

QIG-AG Continuum Assessment

Background

The goal of the National Quality Improvement Center for Adoption and Guardianship Support and Preservation (QIC-AG) was to develop evidence-based models of support and interventions that could be replicated or adapted by other child welfare systems across the country to achieve long-term, stable permanency in adoptive and guardianship homes for waiting children as well as for children and families after adoption or guardianship has been finalized.

Adapted Continuum Assessment

During the first five years, eight QIC-AG pilot sites used a structured process to examine their population, existing infrastructure, and service array to determine areas of potential need. The QIC-AG was approved for a no-cost extension for FFY 2021. As part of the extension, the QIC-AG will work to enhance the continuum of services for non-pilot sites. To effectively support families who have adopted or finalized guardianship, sites must understand how their system currently attends to the needs of these families across the continuum. The Continuum Assessment, if used correctly, will help a site consider not only their population, but also the organizational structure of the service delivery system that impacts their population and the current service array offered.

The QIC-AG adapted the Continuum Assessment that was used with pilot sites to allow for an expedited process for new sites. The adapted Continuum Assessment is composed of three separate but inter-connected elements. The first element gathers population information, the second element examines macro level organizational information, and the third element gathers information about the services and interventions that are offered at each of the intervals on the QIC-AG continuum framework. The Continuum Assessment examines these three elements as they relate to two target groups:

- **Target Group 1:** Children with challenging mental health, emotional or behavioral issues who are awaiting an adoptive or guardianship placement as well as children in an identified adoptive or guardianship home, but the placement has not resulted in finalization for a significant period of time.
- **Target Group 2:** Children and families who have already finalized the adoption or guardianship. This group includes children who have obtained permanency through private guardianship and domestic private or international adoptions.

Element #1: Population Information

Collecting and examining population information will assist the site in gaining a clear understanding of the characteristics of the target populations, as well as the potential scope of service needs. Supported by the site consultant, the site will work with key partners to complete Element #1 with as much available information as possible.

Element #2: Organizational Information

Macro level organizational information is collected in capacity domains that fall under process and outcomes. This information helps sites determine if there is sufficient infrastructure in place to support the target populations. Listed below are the capacity domains broken out by the categories to be explored.

Process

- Infrastructure (includes questions related to policy)
- Functioning (includes questions related to structure, communication and assessment)
- Operations (includes questions related to inter and intra agency relationships, availability/access, and monitoring/management)

Outcomes:

- Knowledge (includes questions related to training)
- Ability (includes questions related to provider capacity)

The QIC-AG site consultant will facilitate a guided discussion to assist the site in determining if there is sufficient infrastructure in place to support the target populations.

Element #3: Services and Interventions

The third element of the assessment gathers information about the services and interventions that are offered at five of the eight intervals on the QIC-AG continuum framework. This helps the site clarify the existing services offered and assists the site in identifying gaps and strengths along the site’s continuum. The QIC-AG continuum framework intervals are listed below.

- Focused
- Selective
- Intensive
- Universal
- Indicated

To generate the clearest picture of a site’s continuum of services, the assessment examines metrics related to quality and accessibility using a rating system from the AdoptUSKids Support Services Assessment¹ Tool.

Quality Metrics

- Adoption/ permanency-competent
- Trauma-informed
- Designed with family and youth input and feedback
- Family-focused
- Outcome-evaluated/ evidence-based (with positive results)

Accessibility Metrics

- Broad eligibility
- Financially accessible
- Geographically accessible
- Well known/publicized
- Rapid availability
- Ongoing availability/sustainability
- Culturally relevant and accessible

The QIC-AG site consultant will assist the site with the assessment of services offered to each target group. When complete, Element #3 will highlight areas of strength and need across the QIC-AG continuum framework.

¹ AdoptUSKids. (2019). Guide to the AdoptUSKids Support Services Assessment Tool. Adoption Exchange Association.