

**TEST\_A trans-national study of decision making**

Dear Child Welfare worker,

This survey is part of a trans-national study of decision making in child welfare systems in Norway, Finland, England and the U.S. Child welfare workers in all four countries are presented with the same questions and sample case studies. We are interested in understanding what factors you consider in decision-making, as well as what your practice experiences have been. This survey should take less than 4 minutes to answer for some, and around 8-12 minutes to answer for others.

Your identity will be hidden.

Read more about confidentiality and hidden identity here. (Opens in a new window.)

**1) \* Are you currently a child welfare worker who makes determinations about child removal and/or who prepares child protective orders as part of your work at a child welfare agency?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

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The following criteria must be fulfilled for this question to be shown:

- ( ☐ If "Are you currently a child welfare worker who makes determinations about child removal and/or who prepares child protective orders as part of your work at a child welfare agency?" equals "Yes"
- )

**We are interested in learning about your considerations and preparations prior to child removal at your workplace. We are presenting you with an excerpt from a case that we would like you to imagine is on your case load. The case description is followed by a series of questions:**

You are working with a boy – Alex - who is 5 years old and whose family has received in-home services over a period of time. The case includes parental substance abuse, previous domestic violence, and general neglect. The circumstances of the case have deteriorated recently to such an extent that you are concerned that the boy's risk of harm is high. You are considering removal of the child from his parents, and you have an interview with the parents to inform them about this. The parents are opposing a removal of Alex.

**2) WHAT WOULD BE YOUR MAJOR AIM(S) IN THIS INTERVIEW WITH THE PARENTS? Please consider each of the statements on a scale from 1=not important to 5=very important. If it is not applicable (NA) in your system, tick off NA.**

	Not important 1	2	3	4	Very important 5	NA
a. Establish the facts and circumstances of the case – “what really happened”	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Inform the parents about why you may be pursuing child removal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Find out if the parents have any needs that you can help with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Make sure the parents are included as participants in relevant decision-making processes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Ask for parental preferences about potential future placement of the child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Make sure parental views about the needs of the child are heard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Confirm that the parents understand that child removal preparations are in process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Advise the parents to seek independent advice from a lawyer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



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- (
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- )

**3) Would you consider referring the family for a Family Group Decision Making meeting (TDM)?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know

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- (
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- )

**4) As the key worker in this case, would you talk with the 5-year old Alex?**

- ☐ Not likely
- ☐ Yes, early in the process
- ☐ Yes, at some point during the process
- ☐ Yes, if a decision about going to court has been made.



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The following criteria must be fulfilled for this question to be shown:

- (
  - ☐ If "Are you currently a child welfare worker who makes determinations about child removal and/or who prepares child protective orders as part of your work at a child welfare agency?" *equals* "Yes"
- )
- and (
  - ☐ If "As the key worker in this case, would you talk with the 5-year old Alex?" *equals* "Yes, early in the process"
  - ☐ or
  - ☐ If "As the key worker in this case, would you talk with the 5-year old Alex?" *equals* "Yes, if a decision about going to court has been made."
  - ☐ or
  - ☐ If "As the key worker in this case, would you talk with the 5-year old Alex?" *equals* "Yes, at some point during the process"
- )

**5) WHAT WOULD BE YOUR MAJOR AIM(S) IN TALKING WITH 5-YEAR OLD ALEX? Please consider each of the statements on a scale from 1=not important to 5=very important. If it is not applicable (NA) in your system, tick off NA.**

	Not important 1	2	3	4	Very important 5	NA
a. Establish the facts and circumstances of the case - "what really happened"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Inform the 5 year old about why you may be pursuing child removal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Find out his wishes and feelings about the situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Find out if he has any needs you can help him with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Confirm that the 5-year old understands that child removal preparations are in process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Make sure he is included as a participant in relevant decision-making processes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Ask his preferences about his potential future placement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



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- (
  - ☐ If "Are you currently a child welfare worker who makes determinations about child removal and/or who prepares child protective orders as part of your work at a child welfare agency?" equals "Yes"
- )

**6) If the boy in the case were age 11, would you talk with him?**

- ☐ Not likely
- ☐ Yes, early in the process
- ☐ Yes, at some point during the process
- ☐ Yes, if a decision about going to court has been made



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- (
  - If "Are you currently a child welfare worker who makes determinations about child removal and/or who prepares child protective orders as part of your work at a child welfare agency?" *equals* "Yes"
- )
- and (
  - If "If the boy in the case were age 11, would you talk with him?" *equals* "Yes, at some point during the process"
  - or
  - If "If the boy in the case were age 11, would you talk with him?" *equals* "Yes, if a decision about going to court has been made"
  - or
  - If "If the boy in the case were age 11, would you talk with him?" *equals* "Yes, early in the process"
- )

**7) What would be your major aims in talking with 11-year old Alex? Please consider each of the statements on a scale from 1=not important to 5=very important. If it is not applicable (NA) in your system, tick off NA.**

	Not important 1	2	3	4	Very important 5	NA
a. Establish the facts and circumstances of the case - "what really happened"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Inform the 11-year old about why you may be pursuing child removal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Find out his wishes and feelings about the situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Find out if he has any needs you can help him with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Confirm that the 11-year old understands that child removal preparations are in process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Make sure he is included as a participant in relevant decision-making processes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Ask his preferences about his potential future placement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



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- )

**8) Given the circumstances at your workplace, would you have sufficient time in the case of 5-year old Alex to undertake all the preparation work (for removal and the court report) to your satisfaction?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know

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- (
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- )

**9) In the case of 5-year old Alex, APPROXIMATELY how long would you spend on the following processes (based on your experience with similar cases):**

a. From the time you informed the parents that it may be necessary to remove Alex until a decision is made to remove him?

b. From the time the decision to remove Alex is made until the court report is sent to the court?

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- (
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- )

**10) A final question about the Alex case: At your current workplace, would there be significant obstacles to arrive at a satisfactory decision about whether to remove Alex? If yes, please describe the two most significant obstacles:**



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The following criteria must be fulfilled for this question to be shown:

- (
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- )

**11) Who authorizes your decision to remove a child?  
Select only those that apply.**

- ☐ No one
- ☐ Co-worker
- ☐ Supervisor
- ☐ Senior manager
- ☐ Agency lawyer
- ☐ Independent source
- ☐ Interdisciplinary team
- ☐ Parents of the child
- ☐ Child
- ☐ Other

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- (
  - If "Are you currently a child welfare worker who makes determinations about child removal and/or who prepares child protective orders as part of your work at a child welfare agency?" equals "Yes"
- )

**12) Who would THOROUGHLY assess or evaluate the quality of your work and decision making in child removal preparations? Select only those that apply:**

- ☐ No one
- ☐ Co-worker
- ☐ Supervisor
- ☐ Senior manager
- ☐ Agency lawyer
- ☐ Independent source
- ☐ Interdisciplinary team
- ☐ Parents of the child
- ☐ Child
- ☐ Other



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The following criteria must be fulfilled for this question to be shown:

- (
  - If "Are you currently a child welfare worker who makes

• )

determinations about child removal and/or who prepares child protective orders as part of your work at a child welfare agency?" equals "Yes"

**13) Based on your experience in the last 12 months, how confident do you feel in the QUALITY of:**

	Highly confident	Confident	Neither confident nor skeptical	Skeptical	Very skeptical
a. The decisions you make on cases about court-ordered child removals?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The decisions your colleagues make on cases about court-ordered child removals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. The decisions your managers make on cases about court-ordered child removals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. The legal advice that the parents have received in cases about child removals?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. The support and advice the child(ren) have received in cases about child removals?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



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- )

**14) The following are statements regarding the use of independent experts (professionals that are not working in your office, but that are qualified to assess a child/family) in the decision making processes relating to child removal. Please rate current practice at your workplace.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. The use of independent experts gives us an important second opinion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. In our agency we use independent experts too much in the child removal decision making process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. The use of independent experts is helpful in that it gives us extra time to make decisions about child removals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. The use of independent experts makes our child removal case stronger in court	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. We only use independent experts in decision making regarding child removal when we need expertise we do not have within our own staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. The use of independent experts delays decision making regarding child removals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. The use of independent experts elicits a child focus in the child removal decision making process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. The use of independent					

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- )

**15) Does your workplace have an informational pamphlet, brochure, or similar document about the child removal process:**

	Yes	No	I don't know
a. That you can give to the parent(s)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. That you can give to the children?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**Please imagine that a principal at a school contacts your agency for a consultation about the following case:**

Jon (11) and Mira (9) are living with their parents. Both mother and father have learning difficulties and mental health problems. The school is very concerned about the situation, and a psychologist has examined the children. She has concluded that Jon and Mira have serious problems with learning and they lack social skills. They are clearly lagging behind their peers, and this is confirmed by their test scores. The psychologist has stated that this is due to lack of stimuli and help from the parents, and the children need a lot of help and support. Further, the psychologist stated that the children lack basic social skills, especially Mira (9). The parents are socially withdrawn and cannot teach and show their children how to behave towards friends and other adults. The psychologist concludes that Mira and Jon are at significant risk of becoming as socially withdrawn as their parents.

**16) Based on the limited information about these two children, please consider these five statements:**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither disagree nor agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. It is my professional opinion that it is likely that Mira and Jon are being neglected by their parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. It is my professional opinion that without help now it is not likely that Jon and Mira will lead well-functioning lives as adults	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. It is my professional opinion that without help now it is not likely that Jon and Mira will be able to gain employment as adults	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. In this situation my workplace would provide services for Jon and Mira	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. In this situation my workplace would consider preparations for child removal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**Background and demographic questions.**

**17) Gender**

☐ Male ☐ Female

**18) Are you a manager / supervisor / team manager at your workplace?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

**19) How many years have you been employed in your present job?**

- ☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 1-4 years ☐ 5-9 years ☐ 10-14 years ☐ 15+ years

**20) How many years have you worked as a child welfare worker?**

- ☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 1-4 years ☐ 5-9 years ☐ 10-14 years ☐ 15+ years

**21) Age**

- ☐ Under 25 ☐ 25-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65 ☐ 65+

**22) What is your education? (Tick off those that apply)**

- ☐ BA or BS in Social Work/Child Welfare  
☐ BA or BS in another discipline  
☐ MSW in Social Work/Child Welfare  
☐ MA or MS in another discipline  
☐ PHD in Social Work/Child Welfare  
☐ PHD in other dicipline  
☐ Other

**23) Approximate work place size measured by number of child welfare workers in full time positions:**

Select answer

**24) What is your caseload today measured by number of children?**

Select answer

**25) Approximately how many child removals (number of children) have you been involved in as the key worker the last 12 months:**

Select answer

**26) Finally, please identify the three most important changes that you believe could improve decision making relating to child removal processes at your workplace**

**27) Please use this space for any additional comments about decision making regarding child removal as well as any comments regarding this survey form.**

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