from the recommendations of the public agency? (Please respond by choosing a number between 1 and 5, with 1 indicating very small extent and 5 indicating a very large extent)	1 2 3 4 5 Very little                      Very great
Over the course of this case, did you ever request an evaluation of the child's health, mental health, or educational needs?	Yes; No
Over the course of this case, did you ever request an evaluation of a parent or caregiver's health or mental health needs?	Yes; No

<p>Over the course of this case, how would you characterize how involved you have been in planning for the safety of the child? (Please respond by choosing a number between 1 and 5, with 1 indicating not involved and 5 indicating very involved)</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 Not at all                      Very Involved                      Involved</p>
<p><b>Additional Questions (WA)</b> <i>Some of the questions from the Georgia case closure questions were on the Washington surveys but were asked each time a survey was completed rather than once at the end.</i></p>	<p><b>Response</b></p>
<p>To what extent has your advocacy in Court on behalf of this child since [pre_fill: reference_event_text] <u>agreed with</u> his child's expressed interests?</p>	<p>Mostly in disagreement; Substantial disagreement; Substantial agreement; Almost complete agreement; N.A. (no recommendations have been made)</p>
<p>To what extent has your advocacy in Court on behalf of this child since [pre_fill: reference_event_text] <u>agreed with</u> the recommendations of the public child welfare agency?</p>	<p>Mostly in disagreement; Substantial disagreement; Substantial agreement; Almost complete agreement; N.A. (no recommendations have been made)</p>
<p>To what extent has your advocacy in Court on behalf of this child since [pre_fill: reference_event_text] <u>agreed with</u> positions taken by parents or parents' attorneys?</p>	<p>Mostly in disagreement; Substantial disagreement; Substantial agreement; Almost complete agreement; N.A. (no recommendations have been made)</p>

# Appendix I: Attorney Behavior Results by State

## Georgia Attorney Behavior Results

**Table I-1. Odds Ratio (OR): Treatment effect on times attorney met in person, spoken on the phone, e-mailed, or texted with. . . (Georgia)**

Type of individual	All surveys		Assignment		Review	
	OR	Sig.	OR	Sig.	OR	Sig.
Mother	1.45		1.18		2.16	†
Father	1.62	*	1.89	**	1.06	
Other individuals related to this child (e.g., grandparent)	1.36		1.40		1.20	
Foster parent or substitute caregiver	1.69	*	1.92	*	1.64	
Caseworker(s)	1.80	*	1.64		1.97	
Attorneys	1.25		0.98		2.32	*
CASA	1.46		1.82		1.95	†
Teacher or other education professional	1.47	*	Δ		2.36	

\*\* *p*-value < 0.01, \* *p*-value < 0.05, † *p*-value < 0.1. Δ Not estimable.

**Table I-2. Average Scales: Treatment effect (Beta or B) on times attorney met in person, spoken on the phone, e-mailed, or texted with. . . (Georgia)**

Average scales	All surveys		Assignment		Review	
	B	Sig.	B	Sig.	B	Sig.
Family members	0.12		0.09		0.12	
Proximate collaterals <sup>a</sup>	0.22	**	0.19	†	0.28	*
Distal collaterals <sup>b</sup>	0.06		0.10		0.08	

<sup>a</sup> Includes caseworkers, other attorneys, and foster parents.

<sup>b</sup> Includes teachers, CASA, and health professionals, and other service providers.

\*\* *p*-value < 0.01, \* *p*-value < 0.05, † *p*-value < 0.1.

**Table I-3. Odds Ratio (OR): Treatment effect on time spent involved in the following activities in furtherance of this child’s case (Georgia)**

Activity	All surveys		Assignment		Review	
	OR	Sig.	OR	Sig.	OR	Sig.
Reviewing, assessing or seeking to influence this child’s case plan	1.87	†	2.11	*	1.58	
Obtaining / reviewing this child’s court file	1.13		0.93		1.21	
Developing the theory of the case	2.34	*	2.64	†	2.28	
Legal research	2.38		2.35		2.89	
Consulting or negotiating with other parties to the case	2.72	**	2.85	*	2.14	†
Drafting and filing pleadings, motions, and court orders	2.18		1.99		3.24	*
Assessing this child’s safety with respect to removal or return to their home of origin	1.43		1.49	*	1.56	
Assessing this child’s safety with respect to current placement	1.69	*	1.46	†	3.14	**
Obtaining / reviewing third-party records	1.72	†	1.40		2.09	
Conducting interviews or reviewing interview notes	2.55	**	2.54	**	2.64	†

\*\* *p*-value < 0.01, \* *p*-value < 0.05, † *p*-value < 0.1.

**Table I-4. Average Scales: Treatment effect (Beta or B) on time spent involved in the following activities in furtherance of this child’s case (Georgia)**

Average Scales	All Surveys		Assignment		Review	
	B	Sig.	B	Sig.	B	Sig.
Legal Case Preparation <sup>a</sup>	0.25	*	0.24	†	0.21	
Investigation & Document Review <sup>b</sup>	0.25	*	0.21	*	0.29	†

<sup>a</sup> Includes developing strategy of the case, consultation and negotiation, drafting pleadings and other court documents, reviewing court file, and seeking to influence child’s case plan.

<sup>b</sup> Includes third-party record review, witness interviews, and assessing safety.

\*\* - *p*-value < 0.01, \* - *p*-value < 0.05, † - *p*-value < 0.1.

**Table I-5. Odds Ratio (OR): Treatment effect on whether attorney participated in the following events since the last survey (Georgia)**

Event	All Surveys		Assignment		Review	
	OR	Sig.	OR	Sig.	OR	Sig.
Mediation	0.70		1.10		3.19	
Family team or treatment team meeting	2.83	*	Δ		1.32	
Other judicial, administrative, or educational proceedings	1.35		2.00		0.90	
Pre-trial hearing/settlement conference	1.85		2.88	*	1.29	
Motion hearing (nonreunification, placement change, etc.)	0.98		Δ		1.11	

\* - *p*-value < 0.05. Δ - Not estimable.

**Table I-6. Odds Ratio (OR): Treatment effect on relationship and advocacy activities (Georgia)**

Activity	All Surveys		Assignment		Review	
	OR	Sig.	OR	Sig.	OR	Sig.
Number of times spoken, e-mailed, or texted with child	2.47	†	2.19	†	3.13	*
Number of times met in person with child	2.18	*	2.69	*	1.68	
Met child outside of court at least once	1.87		1.26		2.56	†
Have you made any efforts to initiate a nonadversarial case resolution process	1.84		2.24		2.06	
Did you argue for, or make other concerted efforts to change, the array of services provided to this child	2.35	*	2.32	*	2.62	†
Did you argue for, or make other concerted efforts to change, the array of services to this child's family	2.15	*	2.34	*	2.57	*
Quality of relationship with child	1.46		1.28		1.87	
Level of understanding of goals and objectives	1.61		1.61		2.65	

\* - *p*-value < 0.05, † - *p*-value < 0.1.

**Table I-7. Odds Ratio (OR) of treatment effect on relationship with child at case closing (Georgia)**

Over the course of the case...	Closing	
	OR	Sig.
Did your relationship with the child help you reach decisions in this case?	2.67	†
To what extent did you share information with the child about child's case?	1.80	
Did child generally express his or her wishes?	2.88	
How much weight did you attach to child's wishes?	1.74	
Did your recommendations to the court reflect child's wishes?	2.17	
Did you ever request an evaluation of the child's health, mental health, or educational needs?	1.60	
Did you ever request an evaluation of a parent or caregivers health or educational needs?	0.89	

**Table I-8. Odds Ratio (OR): Treatment effect on whether child's dispositional order agrees with the goals of the child for his or her case (Georgia)**

Goal	Disposition	
	OR	Sig.
Permanency plan goal	0.75	
Services for his/her parents	0.51	
Visitation plan with his/her parents	2.05	
Placement or living arrangement	0.98	
Other services for this child	0.77	
School placement	1.01	
Other educational issues	1.56	

## Washington Attorney Behavior Results

**Table I-9. Odds Ratio (OR): Treatment effect on times attorney met in person, spoken on the phone, e-mailed, or texted with. . . (Washington)**

Type of Individual	All Surveys		Assignment		Review	
	OR	Sig.	OR	Sig.	OR	Sig.
Biological parent or original caregiver	1.48	†	1.16		1.84	†
Siblings	0.90		0.97		0.67	
Other individuals related to this child (e.g., grandparent)	1.27		1.13		1.61	
Foster parent or substitute caregiver	1.59	*	1.62	**	1.92	*
Caseworker(s)	1.34		1.18		1.51	
Attorney for this child's parents	1.16		0.89		1.70	
Other attorneys or legal professionals	1.64	†	1.19		3.22	*
CASA	1.40	†	1.09		1.43	
Teacher or other education professional	1.23		1.41		1.05	

\*\* - *p-value* < 0.01, \* - *p-value* < 0.05, † - *p-value* < 0.1.

**Table I-10. Treatment effect (Beta or B) on times attorney met in person, spoke on the phone, e-mailed, or texted with. . . (Washington)**

Average Scales	B	Sig.	B	Sig.	B	Sig.
Family members	0.04		0.00		0.05	
Proximate collaterals <sup>a</sup>	0.17	†	0.05		0.31	
Distal collaterals <sup>b</sup>	0.06		0.02		0.08	

<sup>a</sup> - Includes caseworkers, other attorneys, and foster parents.

<sup>b</sup> - Includes teachers, CASA, and health professionals, and other service providers.

† - *p-value* < 0.1.

**Table I-11. Odds Ratio (OR): Treatment effect on time spent involved in the following activities in furtherance of this child’s case (Washington)**

Activity	All Surveys		Assignment		Review	
	OR	Sig.	OR	Sig.	OR	Sig.
Reviewing, assessing, or seeking to influence this child’s case plan	1.14		0.94		1.69	
Obtaining / reviewing this child’s court file	0.79		0.80		0.85	
Developing the theory of the case	1.90	**	2.10	**	2.81	*
Legal research	0.98		1.08		1.28	
Consulting or negotiating with other parties to the case	1.19		0.85		1.76	
Assessing this child’s safety with respect to removal or return to their home of origin	1.35		1.20		1.70	
Reassessing this child’s safety with respect to home of the original caretaker	1.19		0.96		1.92	
Assessing this child’s safety with respect to current placement	1.01		0.92		1.41	
Reassessing this child’s safety with respect to current placement	1.33		0.90		1.87	†
Reviewing this child’s school records	0.88		1.00		0.97	
Reviewing this child’s medical records or assessments	1.07		1.17		1.18	
Reviewing other evaluations and assessments	0.96		0.86		1.22	
Conducting interviews or reviewing interview notes	0.91		0.83		1.20	

\*\* - *p-value* < 0.01, \* - *p-value* < 0.05, † - *p-value* < 0.1.

**Table I-12. Treatment Effect (Beta or B) on Time Spent Involved in the Following Activities in Furtherance of this Child’s Case (Washington)**

Average Scales	B	Sig.	B	Sig.	B	Sig.
Legal case preparation <sup>a</sup>	0.03		0.00		0.14	
Investigation and document review <sup>b</sup>	-0.04		-0.06		0.05	

<sup>a</sup> - Includes developing strategy of the case, consultation and negotiation, drafting pleadings and other court documents, reviewing court file, and seeking to influence child’s case plan.

<sup>b</sup> - Includes third-party record review, witness interviews, and assessing safety.

**Table I-13. Odds Ratio (OR): Treatment effect on whether the following events occurred since the last survey (Washington)**

Event	All Surveys		Assignment		Review	
	OR	Sig.	OR	Sig.	OR	Sig.
Mediation	1.81		1.48		Δ	
Family team or treatment team meeting	1.27		0.81		2.08	**
Other judicial, administrative, or educational proceedings	0.81		0.81		0.87	
Hearing on placement change	0.91		0.89		1.14	
Motion hearing (nonreunification, placement change, etc.)	1.17		0.90		1.78	*

\*\* -  $p$ -value < 0.01, \* -  $p$ -value < 0.05. Δ - Not estimable..

**Table I-14. Odds Ratio (OR): Treatment effect on relationship and advocacy activities (Washington)**

Activity	All Surveys		Assignment		Review	
	OR	Sig.	OR	Sig.	OR	Sig.
Number of times spoken, e-mailed, or texted with child	1.03		0.94		1.26	
Number of times met in person with child	1.04		1.04		1.31	
Met child outside of court at least once	1.17		1.18		1.50	
Have you made any efforts to initiate a nonadversarial case resolution process	2.09	*	1.62		2.94	*
Did you argue for, or make other concerted efforts to change, the array of services provided to this child	1.22		1.26		1.31	
Did you argue for, or make other concerted efforts to change, the array of services to this child's family	1.36		1.29		1.64	
Quality of relationship with child	1.04		1.09		1.04	
Level of understanding of goals and objectives	0.79		0.75		0.81	
Your advocacy agreed with child's wishes	0.60	†	0.70		0.73	

\* -  $p$ -value < 0.05, † -  $p$ -value < 0.1.

**Table I-15. Odds Ratio (OR): Treatment effect on whether child’s dispositional order agrees with the goals of the child for his or her case (Washington)**

Goal	Disposition	
	OR	Sig.
Permanency plan goal	0.60	
Services for his/her parents	0.67	
Visitation plan with his/her parents	1.39	
Placement or living arrangement	1.71	
Other services for this child	0.77	
School placement	0.76	
Other educational issues	0.41	

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## About Chapin Hall

Chapin Hall is an independent policy research center at the University of Chicago focused on providing public and private decision-makers with rigorous data analysis and achievable solutions to support them in improving the lives of society's most vulnerable children. Chapin Hall partners with policymakers, practitioners, and philanthropists at the forefront of research and policy development by applying a unique blend of scientific research, real world experience, and policy expertise to construct actionable information, practical tools, and, ultimately, positive change for children, youth, and families.

Established in 1985, Chapin Hall's areas of research include child and adolescent development; child maltreatment prevention; child welfare systems; community change; economic supports for families; home visiting and early childhood initiatives; runaway and unaccompanied homeless youth; schools, school systems, and out-of-school time; and youth crime and justice.