



Building a 21st Century Research Agenda to Increase the Use of Research in Child Welfare Decision-Making

Partners to Support this Effort

Since 2020, Lived Experience Experts, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Casey Family Programs (CFP) and the William T. Grant Foundation have worked in partnership with more than fifty individuals representing a broad array of experts, stakeholders and people with lived experience to draft research gaps that span community-based family support, child protective services, out-of-home care and post-permanency services. Partnering organizations include Black Administrators in Child Welfare, the National Indian Child Welfare Association, Child Trends Hispanic Institute, the American Public Human Services Association, the Child Welfare League of America, and the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare.

Building a Transformative 21st Century Research Agenda

The Transformative Research Agenda is grounded in principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion; and co-designed with those with lived experience. By doing so, we are transforming the way in which we support families and communities both in *what* we research and *how* we research it. To carry out a Transformative 21st Century Research Agenda, we are:

1. **Forming** a broad coalition of partners to support transformative research
2. **Articulating** clear research questions that are relevant for families and communities, jurisdiction leaders, policy-makers and practitioners
3. **Conducting** research that will close the gaps and answer those key questions
4. **Supporting** agencies and organizations to use the findings to improve policy, program and practice strategies resulting in a bold and transformative systems change

Progress so Far (2020-21)

The work that has been completed so far is depicted below:

Document Jurisdictional Research Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Conduct outreach to CFP Strategic Consultants to better understand the structure and capacity of state research and evaluation departments and partnerships
Identify & Summarize Key Areas and Research Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Conduct surveys and interviews and organized workgroups made up of stakeholders to summarize research areas and gaps (stakeholders include researchers, child welfare leaders, tribal leaders, policy makers, constituents and others)
Review & Prioritize Research Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Prioritize the research areas and gaps to be addressed by engaging stakeholders through workgroups and other review processes
Build Consensus across Child Welfare & Related Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •National Associations gather additional feedback about the research gaps, which is then integrated into Report and RFPs •Held a Consensus Convening in October, 2021 to engage additional stakeholders and receive feedback

Remaining Steps (2022 and onward)

The next steps to build a research agenda are depicted below:

Engage Additional Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Continue engaging stakeholders and build excitement for the research agenda
Conduct Research to Address Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Engage foundations and government agencies to fund research to address the gaps
Increase Use of Research in Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Draw on the work of the William T. Grant Foundation and others to identify strategies to support using research in decision-making

Engage Additional Stakeholders

The partner organizations and National Associations will continue to engage child welfare, other systems and non-traditional partners on the importance and value of a 21st Century Research Agenda.

Conduct Research to Address Gaps

We are identifying what Foundations and the Federal Government are doing regarding current and planned studies in child welfare. We will align this research with the prioritized list created above. For those gaps that are not being addressed, we will reach out to potential funders to address the research gaps.

Increase Use of Research in Decision-Making

A critical aspect of this work concerns what to do once we have research that addresses these gaps. Specifically, how can we support communities, jurisdiction leaders and policy-makers (including legislators) to use research in shaping policy, program design and practice? This work will occur concurrently with other steps described above so that we can support decision-makers as key gaps in the research base are filled. We will rely heavily on existing work by and a current partnership with WT Grant.

Contact Information

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