



A Federally Funded Children's Bureau Research Project: Recruitment and Retention of Child Welfare Staff

254 Baker Hall
School of Social Work, Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824-1118

Dear Colleague,

We are asking for your help to complete a study on the many and varied reasons child welfare workers in Michigan leave private sector child and family agencies. We are doing this research to understand the obstacles and issues faced by child welfare workers. We believe that a new and better understanding will help the child welfare field find more successful ways to recruit and retain future child welfare workers.

Your name was randomly selected from a list of potential participants, compiled by the Michigan Federation for Children and Families. Your former employer provided your name as someone who met our criteria. The list contains names of former employees who had left child welfare positions between August 1, 2005 and December 30, 2005. Only your name and phone number, not your address, were shared with our research team. Your former employer will never know if you were among the people randomly identified and invited to participate in this research.

During this study we will follow strict, professional guidelines and comply with university research requirements about keeping your participation and responses confidential and unidentifiable. No personal identifying information regarding you or your responses will be reported in this study. Your answers only will be reported in aggregate. Nothing you say will be shared with your former employer. After this study is completed the Michigan Federation for Children and Families will destroy the list.

We will be contacting you by phone within the next two weeks to answer questions you may have and to inquire about your willingness to participate in this study. The trained MSW interviewer calling will identify the study as the "Recruitment and Retention Study". The phone interview should take roughly 20 minutes. If our call

comes at a time that is not convenient for you, please let our interviewer know. We will ask you to suggest a time that will work better for your schedule.

As is true in any research there are potential risks and benefits. The potential risk to you for participation is the emergence of difficult memories or issues that sometimes surround a person leaving a job. Your current or future employment will not be affected by your decision to participate or not. There are no direct individual benefits to you. This study only will benefit child welfare professionals as a whole, the agencies they work in and ultimately, we hope, the children they serve.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate at all, or you may refuse to participate in certain procedures or refuse to answer certain questions or discontinue your participation at any time. Your request to end your participation will be honored without penalty, loss of benefits, or interviewer challenge.

If you have any questions about this study or would like to contact the researchers or an interviewer, please feel free to call 517-432-5912. You also can write us: Child Welfare Recruitment and Retention, School of Social Work, 254 Baker Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please feel free to contact Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Director of the Human Subject Protection Programs at Michigan State University: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, email: irb@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Thank you very much for your time and for considering of our request for an interview. Child welfare professionals that assisted in creating the interview tell us that the research questions are very interesting and that they enjoyed being part of developing the study. We hope you too will enjoy being part of this important study.

Sincerely yours,

Gary Anderson, Ph.D. MSW
Principal Investigator
Director and Professor

Peg Whalen, Ph.D. MSW
Project Evaluator
Assistant Clinical Professor

**Michigan State University School of Social Work
Recruitment and Retention of Child Welfare Staff
Child Welfare Staff Exit Interview
Interview Protocol**

Hello, my name is _____. I'm calling on behalf of Michigan State University, School of Social Work's *Recruitment & Retention Study*. You should have received a letter about this study in the mail. Do you remember receiving this letter?

IF NO: I am sorry you didn't receive the letter. What the letter said was that an interviewer will be calling you to ask for your help with a study being conducted by Michigan State University School of Social Work on the recruitment and retention of child welfare staff in Michigan. Since you are a former employee of a member agency of the Michigan Federation of Children and Families, we are hoping you will agree to participate and share your impressions and experience in child welfare work.

Your name was randomly selected from a list of child welfare workers who recently left a member agency of the Michigan Federation of Children and Families. This list was provided us by the Federation. Since our aim is to understand why workers truly leave, it is vital that we hear your views.

I also want to assure you that your answers will be reported in aggregate only, and no identifying information will ever be used in any reports or documents resulting from this research.

Workers we have already talked with tell us that our questions are very interesting and that they enjoyed being interviewed. We think you too will enjoy being part of this important study.

Is this a good time to do the interview – it should take no more than 20-minutes?

(get verbal confirmation)

agreed to do interview now: _____

asked to call back on: _____

did not want to do interview: _____

IF YES: Good, I am glad you received the letter. Just as a quick reminder, this is a study on the recruitment and retention of child welfare workers in Michigan.

Is this a good time to do the interview – it should take no more than 20-minutes?

BEGIN INTERVIEW:

Before we start, I'd like you to know that your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and if you should come to any questions you don't want to answer, please tell me and we'll go on to the next question. You can also stop the interview at any time.

I also want you to know that this study is for research purposes only. We will NOT share your personal information with anyone and we will NOT release any information that could lead to your identification.

I need your formal agreement before I proceed with the interview. Do you agree to participate in the interview? (get verbal confirmation)

agreed to do interview now: _____

asked to call back on: _____

did not want to do interview: _____

Record date and time of interview: date _____
Time begin _____
Time end _____
Interviewer name: _____

**Michigan State University School of Social Work
Recruitment and Retention of Child Welfare Staff
Child Welfare Staff Exit Interview**

First I'd like to ask you a few questions about your work at a Federation agency.

1. When did you start working at your former agency?

2. All together, how many years did you work at that agency?

3. Of the various children's services areas, which one was the last one in which you worked just before you left your agency?

CPS Investigation only	<input type="checkbox"/>
CPS Ongoing services only	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delinquency	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adoption	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prevention Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children's services supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. You said you worked most recently in [see above selection]
 - 4 a. What year did you start working in [see above selection] _____
 - 4 b. What was your job title? _____
 - 4 c. How long did you work there [see above selection] _____[years]

5. Please describe your work history with the agency?
[e.g. 1st position, training, movement across children's services positions, advancement, etc...]

Most Recent Position

Prior

First Position

People have given us all sorts of reasons for moving from one service area to another.

6. What factors or experiences led you to stay for as long as you did stay with the agency?

7. When you think about your job in [Ch Srvc Area from above], why did you leave?

Internal Factors		External Factors	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Compensation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional conflicts outside the agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	Job stress	<input type="checkbox"/>	Returned to school for more education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peer relations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lure of a promotion
<input type="checkbox"/>	Supervision issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	Better job elsewhere
<input type="checkbox"/>	Caseload	<input type="checkbox"/>	Started a family
<input type="checkbox"/>	Burnout	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulties with the Court or Prosectr Ofc
<input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary trauma	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wanted more flexibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	Child death	<input type="checkbox"/>	Better benefits elsewhere
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal Reasons

8. Any other reasons?

(For example, people have told us they moved because of a promotion, or better pay, or more fulfilling work. People have also told us they left a job for personal reasons, bad hours, safety issues, problems with co-workers or supervisors, agency climate, high stress, and so on)

9. Is there anything you can think of that would have kept you at this job?

10. Did you leave to take another job?

Within the agency (promotion/lateral)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, promoted	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, lateral	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Within child welfare	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Within social work	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Outside social work (doing what)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	No

11. Someone has said "When someone leaves an agency they leave their supervisor, not the organization, not the Director." To what extent was this true for you?

Not at all true Only a little true Somewhat true A lot true Completely true

12. To what extent was your supervisor a role model for you?

*Not at all a role model In limited ways for a few things In some things in some ways
 In many ways for a lot of things A role model in everything or every way*

We are almost done with the interview. At this time, I want to ask you some background demographic information.

13. Are you currently:

___ single
___ never married ___ separated ___ divorced ___ widowed
___ married or living with a partner

14. In what year were you born? _____

15. Can you please tell me your race or ethnicity: (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- African American/Black
- Arabic or Middle Eastern
- Asian American/Pacific Island American
- Latino/a/Hispanic
- Native American/American Indian
- White
- Other _____ (SPECIFY)

16. Do you have any children? Yes No

17. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- High School Diploma
- Bachelors Degree
- Associate Degree
- Master Degree
- Doctoral Degree

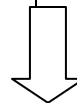
18. Do you have a BSW or MSW? BSW MSW BSW/MSW

19. Are you working now? Yes No

20 a. If Yes- What type of organization are you working for?

- Public human services
- Not-for-profit private human services
- Private for profit human service agency
- Outside human services [describe nature of organization]

20 b. What is your current position? _____



20 c. If no, how likely is it that you will seek another job within the next 3 years.

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not at all likely

21. Gender Female Male (ask only if uncertain)

We are almost finished; we would like to know your thoughts about how to retain child welfare staff.

22. Based on your experience as a child welfare worker, can you suggest ways to retain existing workers?

23. Having worked in children's services, can you tell us what you believe is needed to recruit new workers into the field?

Thank you very much for your time. As I said before, if you have any questions, please feel free to call Dr. Gary Anderson at 517-355-7515 or Dr. Peg Whalen at 517-432-5912.

Memo to: Private Nonprofit Child Welfare Agencies in Michigan

From: Elizabeth Carey, Executive Director

Subject: Requesting your Agency's participation in a "Child Welfare Staff Exit Interview" Telephone Interview

Background:

The Michigan Federation for Children and Families is partnering with Michigan State University School of Social Work and the Department of Human Services. These three organizations are collaborating to develop training curricula and supportive strategies to assist agencies in recruiting and retaining child welfare staff. This project is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Michigan State University, the grantee. Our involvement in this project is the outgrowth of the Federation's Member Interest Network Training Group (MIN). In 2004 the Training MIN identified a need for effective supervisory training and support as high priorities in addressing staff turnover.

The project's current focus is to identify the reasons that child welfare workers leave private not for profit agencies and sometimes even the field of child welfare. The overall goal is to gain a greater understanding of how to recruit and retain child welfare staff. The project work group developed and tested a telephone interview for staff who have recently left child welfare agencies. We are now ready to begin the interviews and need your help in identifying persons who meet the study criteria. For purposes of this study, former child welfare staff is defined as: "*Child welfare workers who have left your agency anytime between 8/1/2005 and 12/30/2005*".

About the survey:

We have included a form for you to list suggest one or more persons no longer employed with your Agency who meets the project definition of a resilient staff person and is willing to be interviewed.

A survey will be conducted via telephone. The first step will be to send letters explaining the study the staff you recommend. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The questions include some demographic information about the person, his/her education and work position. A sampling of some of the questions related to the individual's work experiences include:

- What factors or experiences led you to stay for as long as you did stay with the agency?
- When you think about your job in [child service area], why did you leave?
- Is there anything you can think of that could have kept you at this job?
- Based on your experience as a child welfare worker, can you suggest ways to retain existing workers?
- Having worked in children's services, can you tell us what you believe is needed to recruit new workers into the field?

A copy of the interview protocol is available upon request. Individual's completed interviews, of course, will be held confidential. All answers and personal information will be reported in aggregate only. No personally identifying information will ever be used in the reports or other documents resulting from this research on in any other way.

Once we receive your list of child welfare staff that exited your agency anytime between 8/1/2005 and 12/30/2005, we will randomly select and contact individuals statewide to participate in the survey until we have roughly 60 completed interviews.

If you would like your Agency to participate in this survey, please fax the enclosed form to the Federation no later than **INSERT DATE**.

We sincerely appreciate your support in conducting this survey and look forward to additional collaboration and information sharing as the project proceeds.

**Michigan State University School of Social Work
Recruitment and Retention of Child Welfare Staff
Child Welfare Staff Exit Interview**

For purposes of this study, former child welfare staff are defined as: "Child welfare workers who have left your agency anytime between 8/1/2005 and 12/30/2005."

Suggested participants:

Name (First and Last)	Last Known Address	Last Known Phone Number	Exit Date

Please make copies of this sheet if additional space is needed.

**Michigan State University School of Social Work
Recruitment and Retention of Child Welfare Staff
Child Welfare Staff Exit Interview**

Print name: _____ Name of agency: _____

Position: _____

Phone number: _____ Fax number: _____ E-mail: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please fax this form to: Rose Homa at the Michigan Federation for Children and Families (517) 485-6680