



## R2P Toolkit Series, December 2002, Issue 4

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*Keeping Child Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being at the Forefront*

# Surveys for an Advanced Audience

*This guide advances agency knowledge of survey design, sampling, response, and data analysis. Websites to guide the agency through more complex survey construction are included.*

### **Advanced survey design:**

- Use forced-choice questions instead of agree-disagree statements.
- Establish reliability. This indicates the extent that measures reveal actual differences.
- Establish validity. This determines if the tool is measuring what it intends to measure.

### **Considerations in sampling:**

- Need for accuracy and generalizability. Larger sample sizes more accurately represent the entire population.
- Practicality: cost, time.
- Number of variables being studied. A larger number of variables requires a larger sample.
- Type of data analysis. Some types of statistical tests require larger samples.

### **Response rates:**

- Response rate equals number who respond divided by number of eligible respondents.
- Fewer people respond to survey requests for personal information.
- Unsolicited surveys receive fewer responses.
- Noncommitment by participants to survey issues will yield fewer responses.
- The overall survey purpose may affect the response rate.
- Interviewer-administered surveys have higher response rates but are more expensive.
- Nonresponses could introduce bias in the results.

### **Data analysis:**

- Decide on unit of measure (i.e., entire family or just one particular member).
- Choose a method of analysis and base your decision on what you want to know.
- Use measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) to determine distribution of findings.
- Use measures of dispersion to determine the range and standard deviation.
- Use correlation to determine relationships among variables.
- Use chi-square to determine if there are relationships among nominal or ordinal data (see websites for definitions).
- Many of these tests can tell if there *is* a relationship, *not what* that relationship is.

### **Research reports:**

- Decide on the appropriate audience and write for their level of understanding.
- Include in the report research questions, data collection procedures, sampling strategy, methodology, results, discussion, limitations, and recommendations. Put data collection instruments in appendices.

### **Visit these websites on survey design:**

<http://www.ubmail.ubalt.edu/~harsham/stat-data/opre330Surveys.htm>

Includes a sample size calculator and several statistical operations.

<http://www.statsoftinc.com/textbook/stathome.html>

Features a statistical textbook with chapters on analyses of variance, discriminate analysis, and experimental design.

### **Reference:**

Neuman, W. L. (1997). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

*"To accelerate the rate at which communities and agencies prepare for and adopt the most effective known practices in support of a comprehensive system for ensuring healthy child, youth, and family development."*



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