



Overview of the North Carolina Post Adoption Life Study (NC-PALS)

Below are answers to questions you may have, or you may be asked by parents/guardians or young people if they contact you about the NC-PALS study. If you have any additional questions or comments, please contact Esther Gross, Child Trends project manager, at egross@childtrends.org or 240-223-9260.

STUDY OVERVIEW

What is “NC-PALS”?

NC-PALS, the North Carolina Post-Adoption Life Study, is an important study about the life experiences of young people adopted from foster care in North Carolina.

Who is funding the study?

The Duke Endowment, a foundation in North Carolina.

Who is conducting the study?

Child Trends, a nonprofit organization that performs research to improve the lives of children and youth, with the assistance of the University of Wisconsin Survey Center (UWSC), a department of the College of Letters and Science at the University of Wisconsin which conducts social science research, including interviews for very similar studies.

What is the purpose of the study?

To learn how young people who were adopted from foster care in North Carolina are doing as young adults, and to better understand their experiences with, and opinions about, the adoption process. The research can help child welfare agencies and other organizations providing support to adoptive families improve child and parent adoption preparation and training, as well as post-adoption supports and services.

What type of data will be collected for the study?

Researchers will invite young people to participate in interviews conducted in person by trained interviewers. Each interview should last between 1 and 1.5 hours. Each young person will be interviewed only once. *(See below for details about the eligible participants and the interviews.)*

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

How are young people selected for the study?

Young people are eligible for the study if they (1) were adopted from foster care in North Carolina at age 8 or older and (2) turn 18 in 2018 or 2019.

Do the young people have to live in North Carolina currently, or at the time of the interview, in order to participate?

No, the only requirement is that they were adopted from the North Carolina foster care system. They may be living, either temporarily or permanently, outside of the state. Interviewers can travel to the young person’s location to conduct the interview.

How will young people learn about the study and be invited to participate?

In February 2018, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will mail a packet of information (letter and brochure describing the study), along with information on how to contact the research team, to the households with eligible young people (see above re: eligibility requirements). Young people will be ages 16, 17, or 18 years old when they first learn about study. The young people and their parents/guardians are being identified by staff at DHHS. **The research team (Child Trends and UWSC) will not know the identities or contact information of the young people or families unless the young person or their parent/guardian reports they are interested in learning more about the study and agrees to share their contact information with the**

researchers. Included in these packets from DHHS will be information for both the parents/guardians and the young people themselves.

How will young people express interest in participating?

Young people have several ways of expressing interest in participating. These options will be described in the mailed packets, and include:

- A website
- A paper form (included in the packet) to mail back (self-addressed stamped envelope will be included)
- A phone number

What if the young person is uncertain about participating, and wants to talk to the interviewers before deciding? What if they just want more information about the study?

The young person does not have to decide right away whether they are going to participate. They can contact Karen Zoladz, University of Wisconsin project director, at study@uwsc.wisc.edu, or toll-free at 1-855-837-0052 to get more information about the study.

INTERVIEW DETAILS

What will young people do to participate?

Young people will be invited to participate in an interview **when they are 18**. If they express interest in learning more about the study and share their contact information with researchers (by responding to the initial mailed packet), the research team will reach out to invite them to participate in an interview once they turn 18 (or, for those already 18, shortly after they share their contact information with researchers). If they agree to participate, they will be interviewed at a date, time, and location convenient for them. For example, interviews could be conducted in their home or a community location that the young person chooses.

What are the interview questions about?

The questions focus on the young person's overall well-being and their adoption experiences. Topics include experiences in foster care, experiences with adoption and post-adoption services, education and employment, community connectedness, and long-term plans.

Who will be asking the questions?

Trained interviewers from the University of Wisconsin Survey Center will conduct the interviews. All interviewers have gone through a careful hiring process and have thorough background checks.

How long will the interviews take?

The interview should last about 1 to 1.5 hours.

Will the young person receive anything for participating?

The young person will receive \$50 for participating.

Will participation in the study affect any supports/services/subsidies the young person or their parents receive?

No, the young person's participation will not affect any services, supports, or subsidies that they or their parents receive. This is an independent research study. Being in the study is voluntary, so young people do not have to participate.

What will be done with the information collected? Who will see the results?

Child Trends will prepare a report summarizing the findings, which we'll share with our funders (The Duke Endowment), North Carolina DHHS, and other stakeholders in North Carolina. The summary of the findings and any reports or other products will **not** include young people's names or any other identifying information. Their responses will be combined with those of other young people interviewed when results are described.

Will young people and/or their families see the results?

If they request information, the study team can send participants and/or their families a summary of the findings when the study is complete.