

Identifying Predictive Indicators: The State of Washington Foster Care Home Study

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Introduction

A mixed method correlational exploratory (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989) pilot was conducted in Washington State to determine items within the home study assessment that could be used as indicators to identify baseline requirements of the assessment and suggest anticipated depth (expansion or reduction) within the required topic(s).

The purpose of the home study is to assess the caregiver(s)' ability to provide a safe home, the quality of care needed by children and an environment that is nurturing, respectful and supportive. The goal of this study was to identify predictive indicators that will assist in the development of a home study that will increase consistency within

Primary Analysis (Dr. Richard Fiene)

The methodology used to generate the indicators was drawn and modified from the regulatory compliance and licensing research literature where this methodology has been used a great deal in making monitoring decisions (Licensing Key Indicator Methodology – LKIM (Fiene, 1985). The Licensing Key Indicator Methodology (LKIM) was used because it has proven to be very effective in dealing with nominally measured data that are extremely skewed (Fiene & Nixon, 1985).

IBM/SPSS Version 26 was used to analyze the data for this study. Basic demographics, (provider type and recommendation) and frequencies were

Secondary Analysis (Daniel Blevins)

A second set of analytics was run in order to address how some items are not indicators until a pattern is discovered. Through the coding process it was possible for themes to be mentioned more than once in a single home study. For example, an applicant may have expressed multiple medical needs (MN) such as issues with diabetes and a heart condition resulting in the code mentioned twice in one home study. Another example could be that an applicant mentioned they occasionally drink alcohol, smoke regularly and use marijuana resulting in the code drug and alcohol abuse or use (DAAU) being mentioned three times. A secondary set of analytics was completed in order to identify codes based on frequency or

Recommendations (Amber Salzer)

making and bias by creating an avenue for consistency in home study assessments and guidance for recommended approvals or denials. This can be done by identifying areas that may predict unsuccessful placement. It is possible this will provide guidance to assessors when further assessment and mitigation is needed.

Additionally, with a carefully designed home study tool it should be possible to reduce the amount of time an assessor uses to approve or deny a home study, saving agency time and resources. Finally, by differentiating and focusing technical assistance to those applicants that need more or specific support, the use of indicators may increase the

Method, Sample and Tools (Dr. Sonya Stevens)

We chose a mixed method correlational exploratory method to explore correlations of thematic identifiers within a sample of archived home studies. Through the review of individual home studies, qualitative descriptive themes were identified, both positive and potentially alarming, in order to map common concerns between the various archived home studies and their outcomes. Descriptors were coded into alphabetical (and ultimately numerical) themes allowing for quantitative analysis. Two-hundred and seven (207) case studies were identified through a combination of convenient and proportionate stratified sampling measures ensuring

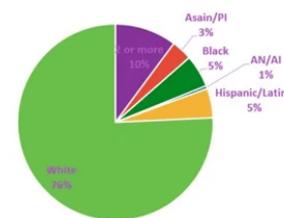
Sample

Cases:

- 207 completed
 - 98 Approved/Good Standing
 - 57 Revocations
 - 52 Denials
- Reflected the regional caseload distributions
- Cases were designated in one of 6 types

Provider Type	Licensed Adoptive	Licensed General	Licensed Kinship	Unlicensed Adoptive	Unlicensed Kinship	Unlicensed ICPC
Count	39	105	14	12	36	1

3. Ethnic Makeup



Conclusion

There are many potential uses of indicators within the home study process:

Most of the indicators have been systematically and intentionally imbedded in the home study sections as questions for the assessment worker to answer based on the applicant's responses on the application, during interviews and through their own assessment. Indicators will only be used as a tool to identify potential areas that need additional information before finalizing a home study. **Due to potential bias limitations, indicators will not be used as a tool to recommend or not recommend placement or permanency.**

It's important to note that additional validation