

Virginia Department of Social Services, Division of Family Services, Post-Adoption Dissolution Project

What is the purpose of this project?

While adoption can bring much joy to a family, adoptive families can face unique challenges, which can sometimes result in the family not being able to stay together. The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) is very concerned about the struggles that adoptive families face and would like to know how they can support families through these difficult times. Input from families and from staff who work with families in these types of situations is vital to understanding what supports are needed. Such input can also inform improvements to services and supports available to families that may prevent future adoption instability, disturbances, or dissolutions.

Do you have to participate?

No. We hope you will volunteer to participate. For the project to be successful, VDSS and the Division of Family Services needs to hear from those who have experienced disruptions or dissolutions of their adoptions, as well as from staff who work with these families and individuals. Not only will we report findings with no names or identifying information attached, but we will also keep confidential what individuals tell us.

Why is this project important?

This project will provide needed information to improve services that support families who may experience adoption instability and/or dissolution.

How can you participate?

We both need and welcome the involvement of those who are most knowledgeable about adoption instability and dissolution in Virginia. Opportunities for involvement (*by invitation*) include:

Adoptive parents and young people who were adopted:

- Participation in research interviews for parents, young people, and service providers
- Participation in online surveys for parents who have experienced adoption dissolution

Local DSS and private agency staff:

- Participation in interviews with local DSS caseworkers and private agency social workers
- Participation in online staff survey about their knowledge and experiences regarding adoption
- Participation in training for service providers to improve supports and services

Who is providing this study?

Child Trends—a trusted nonprofit leader in research about children, youth, and families—is the lead organization providing this consultation.

Key activities and study timeline – *be on the lookout for invitations:*

- Surveys will happen from September to October 2022.
- Interviews will happen from October 2022 to March 2023.
- Findings from the study will be reported in December 2023.

If you have any questions or would like more information about this work, please contact Berenice Rushovich at brushovich@childtrends.org or 240-223-9269.