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Open Courts Pilot Project: Observations and Evaluation Report September 1, 2018

By

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Summary Abstract

On March 13, 2018 the Supreme Court of Kentucky issued [Order 2018-05](#) implementing the Open Court Pilot Project to “study the feasibility and desirability of the opening or limited opening to the public of the following court proceedings, except of related to sexual abuse: Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse (DNA) proceedings under KRS Chapter 620 and Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) proceedings under KRS Chapter 625.”¹ The Order adopted the statutory recommendations of KRS 21A.190 and KRS 21A.192.² The Order designated Family Court Circuits 30, 4, and 18 as open court pilot sites and Family Court Circuits 22, 3 and 38 as control sites. The order also authorized the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to evaluate the pilot project.

Data for the evaluation was collected from questionnaires completed by professional and family members having open court DNA or TPR proceedings, focus group meetings with professionals associated with the pilot site cases, and observations of court proceedings held at the project’s pilot and control sites. Opinions from both professionals and family members were mixed when asked about the effects of opening DNA or TPR cases on children, families, or public. Opinions expressed during the pilot sites’ focus group meetings of the professionals, which were held after the pilot project had been completed, tended to suggest more support for opening the proceedings to the public, as long as there is judicial discretion. Observations of

¹ Order 2018-05, Supreme Court of Kentucky, March 13, 2018.

² *Id.*

the pilot and control proceedings found the attendance and general court processes were similar. Caution must be given, however, to generalizing these findings. The data was derived from 6 Circuits over a short period time using convenience sampling.³

Continued study of the pilot project is recommended, with particular emphasis on an in-depth examination of the evidentiary effects on children and families through interviews with professional counselors, and possible content analysis of case/court records. An analysis of the court records of pilot and control sites is also suggested to determine whether the opening of the court proceedings affected case management proficiency. A systematic and exhaustive review is also recommended to be conducted of current statutes, standard operating procedures, and policies concerning confidentiality, protection from harm, accountability, and transparency for Kentucky's child protection cases.

Introduction

In 2016, the Kentucky General Assembly passed Senate Bill (SB) 40 which requested that the Supreme Court of Kentucky institute a pilot project to study the feasibility and desirability of opening court proceedings related to dependency, neglect, and abuse (DNA) and termination of parental rights (TPR), except for proceedings related to sexual abuse. Senate Bill 40 became three new Kentucky Revised Statutes; [KRS 21A.190](#), [KRS 21A.192](#), and [KRS 610.072](#); that provided the Kentucky court system with guidelines for the institution of the Open Courts Pilot Project: [KRS 21A.190](#), which provides the framework for the project; [KRS 21A.192](#), which provides the procedures that shall be followed; and [KRS 610.072](#), which addresses the attendance of the public at these hearings.

[KRS 21A.190](#) established the following framework for the Open Courts Pilot Project:

- The pilot project may be established in a minimum of three diverse judicial districts or judicial circuits;
- A pilot project shall not be established in a district if the applicable judge or county attorney objects;
- The pilot project shall require participating courts to be presumptively open; and
- The pilot project shall last for four years unless extended by the General Assembly.

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is required to monitor and evaluate the pilot project to determine:

³ Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling which draws subjects from that part of the population that is close at hand and is accessible (i.e., courtroom).

1. Whether there are adverse effects resulting from the opening of certain proceedings or release of records;
2. Whether the pilot project demonstrates a benefit to the litigants;
3. Whether the pilot project demonstrates a benefit to the public;
4. Whether the pilot project supports a determination that such proceedings should be presumptively open;
5. Whether the pilot project supports a determination that such proceedings should be closed;
6. How open proceedings under the pilot project impact the child;
7. The parameters and limits of the program;
8. Suggestions for operation and improvement of the program;
9. Rule changes which may be needed if the program is to be made permanent and expanded to all courts; and
10. Recommendations for statutory changes which may be needed if the program is to be made permanent and expanded to all courts.⁴

The AOC, along with the help of the Open Court Pilot Project’s Planning Committee, employed an approach to collect data and information regarding open court proceedings and records in DNA and TPR cases.

Open Court Pilot Project’s Planning Committee

On August 31, 2016, the Chief Justice, a panel of Family Court judges, and representatives from the AOC met to begin the planning process for the implementation of the Open Courts Pilot Project.

Jefferson (Circuit 30), Hopkins (Circuit 4), and Harrison, Nicholas, Pendleton and Robertson (Circuit 18) Counties were selected as the pilot project sites. Jefferson County is an urban area containing the largest city in Kentucky, while the other counties are classified as being more rural. The following leadership from the selected circuits participated in the planning committee:

- Chief Family Court Judge Paula Sherlock, Circuit 30
- Family Court Judge Susan McClure, Circuit 4
- Family Court Judge Heather Fryman, Circuit 18

Demographically similar control sites were also chosen. The control site observations provided baseline information, which will be compared with the open court proceedings. The counties

⁴ KRS 21A.190(3)(c).

agreeing to be the control group for the project were Fayette (Circuit 22), Christian (Circuit 3), and Ohio, Butler, Edmonson, and Hancock (Circuit 38) Counties.

Finally, the committee requested technical assistance through the federal child welfare resource collaborate, the Capacity Building Center for Courts (CBCC), for recommendations on how to best monitor and evaluate the pilot project to determine its impact.

The CBCC recommended the following:

- Review of other states' pilot projects/programs;
- Data collection recommendations such as measuring attendance in the courtroom and avoiding a focus on macro level outcomes;
- Court observation tools; and,
- Conduct focus groups.

Review of Other States' Pilot Projects

In the following section, pilot programs from Minnesota, Arizona, and Connecticut are reviewed in order to examine the impact of opening court proceedings (and records) in dependency courts. Overall, the three projects provide helpful insight into the procedures and methods used for the collection and analysis of data. However, there was insufficient statistical data to be able to draw any conclusion about the efficacy of opening court proceedings to the public.

Minnesota conducted an open courts pilot project in 1999 and submitted its final report in August of 2001.⁵ The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) conducted the pilot project study for Minnesota. The NCSC team utilized site visits, interviews, focus groups, surveys, file reviews, data collection, and data review.⁶ The team surveyed the following professionals: judges, court administrators, county attorneys, public defenders, guardians ad litem, social workers, and the news media.⁷ The team also interviewed these same groups to capture information on implementation strategies, local court operation and policy, case management, file management, observations, and experiences in child protection proceedings. Focus groups were asked to reflect on the following topics: the benefits and downsides to open court proceedings; their perceptions of the effect on court operations, quality, and accountability; the frequency of closed proceedings; and, suggestions for improvements.⁸ The Minnesota pilot

⁵ National Center for State Courts, Evaluation Data: Open Hearings and Court Records in Juvenile Protection Matters, Volume II (August 2001).

⁶ *Id.* at 2.

⁷ *Id.* at 5-6.

⁸ *Id.* at 5.

project's finding concluded that open courts may have positively impacted professional accountability yet produced negligent systemic insight into policy and increased the workload of court staff.⁹

Arizona also explored open courts through a pilot study that involved the use of surveys, self-reporting from participants, court attendance, and closure data collected by court staff.¹⁰ Arizona sent surveys to child protective case workers, court appointed special advocates, court-appointed attorneys, and parents' attorneys.¹¹ Only 54 responses were received. The low number of responses made it difficult to form any substantial statistical connection or conclusion. The study also found that very few of these hearings were actually open to the public – judges would often close the hearings even when only the parties were present in the courtroom. Ultimately, the report found that opening dependency courts had little impact on the judicial proceedings but cautioned that low attendance by the public may have been due to a lack of consistency in opening or closing hearings.¹²

Connecticut conducted an open courts pilot project using an online survey, hearing attendance sheets, focus groups, and a survey conducted at Connecticut's Annual Child and Youth Law Forum.¹³ The online survey was distributed to attorneys, DCF (Department of Children and Families) staff, court staff and the media. The survey only received 40 responses and Connecticut's Advisory board determined that the limited number of responses was too small to provide any "statistically reliable results."¹⁴ The hearing attendance sheets showed minimal attendance by the media and the general public (individuals who did not have an established legitimate interest in the proceeding) – over 80% of the attendees at the open hearings were either parties or had a legitimate interest (relative or foster parent) in the proceedings. Further, since only 20 hearing attendance sheets were received, the results were found to be inconclusive for the purposes of evaluation.¹⁵

Connecticut's focus group results showed that most attendees disagreed with opening the cases to the public, primarily due to concern over the risk of emotional harm and psychological harm to the children involved. A handful of judges agreed with open courts to raise awareness

⁹ *Id.* at 37-40.

¹⁰ Broberg, Gregory B., Final Report, Arizona Open Dependency Hearing Pilot Study 6,12 (Mar. 5, 2006).

¹¹ *Id.* at 12-13.

¹² *Id.* at 13.

¹³ Juvenile Access Pilot Program Advisory Board, Report to the Connecticut General Assembly 12-13, 26 (Dec. 31, 2010).

¹⁴ *Id.* at 23

¹⁵ *Id.* at 19 and 26.

of the issues involved in the cases and to build public trust in the courts.¹⁶ The Child and Youth Law Forum survey was distributed to attorneys who practice child protection law, judges, DCF legal staff, assistant attorneys general, court staff, and judges.¹⁷ Approximately 60% of the responses disagreed or strongly disagreed with opening the proceedings.¹⁸

Based on the pilot project results (or lack of results), Connecticut’s Advisory Board determined that the majority of the individuals that attended these types of hearings were foster parents or other relatives and were closely connected with the cases, and that there was some benefit to “limited expanded access.” The Advisory Board recommended closing the proceedings to the public, but also recommended amending the statute to allow individuals or entities to attend these proceedings if they have an established legitimate interest.¹⁹

Methods for Evaluating the Open Courts Pilot Project

On March 16, 2018 the Supreme Court of Kentucky publicly announced the implementation of the Open Court Pilot Project, with Family Court Circuits 30, 4, and 18 being designated as the open court pilot sites and Family Court Circuits 22, 3 and 38 as the control sites. DNA and TPR proceedings were to be open per the Supreme Court order effective as of March 13, 2018.²⁰ The order authorized the AOC to observe the sites between March 19, 2018 and May 31, 2018, and then to evaluate the pilot project and provide an annual report, in accordance with KRS 21A.190(4), to the Legislative Research Commission, the Interim Joint Committee on Health and Welfare, and the Interim Joint Committee on Judiciary. The report is to contain statistics, findings and recommendation on the Open Courts Pilot Project by September 1, 2018.

The Observation Methods

The pilot and control sites were examined through convenience sampling. At the three-pilot Circuits (30, 4 and 18) professionals and family associated with either DNA or TPR appearances were surveyed per their convenience on the days AOC staff were present. The professional questionnaire gathered opinions from professionals who attended or participated in open court

¹⁶ *Id.* at 22-23

¹⁷ *Id.* at 26

¹⁸ *Id.* at 27

¹⁹ *Id.* at 28. It is also interesting to note that this is already the case in Kentucky. Individuals and entities who have a direct interest in the case, and such other persons as agreed to by the child and his/her attorney, may be admitted to juvenile hearings. KRS 610.070(3).

²⁰ The public announcement is located at <https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=KentuckyCourtofJustice&prId=85> as of August 21, 2018. The order is located at https://courts.ky.gov/Documents/Newsroom/OCPPOrder_03132018.pdf as of August 21, 2018.

proceedings such as attorneys, judges, court staff, social workers, and the media. The professionals were asked to complete the surveys after their proceedings had concluded. The family member surveys collected the perceptions of the family members who attended open court proceedings and were filled out the day that their case was heard. (Note: copies of the two survey instruments can be found in the Appendices (last section)).

While surveys were being collected at the pilot sites, the open court proceedings were also observed. The observations were to determine the extent to which opening the courts affected the proceedings and its participants. A court observation form was utilized to ensure the observations were uniform and valid. The AOC partnered with National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) through the Court Watch Initiative to assist with observing Jefferson County. The other pilot sites (Circuits 4 and 18) were observed only by AOC staff. (Note: a copy of the observation form is located in the Appendices (last section)).

Observations were also made in the control sites, Circuits 22, 3, and 38. AOC staff completed the observations with an observation form asking questions similar to those on the pilot site observation form. (Note: a copy of this form can also be found in the Appendices (last section)).

Focus Group Meetings

After the Open Court Pilot Project was completed on May 31, 2018, focus groups were conducted. The meetings included the professionals associated with the DNA or TPR cases appearing before the piloted open Family Courts. Three focus groups met from July 10 through August 10, 2018, with AOC staff facilitating the discussions:

- Circuit 4 professionals met on July 10, 2018.
- Circuit 8 professionals met on July 23, 2018.
- Circuit 30 professionals met on August 10, 2018.

The meetings provided the professional respondents another opportunity to express their opinions about opening family court to the public, to reflect on the procedures, and to make recommendations. Refer to Appendices for focus group questions and group responses (pp. 40-43).

Statistical Analyses

In this section, statistical results are reported from the questionnaires distributed to the family members and professionals, the focus groups of the pilot sites, and observations of open and closed courts. The statistics were calculated using SPSS Version 19 and displayed visually using Microsoft Excel. As standard scientific practice, responses which were 'N/A,' 'Not Applicable,' 'I Don't Know,' 'Don't Know,' or unanswered were not included in the marginal or grand totals, frequency counts, percentages, or other statistical results, but were defined as missing data. For each data source different analyses were completed.

- The survey responses were analyzed using univariate tables and crosstabulations, which sorted the responses to the opinion statements by the roles of the respondent. Pearson Chi-Square Statistic Tests were calculated for each cross-tabulation. The possible answers to a statement were either 'Yes' or 'No' or a five-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. There were 163 professional surveys and 207 family surveys completed. Please note both totals are distinct counts of completed surveys that were returned to AOC Staff. A given professional or family member had an opportunity to complete a survey instrument multiple times during the pilot project.
- The focus groups' responses to 6 primary questions were analyzed per circuit. The qualitative responses were examined for major themes. There were three focus group meetings.
- The observations of open or closed proceedings were based on the responses to the questions provided by the respective observation forms. The observations were analyzed using univariate tables, with the open court observations being cross-tabulated by circuit. There were 1,105 open court observation forms and 682 closed court observation forms completed and returned to AOC Staff. (Note: on occasion there were multiple observations completed for a given court proceeding. This was particularly true for Jefferson County).

Survey Responses from the Professionals

The open Family Court survey for the professional respondents began by asking whether certain events occurred during the court appearance. The table below presents the percentages of responses to a given event. The highlighted green percentages indicate that over 50 percent of the respondents either indicated 'Yes' or 'No' to the given statement. Among the professionals who completed this section, the following was noted:

- A little over half (54%) noted the judge had the parties and participants introduce themselves.

- Nearly 70% indicated there were individuals present in the courtroom who were not associated with the case.
- More than half answered that the judge did not close the proceedings (60%).
- The majority indicated a service provider was not present (66%), while almost all indicated a member of the faith community was not present (95%).
- The large majority indicated no one had asked to close a case (83%); and nearly all responded the judge granted a motion to close a case, when such a motion was made (94%).
- Virtually all professional respondents indicated their case(s) had not received media attention (95%) and had not been contacted (98%) or interviewed (99%) by the media.

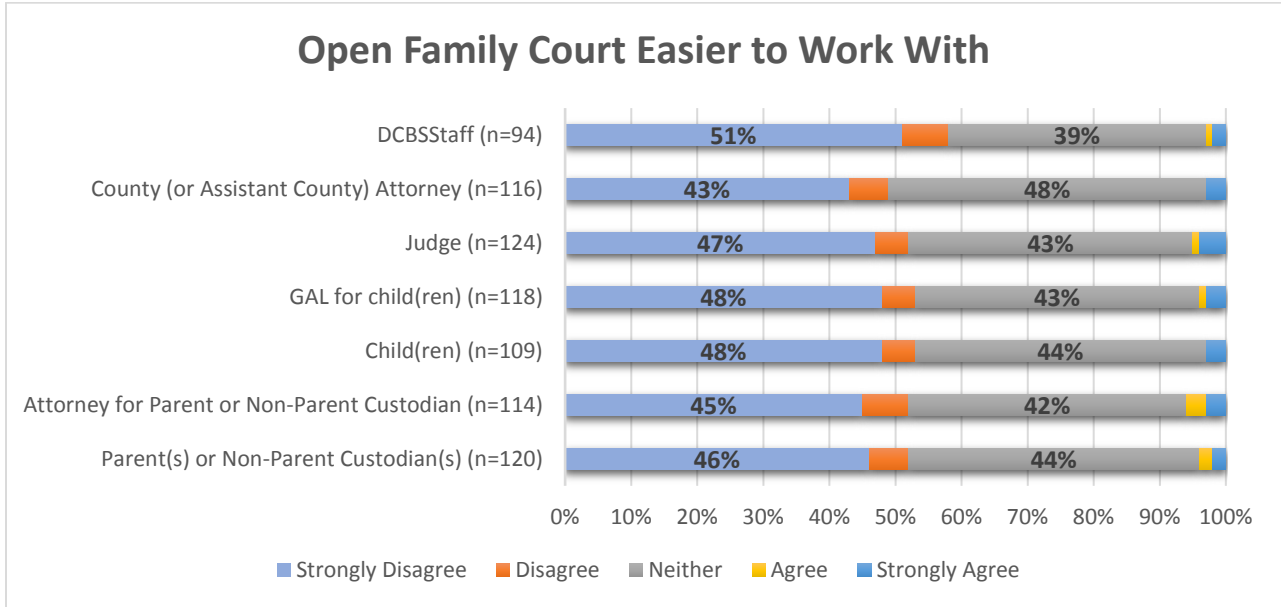
Did any of the following occur regarding you case(s) today	Yes	No	Total
The Judge asked everyone in the courtroom to identify himself/herself.	54%	46%	157
People who were not involved in today's cases were in the courtroom.	69%	31%	154
A party asked the Court to close a case on today's docket.	17%	83%	151
The Judge closed a proceeding.	40%	60%	159
The Judge left a case open despite a motion to close that case.	6%	94%	153
One, or more, of your cases today received media attention prior to court.	5%	95%	162
You were contacted by the media about a case on today's docket.	2%	98%	163
You were interviewed by the media about a case on today's docket.	1%	99%	163
A service provider attended today's proceedings	33%	66%	155
A member of the faith community attended today's proceedings.	5%	95%	149

When asked whether their case(s) had been affected by opening the proceeding to the public, the majority of responses ranged from 'Strongly Disagree to Neither (disagree or agree)' on the five-point opinion scale. In the cross-tabulation below, the green highlighted responses indicate more than 30% of the professionals responded either 'Strongly Disagree' and/or 'Neither' to the following:

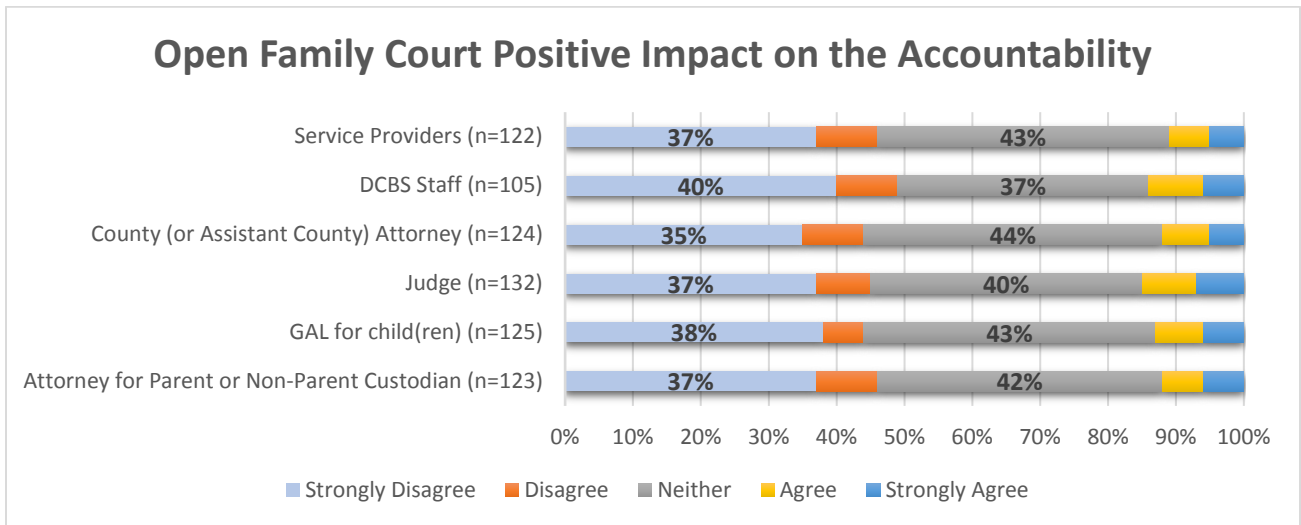
- Preparation of the participants
- The efficiency, dignity, or quality of the proceedings
- The testimony of the witness
- Content of court statements, reports, or exhibits
- Services offered to the family.

1. I believe that having my case(s) open to the public today affected the following:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Preparation of the participants.	34%	11%	46%	5%	4%	147
Efficiency of conducting the proceeding(s).	30%	13%	37%	13%	7%	152
Dignity of the proceeding(s) (e.g., respect shown for participants).	27%	13%	42%	9%	9%	150
Quality of the proceeding(s) (e.g., issues discussed, decisions made).	26%	11%	47%	9%	8%	151
Witness testimony (Please leave blank if no witness testified under oath).	28%	10%	53%	4%	5%	114
Content of court statements, reports, or exhibits.	31%	11%	46%	5%	7%	149
Services offered to the family.	33%	11%	48%	5%	3%	149

The majority of respondents’ answers emphasized that open proceedings did not “make it easier to work with” the parties (parents/non-parent custodian or children) or other professionals. The distribution of responses made about each professional type was essentially bimodal. The vertical stacked bar graph below clearly depicts this pattern. The majority of responses were either ‘Strongly Disagree’ or ‘Neither Disagree or Agree’ on the five-point scale. ‘Strongly Disagree’ is represented by the lavender color on the bar, while the color brown indicates ‘Neither Disagree or Agree.’ The ‘Strongly Disagree’ responses ranged from 43 percent to 51 percent, while the ‘Neither Disagree or Agree’ responses range from 39 percent to 48 percent. In other words, opening the court proceedings did not make it “easier” to work with other professionals.



When asked about the impact of opening Family Court on the accountability of each professional to the children involved in the DNA case proceeding(s), the majority indicated either ‘Strongly Disagreed’ or ‘Neither Disagreed or Agreed’ that this impact was positive. Using the same format as the graph above, the bimodal response below clearly depicts the ‘Strongly Disagree’ response percentage ranged from 35 percent to 40 percent, while the ‘Neither Disagree or Agree’ response percentages ranged from 37 percent to 44 percent. These opinions point to the conclusion that the majority thought opening the court proceedings did not seem to affect professional accountability.



The professionals’ responses also continued to have a similar pattern from ‘Strongly Disagree’ to ‘Neither Disagree or Agree’ regarding opinion statements about the effects of the pilot

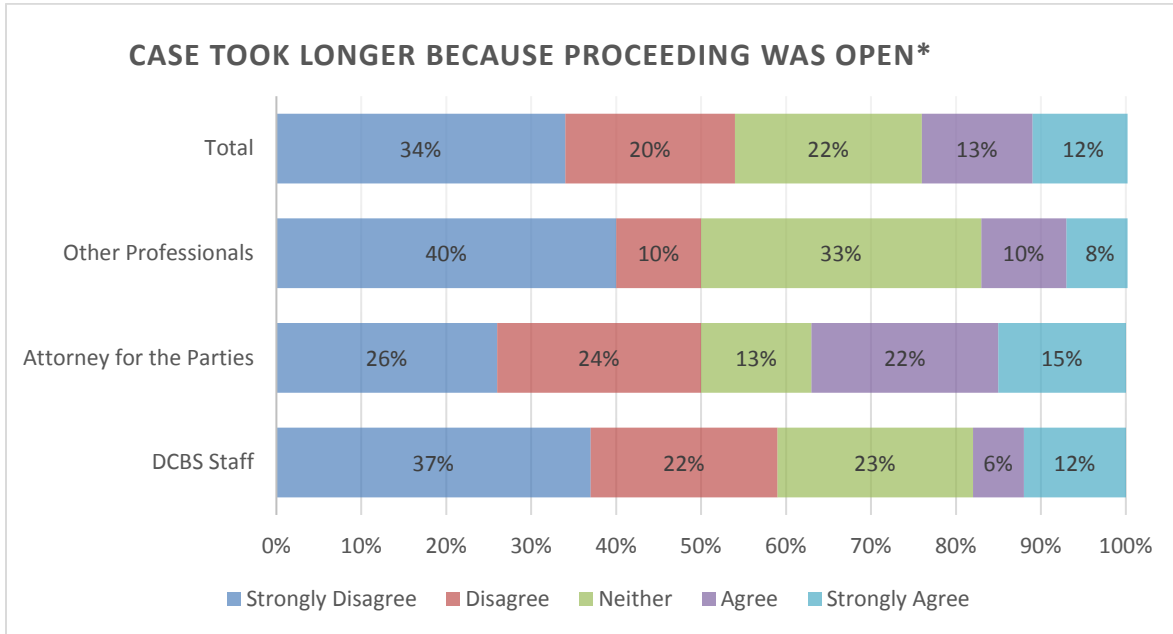
project on the children, parties and non-parties involved with the case, time associated with the case, and the overall positive effects on the child(ren) or family(ies). The response distribution pattern is visualized in the table below. The responses highlighted in green, indicate more than 30 percent of the responses were either ‘Strongly Disagree’ and/or ‘Neither’ for each specified statement below. The strongest negative response, interestingly, was given to statement 6: “I directed more time and attention to my case(s) today because the proceeding(s) was open to the public.”

Thinking about the proceedings today, I would say:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
2. I believe that having my case(s) open to the public today had a positive impact on the child(ren) involved in the case(s).	33%	18%	36%	8%	5%	153
3. I believe that having my case(s) open to the public today was beneficial to the parties involved.	35%	13%	34%	13%	5%	157
4. I believe that having my case(s) open to the public today was beneficial to the non-parties and members of the public in attendance.	35%	15%	28%	17%	6%	156
5. I believe today’s case(s) took longer because court was open to the public.	34%	19%	22%	13%	12%	160
6. I directed more time and attention to my case(s) today because the proceeding(s) was open to the public.	61%	8%	25%	5%	1%	160
9. Overall, I anticipate positive effects on the child(ren) or family(ies) as a result of opening these proceedings to the public	32%	10%	39%	11%	10%	158

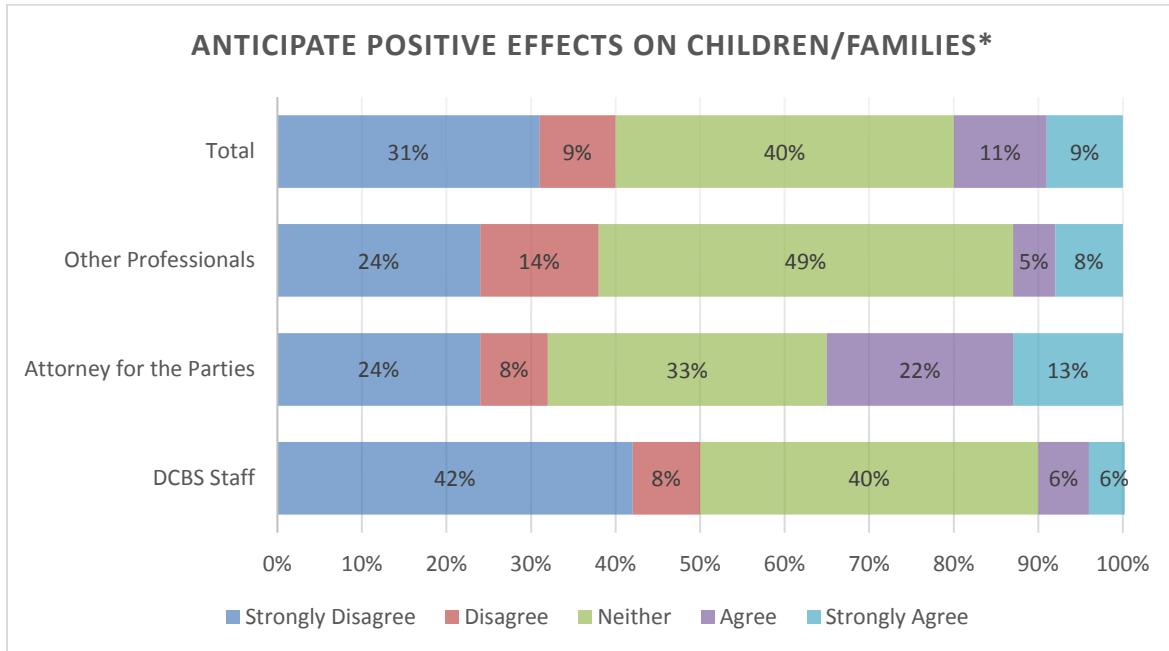
Bivariate analysis of the above statements’ responses (Statements 2-6, and 9) by the professional respondents found moderate statistically significant difference in responses to:

- “5. I believe today’s case(s) took longer because court was open to the public.”
- “9. Overall, I anticipate positive effects on the child(ren) or family(ies) as a result of opening these proceedings to the public.”

In order to calculate the analysis, the original professional categories had to be collapsed from eleven (11) categories to three: DCBS Staff, Attorney for the Parties (children and parents/custodians), and Other Professionals (Judges, Court Staff, County Attorney, School Representative/DPP, and Others). The new categories were required to meet the cross-tabular cell size requirement for the Pearson Chi-Square statistic test. Below the respective bivariate analyses are shown in the graphs entitled “Case Took Longer Because Proceeding Was Open (i.e., Statement 5)” and “Anticipate Positive Effects On Children/Families (i.e., Statement 9).”



Respondents who were categorized as “Attorney for Parties” (graph above) were less likely to ‘Strongly Disagree/Disagree’ and more likely to ‘Agree/Strongly Agree’ than the other two professional categories with the statement: “opening the Family Court increased the time needed to address their case(s).”



When comparing the professional responses to Statement 9, survey participants categorized as ‘DCBS Staff’ had the most negative response to “anticipating positive effects on the children or families” from opening DNA case proceedings to the public (graph above). Half of the ‘DCBS Staff’ group responded, ‘Strongly Disagree/Disagree,’ with 42 percent responding, ‘Strongly Disagree.’

When given an opportunity to further comment about Statement 9’s ‘Strongly Disagree’ responses, professionals noted the following concerns with opening DNA and TPR cases:

- The children may possibly or will be harmed.
- The rights of privacy of children and family members could be or are violated.
- Confidentiality will be breached.

Professionals who further commented on their response of ‘Neither Disagree or Agree’ to Statement 9 indicated:

- It was too soon to make a conclusion.
- There was little or no positive impact having the proceedings opened.
- Opening the proceedings increased the court’s credibility.
- Opening the courts allowed the families to find resolutions.

The few who indicated a positive response to Statement 9 and made an additional comment felt:

- Opening the court proceedings reduces inappropriate behavior and increases accountability.
- Transparency of the cases gives the public an opportunity to understand family court.
- Opening DNA and TPR proceedings, except for sexual abuse cases, was a positive step.

Please see the Appendices for additional cross tables of the opinion statements sorted by the three professional categories. These tables visualize the five-point scale responses to each statement using vertical stacked bar graphs depicting the response percentages. Also refer to Appendices for the comments associated with the opinion statements, as well as the professional respondents' concluding remarks (pp. 27-39).

Focus Groups of Open Court Professionals

In addition to surveying professionals after their case proceedings were completed, the pilot sites had focus groups conducted. Three focus groups met after the pilot project. Please refer to the Appendices for the circuits' exact responses to the focus group questions (pp. 40-43).

Below is a summary of the responses made by the focus group members. Please note the

Circuit 30

Circuit 30's focus group generally did not see any major differences from implementation to closure of the pilot project. The group thought the parties or public really did not understand the meaning of the statement: "the court proceeding is opened to the public," and were not aware the courts were open. They felt more public education was needed prior to the pilot project, and the pilot project should have lasted longer.

The group also noted that no one expressed any concern to them about their case being open to the public; nor did they think opening the courts had any effect on the family or children. The group's final proposal was to move forward with opening the Family Courts and allow the judges the discretion to close as needed.

Circuit 4

The focus group for Circuit 4 noted that case proceedings took longer when the Family Court was open to the public. They indicated many family members felt "nothing is going to change." The same results will occur regardless. The focus group members observed that many of the family members did attend the open hearings. They thought this was a missed opportunity for the children and would have been beneficial to the children.

The focus group questioned whether people actually knew the cases were being handled differently. They further conveyed that many of the “interested parties” did not want to complete the questionnaires.

Circuit 18:

The focus group for Circuit 18 noticed the most significant changes were the dockets were quicker and fewer deputies were needed. With the courtroom opened, the courts no longer had to track down family members or parties associated with the case. Moreover, with everyone in the courtroom, fewer deputies were required to keep order within or outside the courtroom. Once the court completed the pilot project, the focus group members noticed the docket took longer, but also witnessed that the family members have continued to be interested in the cases.

The focus group also felt there were both positive and negative impacts on the children and family members, which in the end balanced out. On one hand, there were parties who did not want to testify in open court. On the other hand, the group did not see a negative impact on the children, and thought open court stopped “excuses and dishonesty.” In fact, according to the group, when parties found out the court was open to the public, many brought their family members to future appearances.

There was no media attending court when proceedings were opened, and there were fewer people attending the open court proceedings than they thought would.

When asked about the study itself the following was suggested:

1. The study should be longer, and the AOC should observe all dockets.
2. The survey instrument needs to be shorter, less confusing, and more concise. The questions should not focus so much on the media. Fewer satisfaction questions should have been asked, and they would have preferred knowing whether the courts received all the information they needed.
3. The family members should be interviewed face to face, and specifically asked about whether they received more services when the courts are opened.
4. The parents who have had their children returned to them should also be interviewed about the overall process.
5. Calculate the clearance rate for open family court cases, along with specific rate of open family court cases re-opened cases.
6. Logistics of setting arrangements within the courtroom should be taken into consider the next time the pilot project is implemented.

Survey Responses from Family Members

The open Family Court survey for the family respondents began by asking whether certain events occurred when their case appeared before the open court. The table below presents the percentages of responses to a given statement. The highlighted green percentages indicate that over 50 percent of the respondents either indicated ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ to the given statement. Among the family members who completed this section, the following had happened, as conveyed by the percent of responses:

- Told the hearing was open before it started (58%).
- Approximately 65%, respectively, noted the judge had everyone introduce themselves, and indicated individuals, who were not associated with the case, were present in the courtroom.
- The large majority indicated no one had asked to have the proceeding closed (90%).
- The judge did not close the proceedings (83%).
- Virtually all family respondents indicated their proceeding or case had not received media attention (94%) and had not been contacted (97%) or interviewed (97%) by the media.

Did any of the following occur regarding your case today?	Yes	No	Total
Before the hearing started, I was told it was open to the public.	58%	42%	193
The Judge asked everyone in the courtroom to identify himself/herself.	64%	36%	207
People who were not part of the case were in the courtroom.	67%	33%	190
Someone asked for the proceeding to be closed to the public.	10%	90%	179
The Judge closed the proceeding to the public.	17%	83%	175
This proceeding, or case, has received media (TV, newspaper, radio) attention.	6%	94%	187
I was contacted by the media (TV, newspaper, radio) about this case.	3%	97%	204
I was interviewed by the media (TV, newspaper, radio) about this case.	3%	97%	206

In the last unit of the survey, the family respondents were asked their opinion of the proceeding using the five-point scale ranging from ‘Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.’ There

were eight opinion statements (see table below) The statements and results are depicted in the table below, with responses greater than 31% being highlighted in green.

The only statement having a positive response by most of the participants was Statement 1: “The way the case was handled was fair.” Approximately 75 percent of family respondents ‘Agreed or Strongly Agreed’ with this statement, with about 60 percent ‘Strongly’ agreeing.

Statements 2,3 and 5-7 tended to have a bimodal distribution of responses, with approximately 1/3 of the answers being either ‘Strongly Disagree’ or ‘Neither Agree or Disagree,’ respectively, for each of these statements:

- “2. I feel like having other people in the courtroom, who are not part of the case, had a positive effect on the child(ren) involved in the case.”
- “3. I feel like having other people in the courtroom, who are not part of the case, was helpful to me.”
- “5. I feel like my attorney has spent more time on, and paid more attention to, this case because the proceeding was open to the public.”
- “6. I feel like the social worker(s) paid more attention to this case because the proceeding was open to the public.”
- “7. I feel like there were more services offered to me, or the child, or the family involved because the proceeding was open to the public.”

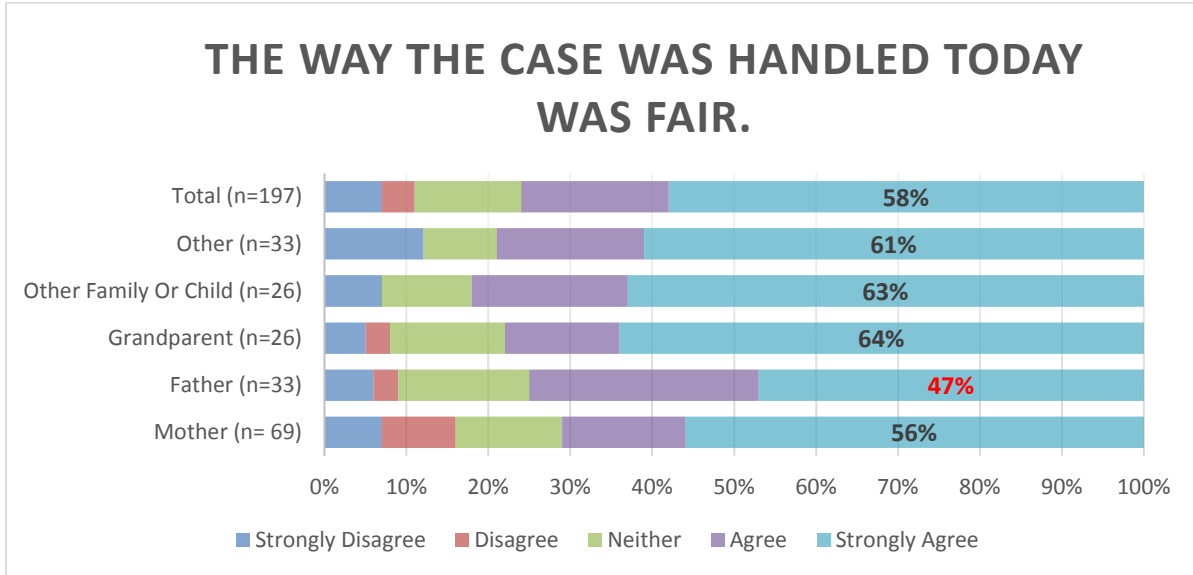
Opinion Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
1. The way the case was handled today was fair.	8%	4%	13%	17%	57%	202
2. I feel like having other people in the courtroom, who are not part of the case, had a positive effect on the child(ren) involved in the case.	26%	12%	34%	10%	18%	190
3. I feel like having other people in the courtroom, who are not part of the case, was helpful to me.	33%	9%	37%	10%	12%	190
4. I feel like the Judge listened more closely to me or others involved in the case because the proceeding was open to the public.	27%	7%	30%	12%	24%	194
5. I feel like my attorney has spent more time on, and paid more attention to, this case because the proceeding was open to the public.	27%	8%	32%	13%	19%	136

6. I feel like the social worker(s) paid more attention to this case because the proceeding was open to the public.	31%	10%	31%	11%	17%	189
7. I feel like there were more services offered to me, or the child, or the family involved because the proceeding was open to the public.	30%	13%	33%	12%	13%	190
8. Overall, I feel like opening these types of proceedings to the public will have a positive effect on children and families involved in Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse Cases and/ or Termination of Parental Rights.	28%	8%	27%	11%	27%	196

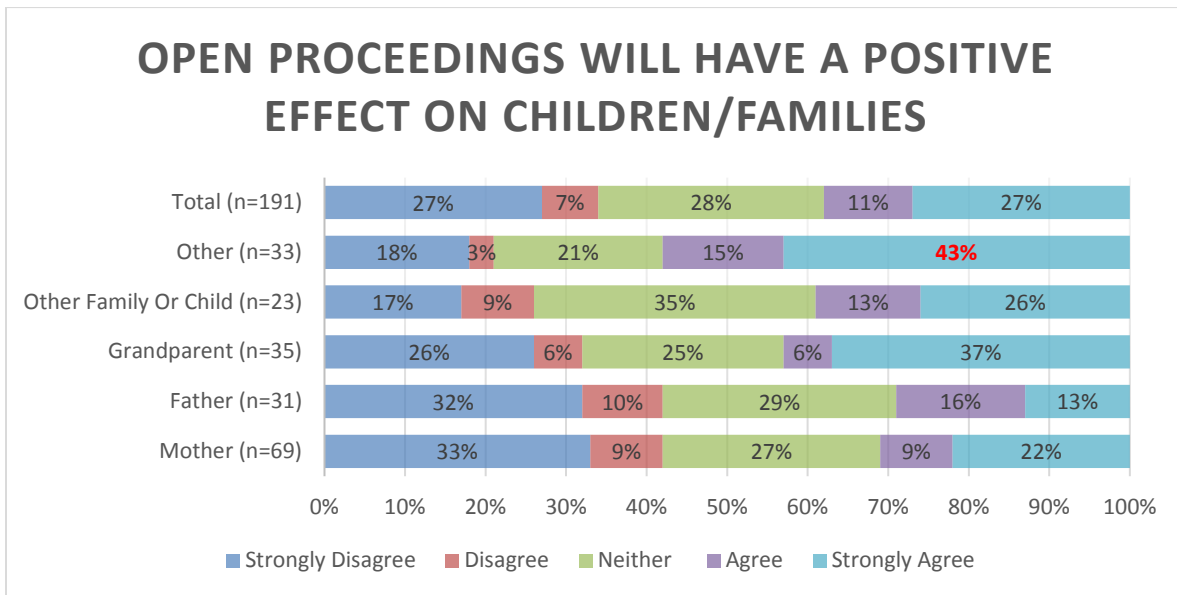
The family participants response distribution to Statements 4 and 8 tended to peak at three points on the five-point scale, ‘Strongly Disagree,’ ‘Neither Disagree or Agree,’ and ‘Strongly Agree.’ Statement 4 indicated the extent to which they thought opening the proceeding affected the judge’s ability to closely listen; while Statement 7 focused on their opinion about open family court having a positive effect on the children or families associated with the cases.

Bivariate analyses of each of the respective responses to each of the eight opinion statements sorted by family member category: Mother, Father, Grandparent, Other Family Member or Child, and Other (Foster Parent, Adoptive Parent, or Other). The cross-tabulations were found to not be statistically significant (Pearson Chi-Square statistics test) and can be found in the Appendices (pp. 44-52).

Although not significant, below are two bar graphs visualizing Statements’ 1 and 8 responses separately by the family member categories. In each table the percentage of response which is of particular interest is highlighted in red. In the first graph (p. 20), “The Way The Case Was Handled Today Was Fair,” although the majority of family respondents felt their case was handled fairly, however, a smaller percentage of the Fathers and other family members, indicated they ‘Strongly Agreed.’



In the second graph, the red highlighted percentage (43%) indicates the ‘Other’ group (i.e., Foster Parents/Adoptive Parents), in contrast with the other family member categories, this group was more likely to support opening family courts, with 43 percent ‘Strongly Agreeing’ that opening the proceedings will have a positive effect on the children/families.



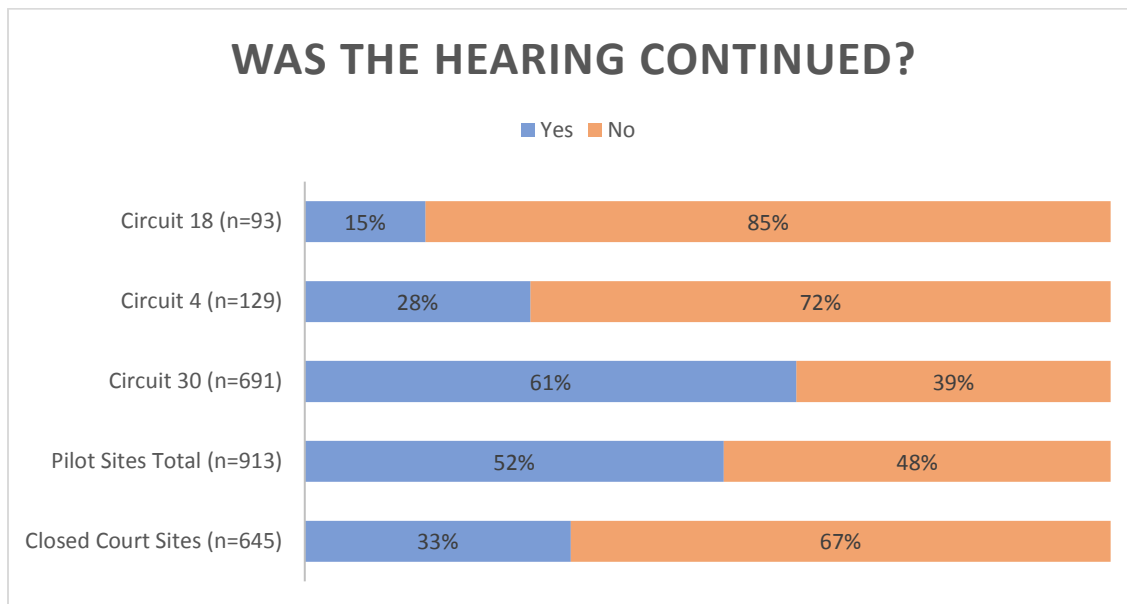
Comparing Open and Closed Family Court Observations

As part of this research project, the court proceedings of the pilot open Family Courts and a control set of closed Family Courts were observed. The observations were based on similar questions, except when specifically addressing the proceedings being either opened or closed. The exact questions and statistical results are located in the Appendices (pp. 53-57). Each pilot site's observations are reported at the circuit level, followed by the total observations of the control sites (closed Family Court proceedings). The primary purpose for the observations was to determine whether opening DNA or Termination of Parental Rights proceedings is beneficial.

Overall, the response distribution of the open and closed courts' observations tended to be similar. For the majority of the questions, the pattern of observations (the percentage of answers being either 'Yes' or 'No') had similar variability. For example, the majority of observations for both open and closed proceedings indicated:

- A parent/custodian, social worker, prosecutor, and GAL were present at the hearing.
- There were people in the courtroom who were not part of the hearing.
- The judge gave attorneys/parties opportunities to argue an issue; and they tended to accept the County Attorney's recommendations.
- The judge engaged the parties before issuing an order and also explained his/her decisions.
- Children usually were not in attendance and very rarely provided testimony.

Both the opened and closed observation forms included the question: "Was the hearing continued?" The observations made from the pilot and control sites had different response distributions. The variations are graphically depicted in the bar chart below. The pilot sites were more likely than the control closed courts to have the hearing continued. Moreover, the open proceedings were more likely to be observed to be continued in the urban circuit (30) than the rural Circuits (18 and 4). This difference, however, could be because of variance in observers' understanding of what constitutes a continuance (graph below, p.22.)



In the table below are a set of observation questions that were only included on the Pilot Open Court Observation form. The table reports the total percentage of ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ responses for each question (1-6). The percentages of responses highlighted below indicate more than 50 percent did not observe the activity referenced in one of the six questions. Of the open proceedings observed,

- Fifty-five percent of the observations noted the judge did not announce the hearing was open.
- The vast majority did not hear anyone expressing concern about the hearing being opened, or see any party showing concern.
- Virtually all of the observations specified no one objected to hearing being closed.
- A hearing being closed to the public was a very rare occurrence.

Open Court Observations	Yes	No	Total
1. Did the Judge announce that the hearing was open?	45%	55%	1105
2. Did anyone verbally express concern over the hearing being open?	2%	98%	1085
3. Did any party exhibit body language that indicated concern that the hearing was open?	1%	99%	1082
4. Did someone ask for the hearing to be closed to the public?	1%	99%	1085
5. Did anyone object to closing the hearing to the public?	2%	98%	416
6. Did the Judge close the hearing to the public?	1%	99%	1088

In the last section of both observation forms, questions were asked about the overall effect of opening or closing the proceedings on the parties. In the first table the total observations of the open pilot proceedings are reported. It is followed by the control group, the total observations of the closed Family Court hearings.

In the table below, green highlights more than 31% of the forms not finding ('No') adverse effects or could not determine ('Unable to Determine') such results. The most positive response was 64 percent replying 'No' to the questions, "21. Did you observe adverse effects resulting from the open courtroom?*".

Final Observations of Open Proceedings	Yes	No	Unable to Determine	Total
21. Did you observe adverse effects resulting from the open courtroom?*	1%	64%	36%	1079
22. Did you observe any benefit to the parties from the open courtroom?*	7%	44%	48%	1078
23. Did you observe any benefit to the public from the open courtroom?*	9%	42%	49%	1073

The table below displays the final observations made about closed court proceedings. With regards to this project the most interesting finding is the percentage of negative ('No') responses to the question, "18. Do you feel that the outcome of the hearing would have been different if it had been open to the public?" A little over half of the observations concluded the closed hearing's outcome would not have been different if it had been open to the public.

Final Observations about Closed Courts	Yes	No	Unable to Determine	Total
18. Do you feel that the outcome of the hearing would have been different if it had been open to the public?	0%	56%	44%	656
19. Did the closed courtroom benefit the parties?*	14%	16%	70%	658
20. Did the closed courtroom benefit the public?*	1%	21%	78%	670

Discussion and Recommendations

Overall, caution must be given when making conclusions about the findings. The statistics analyzed were based on convenience sampling of professionals and family members with DNA or TPR cases appearing before the selected pilot family court sites. Moreover, the surveys and observations were completed when the AOC staff were present. As a result of these limitations, simplifications of the findings cannot be generalized across the Commonwealth.

Based on the participants in the Open Courts Pilot Project who completed the surveys, attended the focus group meetings and the observations made utilizing a standard form, opening DNA and TPR cases to the public does not adversely affect the professionals associated with the cases or the case proceedings. All indicated that professionals who should attend the proceeding usually did, the media was not present, and the cases seemed to be handled fairly.

When determining whether opening the DNA and TPR family cases is beneficial to the litigants and public, has positive impact on the accountability of professional, or has any adverse effects on the children or family members, the results were mixed. Overall the respondents to the professional and family member surveys, respectively, indicated that they did not think the process improved accountability. Most of the responses to positive opinion statements were either 'Strongly Disagree' or 'Neither Agree or Disagree.' Generally, the professional respondents did not find that opening the proceedings improved working relations or increased accountability. In fact, they strongly disagreed with the statement that opening the courts would increase the time or attention spent on their cases. Family member respondents also did not agree with the statements that the professionals paid more attention to their cases when it was open to the public. These answers, however, also indicate the majority of respondents do not think open courts had a negative effect on the process.

As for determining the extent to which opening a case was beneficial and did not have adverse effects, approximately one-third of professionals and one-third family respondents disagreed with the statements regarding open court as having positive impacts on or being beneficial to the children and families associated with the case, or to the public attending the hearings. However, during the focus group meetings, court professionals acknowledged that what occurred during the pilot shifted their opinions of opening DNA and TPR proceedings. In fact, some noted that the open hearings increased communication and accountability of the family members. Other professionals were concerned the parties did not understand the court proceedings were opened, or what an open court case meant.

Recommendations

1. Consider implementing another pilot project in which the DNA and TPR cases are opened at both the pilot and control sites. Increase the amount of public announcements distributed to the media and other pertinent professionals. Notify parties prior to their court date that the proceeding will be open per the judge's discretion.
2. During the implementation period, ensure all parties are given educational materials appropriate to their level of understanding of the court system, particularly the litigants, children and family members.
3. From the results of the first evaluation, derive more accurate measures of benefits and effects of open court to litigants, children, and family members. Use new measurement scales to demonstrate the extent to which open family courts may or may not be beneficial.
4. Consider sampling family members and children for in-depth interviews about the effects of having their case proceedings open.
5. Consider having in-depth interviews with social workers/counselors concerning the effects on children and family members when the case appearances are opened versus closed. Possibly conducting content analyses of case/court records to determine the extent of such effects.
6. Consider analyzing case management measurements on the efficiency and effectiveness of DNA and TPR cases heard in open and closed courts. Determine whether all pertinent documents were obtained during the proceedings.
7. Consider conducting a systematic and exhaustive review of current statutes, standard operating procedures, and policies concerning confidentiality, protection from harm, accountability, and transparency for Kentucky's child protection cases.

Appendices

Opinion Statements by Professional Respondents (Survey Responses)

2. I believe that having my case(s) open to the public today had a positive impact on the child(ren) involved in the case(s).	Strongly Disagree		Neither		Strongly Agree		Total
	Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Agree		
DCBS Staff	43%	15%	34%	5%	3%	65	
Attorney for the Parties	26%	20%	38%	8%	8%	50	
Other Professionals	24%	19%	38%	16%	3%	37	
Total	33%	18%	36%	9%	4%	152	

Comments: Statement 2		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Blank	82	48.0
	Don't feel that general public needs to know childs situation/info	1	.6
	Don't feel that personal info on children being given to others is helpful to child or family	1	.6
	I believe knowledge of court being open to the public may lead to better behavior on the part of the parties which in turn benefits the children	1	.6
	I believe there was no impact	1	.6
	I don't see a positive in the accusations towards parents in public was positive	1	.6
	I feel this pgrm will have negative impact on children.	1	.6
	I heard nonsense comments from the "gallery" of people who would normaly not be allowed in. Snickering or laughing at other parties	1	.6
	I think some families were encouraged by seeing other families succeed	1	.6
	If my child would have been present she would have heard the nice thing ssaïd about her	1	.6
	It seems to me that the parents knowledge of open proceedings serves as an additional deterrent to abuse.	1	.6
	Juvenile courtrooms should not be open to the public	1	.6
	my case was not open to the public	1	.6

My client was confronted with personal info that someone heard in public from open court. It was mentioned in public.	1	.6
n/a	5	2.9
no impact for child negative impact for birthparents	1	.6
no one present	1	.6
No outside persons entered	1	.6
no response	64	37.4
pgrm had no impact	1	.6
public does not need to know personal info on children and what is going on with the childs family	1	.6
see above	1	.6
see above comment	1	.6
Total	171	100.0

3. I believe that having my case(s) open to the public today was beneficial to the parties involved.						
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
DCBS Staff	46%	11%	32%	9%	2%	65
Attorney for the Parties	27%	15%	40%	12%	6%	52
Other Professionals	26%	13%	31%	21%	9%	39
Total	35%	13%	35%	13%	4%	156

Comments: Statement 3		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Blank	85	49.7
	3	1	.6
	Docket was faster - parties were not going in and out of court	1	.6
	effected client.	1	.6
	Having the public present is a breach of confidentiality per cabinet policy	1	.6
	I feel this pgrm is not beneficial	1	.6
	I think some families saw others doing well and hopefully that demonstrated that it can be done	1	.6
	It seems to have expedited the docket and allowed parties to leave earlier	1	.6

juvenile courtrooms should not be open. Confidentiality issues.	1	.6
n/a	3	1.8
no benefit loss of confidentiality in sensitive appearance	1	.6
no impact	1	.6
no one present	1	.6
no outside persons entered	1	.6
no response	64	37.4
pgrm had no impact	1	.6
see above	3	1.8
See above	3	1.8
Total	171	100.0

4. I believe that having my case(s) open to the public today was beneficial to the non-parties and members of the public in attendance.	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total
DCBS Staff	48%	12%	28%	9%	3%	65					
Attorney for the Parties	25%	15%	33%	21%	6%	52					
Other Professionals	24%	18%	24%	24%	10%	38					
Total	34%	15%	28%	17%	6%	155					

Comments: Statement 4		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Blank	83	48.5
	Caregivers got more information	1	.6
	don't see how private info of my case helps people not involved	1	.6
	I cannot state whether there was any change	1	.6
	I do not know	1	.6
	I don't know for sure. I wouldn't see how it would be beneficial. It seems it is just parties to cases, the same as always.	1	.6
	I don't think it did any good for them to hear the troubles of other abused kids. Also see above	1	.6
	I feel this pgrm is not beneficial.	1	.6
	Info involving my case will not benefit anyone not involved	1	.6
	It allows everyone to know whats going on	1	.6

n/a	4	2.3
no one present	1	.6
no outside persons entered	1	.6
no response	67	39.2
other than court personnel coming to observe there was no difference in attendance	1	.6
public have no right to observe/identify cases in which birthparents have voluntary petition for TPR	1	.6
Relatives got better information	1	.6
see above	1	.6
Several attended a few hearings that wouldn't before	1	.6
unsure	1	.6
Total	171	100.0

5. I believe today's case(s) took longer because court was open to the public.							
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	
DCBS Staff	37%	22%	23%	6%	12%	65	
Attorney for the Parties	26%	24%	13%	22%	15%	54	
Other Professionals	40%	10%	33%	10%	8%	40	
Total	34%	20%	22%	13%	12%	159	

*** Pearson Chi- Square significant at .05**

Comments: Statement 5		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Blank	81	47.4
	Absolutely! Crawling right along.	1	.6
	did take a little longer due to Judge having to explain the open court guidelines	1	.6
	Everytime a new case was called the judge had to go through all the info concerning can be present by no notes video etc	1	.6
	Having everyone in one room streamlined proceedings	1	.6
	I believe it went quicker	1	.6
	I believe there was no impact	1	.6
	It saved time bc we werent having people leave the room	1	.6
	It took more time to explain	1	.6
	Judge conducted closed session cases first. In the past TPRs were called first	1	.6
	Judge had to take time to explain rules to the public sitting in on cases	1	.6

Logistics of overcrowded courtrooms and moving courtrooms	1	.6
n/a	2	1.2
no change	1	.6
no outside persons entered	1	.6
no response	68	39.8
no unauthorized party present	1	.6
overcrowded courtroom logistics	1	.6
pgrm had no impact	1	.6
Probably - due to Judge having to give speech at the beginning	1	.6
Shuffling between open and closed added to the docket	1	.6
The closed v. open shuffling and confusion of the parties increased the docket time. Also, having to explain to parties why some are closed but not theirs is tough.	1	.6
took way to long clients linger too long at table	1	.6
Total	171	100.0

6. I directed more time and attention to my case(s) today because the proceeding(s) was open to the public.	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total
DCBS Staff	61%		8%		22%		6%		3%		67
Attorney for the Parties	63%		9%		28%		0%		0%		54
Other Professionals	60%		8%		24%		8%		0%		38
Total	62%		8%		25%		4%		1%		159

Comments: Statement 6		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Blank	85	49.7
	doesn't matter if open I prepare the same	1	.6
	I believe there was no impact	1	.6
	no unauthorized party present	1	.6
	Absolutely not. I always treat proceedings with the time and attention they merit.	1	.6
	CASA's spent same amount of time on cases	1	.6
	conducted myself the same	1	.6
	I always prepare my cases the same, no difference from me	1	.6

I explained more things in detail so that the public would understand	1	.6
I give all cases my individual time and attention, regardless of who is in court.	1	.6
I'm prepared for court	1	.6
It caused distraction	1	.6
n/a	2	1.2
no change in prep	1	.6
no outside persons entered	1	.6
no response	68	39.8
pgrm had no impact	1	.6
same as always	1	.6
The fact that these proceedings made no difference to my preparation in these cases	1	.6
Total	171	100.0

9. Overall, I anticipate positive effects on the child(ren) or family(ies) as a result of opening these proceedings to the public.						
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
DCBS Staff	42%	8%	40%	6%	6%	65
Attorney for the Parties	24%	8%	33%	22%	13%	54
Other Professionals	24%	14%	49%	5%	8%	37
Total	31%	9%	40%	11%	9%	156

* Pearson Chi- Square significant at .05

Comments: Statement 9		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Blank	47	27.5
	?	1	.6
	1st day w/ surveys. Proceedings went normally. "open" court did not appear to affect proceedings one way or the other today.	1	.6
	Additional Comments, court could be more effective if social workers were assigned certain courtrooms. Currently, staying all day for a social worker is not beneficial to our clients because we often times waist unnecessary time causing us to not be able to initiate cases in a timely manner	1	.6
	already notes	1	.6

Children are victims in these cases - my concern is protecting the children and the public not labeling them because of their situation - not a fan.	1	.6
Displaying the child's identity in the media will have a negative impact on the child in public/school	1	.6
do not feel this will change how children or family are helped/worked with	1	.6
From a mental health provider perspective this makes me nervous. It is already difficult to maintain a therapeutic relationship when a client is aware that information will be shared with representatives of the court. I think this has the potential to cause problems within the therapeutic relationship.	1	.6
From comments I overheard in the gallery I don't see how it was positive. They treated it like a Jerry Springer episode	1	.6
I am concerned about the affects of allowing any one in the courts to view it. We will take it case by case and ask (as CASA) to have cases closed to protect children	1	.6
I am not sure yet	1	.6
I believe having these cases open to the public serves as an additional disincentive to bad behavior	1	.6
I believe it will create additional problems/drama for families/children to have non-case members involved or have knowledge about family court issues.	1	.6
I believe only negative things will come about due to open court program.	1	.6
I believe opening the proceedings gives all parties involved more accountability and also a better understanding of the information discussed at the hearings, for all parties directly or indirectly involved	1	.6
I believe strongly that children and their rights are violated when it is open to the public/community what tragedy they suffered!	1	.6
I can see both sides of the issue but I do not support opening the court. I do not see a benefit to the children in doing this. I know the court says they will expect confidentiality to be maintained, but I don not see how this is going to be policed. My fear is that confidential information will get out. I do not see enough benefit to make the risk worth it.	1	.6
I did not attend the entire docket. I was present from 1:30 - 3:15 so my opinions/observations are based on that time period only	1	.6

I DO NOT agree with family court being open to the public. Family court is generally focused on children and their well-being. Having strangers, reporters, etc. present in the courtroom and waiting areas violates their privacy as minors and can be traumatic in addition to what they're already dealing with	1	.6
I do not believe family court should be open to the public.	1	.6
I do not believe that opening the cases to the public has any significant impact on the proceedings	1	.6
I do not feel the court cases should be open to the public to protect the privacy of the children involved in the cases. Even though the public isn't supposed to take notes, discuss any case proceedings, etc. doesn't mean they will take the privacy of these children seriously. The cabinet has an obligation to ensure the privacy of our clients and their children and I feel having our court proceedings open to the public violates this. Having an open court will not benefit the families we are working with.	1	.6
I do not support this program. I strongly disagree with the open courts program. Juvenile court proceedings should be closed to the public due to confidentiality issues. Childrens cases should not be open to public for any reason. Also due to concerns about witness information, court divisions should remain closed where children are involved. To protect the confidentiality of children and cases involving children courtrooms should be closed to anyone whom the judge deems to not be a necessary or interested party. Thank you for the opportunity to give feedback. I feel that I have been able to have agency in this matter.	1	.6
I do not think there is anything positive. I believe the opposite. Only harm can come due to open courts.	1	.6
I do not think this pgrm will have a positive impact on children. I believe it harms children. Thank you for your opportunity to give feedback. I feel like I have been given agency. I strongly believe this pgrm will harm children. Family court should not be open to the public. There may be children testifying, there is possibility of witness intimidation. I see no benefits of making family court open to the public. How can you control that member of public will not record or take notes? Or not mention kids names? Again, I strongly and firmly believe this pgrm will only have a negative impact on children and families involved in family court.	1	.6
I don't think that there was any difference in attendance of court today versus other court days	1	.6

I hope this works. Set up needs to be different are we standing or sitting? Maybe divide cases by type vs. alphabetical, closed court, inmate, etc.	1	.6
I remain opposed to the open court process.	1	.6
I see no positive potential to opening these cases to the public. I possibly could understand opening a heinous criminal offense committed by a juvenile to the public, as long as it was not a sex abuse case. Opening dependency, neglect, and abuse cases to the public at large violates the privacy of the parties involved. The majority of these cases involved drug abuse or severe poverty. Subjecting the parties to public ridicule will in no way enhance the case and the children involved become victimized twice. Once by the abuser and then by the open court system. If an open court system is to be effected I would suggest limiting it to family members and those actively involved in an individual child's life, not to the public at large.	1	.6
I think that the litigants benefit in that they will have more people observing their behavior and they will benefit in seeing other cases are treated similarly to theirs. (see below)	1	.6
I think they should open family court and show transparency in most cases excluding sex and physical abuse and TPR	1	.6
I was only monitoring new cases today. I had no volunteers advocating actively on cases today.	1	.6
Information revealed, for the first time to family members can result in family solutions	1	.6
It streamlines efficiency and allows for better knowledge of the public	1	.6
Keep them open	1	.6
May only concern is high profile cases people will try to be in court.	1	.6
n/a	1	.6
No difference at all	1	.6
No difference in court process today	1	.6
no real evidence of impact today	1	.6
no response	63	36.8
no unauthorized parties present	1	.6
Not really sure how opening cases to the public would be helpful to my clients. Clients had told me that they didn't like people in their business	1	.6
Noticed NO difference in procedures, etc.	1	.6
Open court is minimally effective in improving the court process	1	.6

Private, independent and agency adoptions do not require transparency. Voluntary termination of parental rights so that adoption can be finalized is/should be a private matter. Birth parents have right to privacy. They have made difficult decision to place their child with another family. Private decision - should be able to proceed legal system with confidentiality. Involuntary TPR may benefit from open courtroom but confidentiality will no longer exist. Update today's TPR hearing was in locked, private courtroom	1	.6
thank you for this project purpose	1	.6
The children and families involved with neglect and abuse docket are already traumatized. By publicizing these victims trauma more harm can occur and their healing process can be stunted	1	.6
The information that is discussed in family court is of the most sensitive nature. In criminal cases the details of the crime is discussed to tell the defendant's criminal history, but in the case in Family Court the most sensitive and intimate details of parents that the children lives are reviewed in mental health, substance abuse, foster care of a child, etc. My deep concern is that while there may be an argument for the bench not to discuss the information shared in court with other it will be. And, the most sensitive and private details of person lives will end up on social media. There will be no way to trace who released the information but once it is out then there is no way to retract its release.	1	.6
The multiple individuals could be distracting with their side conversations	1	.6
The public was able to judge the credibility of the parties due to the proceedings being open. Lack of credibility of certain parents was very evident today	1	.6
The sex offense cases must remain closed for the protection of the child	1	.6
There is little positive effect	1	.6
These cases are closed for a reason. Media attention will only make this a more political process for the court and the parents will suffer	1	.6
This breaks the confidentiality of our clients that we work with outside of court. Juvenile criminal proceedings aren't open to the public, so why would family court be open? Having the public in these proceedings gives others the ability to know about cabinet involvement and knowing what is on the case plans and what happened to the children.	1	.6
This is a breach of confidentiality. I disagree with this process. This is a breach of confidentiality. Clients have the right to have their cases privately heard.	1	.6

This is breaking confidentiality for DCBS clients and families	1	.6
Too soon in the process but I haven't really seen a benefit or a drastic problem. It has made the dockets longer. Still don't know the benefits of the public hearing all allegations and how its positive. One client did express apprehension.	1	.6
Too soon to see if what, if any, effects the open court pilot project is having on our cases	1	.6
Too soon to tell	1	.6
Went smoothly - orderly avoided hall confrontations	1	.6
Your questionnaire is slanted toward favorable outcomes to further this program -- seeking all positive effects or positive responses. Open court has slowed this process to a crawl.	1	.6
Total	171	100.0

Additional Comments: Professional Survey

Additional Comments		Frequency	Percent
Valid		102	59.6
	DNA docket seems to move more quickly when all attendees are in the circuit courtroom instead of scattered throughout the 2nd floor	1	.6
	Families currently have chaotic issues they are dealing with in family court and with child protective services, so to have "outsiders/strangers" set in on a family case they are not a part of or know anything about, creates additional drama, chaos, confusion, anxiety and frustration for the family involved. The only individuals being affected by open court are the children. They are innocent and have no say in what has occurred or how their family got to this point. It's an embarassment for the children and family to have their business be known by strangers.	1	.6
	For various reasons, I believe opening family ct to the public will have an overall negative impact.	1	.6
	good pilot program	1	.6
	I disagree strongly with allowing non parties to view cases on DNA docket. These cases involve sensitive material and families are burdened enough w/o having strangers observe these cases. How can anyone make sure nothing is being recorded or that info is not repeated later? Especially if children are present or testifying-it is hard enough for them without having strangers present. I do not believe there are any benefits of open courts for DNA dockets. I very strongly believe that great harm would be done.	1	.6
	I feel professional staff can be held accountable in other ways.	1	.6

I have long been an advocate of opening this to the public. I have had many clients who believe the judge/cabinet/prosecutor are "out to get them personally." I believe observing other cases may help them to see this isnt a personal matter and encourage them to be more cooperative with my advice.	1	.6
I strongly believe family courts should not be open to the public. These are sensitive and legally protected confidential proceedings. I am concerned about keeping sensitive information private, and possible witness intimidation or coaching if family courts are open to non-parties. Proceedings in family court should remain private and confidential. I believe there are no positives and many negatives if family courts are open to the public. For example, how could rule that no recording to take place? Or how would "no notetaking" rule be enforced? Thank you for allowing me to give input.	1	.6
I think having open court is a horrible idea for the children when we are supposed to protect children.	1	.6
I thought open court did not affect the proceeding negatively or positively. Business as usual.	1	.6
I'm unsure of my thought on this issue but I do think Family Court should be concern with the privacy of children.	1	.6
In todays social media age, these proceedings could provide another avenue for bullying of the children at school. Attendants could name individuals on social media which could lead to bullying, anxiety and other mental distress to the child.Children are under enough pressure today due to stressors at home and school. These proceedings should not be an avenue for additional stressors.	1	.6
Increased docket length is not beneficial. Only notice parties to cases in the open room so no knew people here to be involved. Parties complaining that their case is open but not others.	1	.6
Interesting about open court, not sure if I agree or disagree	1	.6
no response	47	27.5
Overall, I believe open courts is a good idea unless the abuse or neglect allegation is one of sexual nature (then it should be closed) MUST be closed.	1	.6
Program provides more transparency and accountability but very little procedurally has changed since introduction of the pilot program. I am in favor of the program continuing	1	.6
Small docket today!	1	.6
thank you for this project	1	.6

The children in these cases should be taken into account. Parents in the community may talk about cases despite it being confidential. If this occurs, the kids may be made fun of or bullied once they return home, or if they continue in the home, or if they are with a foster family or bio family still in the county of origin, with social media bullying being prevalent, this could be detrimental to the children with mental health issues. in my opinion, these cases should remain confidential base on the best interest of the children involved.	1	.6
This is a violation of confidentiality for DCBS to talk about cases in front of outsiders to the case.	1	.6
This was the first time I had a problem with info being used against someone in a public setting to embarrass.	1	.6
was not aware that court case was open to the public	1	.6
Total	171	100.0

Open Courts Pilot Project Focus Group Results

Open Courts Pilot Project

Focus Group Questions

Date: July 10, 2018

Location: Hopkins County

Participants: 13

1. What changes did you witness in the courtroom because it was open to the public?
 - Docket Slower.
 - Each case took too long.
 - Parties were not asked into court room, but signs posted outside stated they could enter the court room.

2. What effect (positive or negative) did open court have on the families and children you serve?
 - Interested parties did not want to complete surveys after court hearing.
 - In theory, we thought more family members would attend court. But they did not show for hearing. If family members attended more opportunities might have been provided to the children.
 - How were the experiences more positive/negative?
 - Court docket ran longer.
 - Parties waited longer than normal.

3. Did anyone that you represented or served express any feelings towards court being open?
 - Nothing is going to change.
 - What were their feelings?
 - Felt nothing was going to change.

4. What changes have you noticed since the courtroom has become closed again?
 - Judge does not have to follow the script (Bench Card) announcing open court
 - Would you consider these changes positive or negative changes?

5. What suggestions do you have for measuring the effects of open or closed courts?
 - People did not know if their cases were handled differently as they may not have ever appeared before the judge or attended court.
 - If more family members could have attended court, the child should have benefited.

Open Courts Pilot Project

Focus Group Questions

Date: July 23, 2018

Location: Harrison, Nicholas, Pendleton, Robertson Counties

Participants: 11

1. What changes did you witness in the courtroom because it was open to the public?
 - It was quicker
 - We didn't have to track people down to get them in and out of the courtroom
 - We eliminated back and forth, otherwise didn't notice anything different
 - Interest in the spectators because they were in the courtroom and not sitting outside
 - We didn't have to call any extra sheriff's deputies

2. What effect (positive or negative) did open court have on the families and children you serve?
 - We did have one child who was not present where the relative went out and shared information with them on what took place in court because it was open
 - Multiple occasions where the client would say "I don't want to say that in front of everybody" or wouldn't feel comfortable speaking up in open court.
 - Relatives knowing it was open shut down excuses, eliminates opportunities to be dishonest
 - One person who said "I don't want all these people to know my business".
 - Someone asked me how long this was going on and if I could pass the case until the court was closed again
 - One of my kids was able to get visitation with a grandparent who wouldn't have otherwise been in court
 - How were the experiences more positive/negative?
 - It balanced out. For the few I heard negative comments, there were people with a peaceful atmosphere
 - I thought it would have a negative impact on our kids but I didn't find that to be the case
 - Most people didn't even know
 - People would come the first time not knowing and then bring family members back for future appearances
 - Never had media attend court
 - I was surprised at the lack of people who did come

3. Did anyone that you represented or served express any feelings towards court being open?
 - No one ever said one way or the other

- If motions were filed, they were granted
 - What were their feelings?
- 4. What changes have you noticed since the courtroom has become closed again?
 - It takes longer
 - We're back to trying to track people down
 - I thought it was easier when it was open, you could account for who was there that may benefit the case, additional people who were not involved in the case
 - Would you consider these changes positive or negative changes?
 - We've only had court twice since it was closed
 - Family members now feel like they can speak freely
- 5. What suggestions do you have for measuring the effects of open or closed courts?
 - Do the study longer
 - Oral interviews with family members instead of written surveys
 - Too many questions about media interest
 - Surveys should be shorter
 - I would be interested to know the recidivism, whether this had any effect on repeat trailers
 - Questions were confusing after a long docket, shorter form and more concise
 - AOC wasn't represented at each docket, maybe two thirds
 - Instead of asking about satisfaction, if you asked if you feel like all the necessary information got to the court
 - I'd like to hear from the ones who go through the entire process, those who get their kids back
 - Ask the parents if they received more services because the court was open
- 6. Is there anything we haven't asked that you would like to share in regards to Open Court?
 - People were standing around the court room so it obstructed the view of the bench. People didn't know where to stand.
 - Ask people if given the choice, would they prefer their case be open or closed

Open Courts Pilot Project

Focus Group Questions

Date: August 10, 2018

Location: Jefferson County

Participants: 6

1. What changes did you witness in the courtroom because it was open to the public?
 - None
 - One case followed by the press
 - My sheriff who wouldn't typically let concerned persons in the courtroom but would during the study
2. What effect (positive or negative) did open court have on the families and children you serve?
 - None
 - I don't think as many people knew
 - How were the experiences more positive/negative?
3. Did anyone that you represented or served express any feelings towards court being open?
 - Not to me
 - Nobody expressed concerns
 - What were their feelings?
4. What changes have you noticed since the courtroom has become closed again?
 - None
 - I won't let the press in now
 - Would you consider these changes positive or negative changes
5. What suggestions do you have for measuring the effects of open or closed courts?
 - More public education prior to opening again
 - Longer open period
 - I forgot the opening statement so if there was a better way to tell litigants
 - I don't understand how you can even measure this
6. Is there anything we haven't asked that you would like to share in regards to Open Court?
 - Just open the courts and be done with it
 - Move forward with presumptively open courts with judge discretion to close

Opinion Statements by Family Member Survey Respondents

1. The way the case was handled today was fair.	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree				Total
	Disagree	Disagree	Neithe	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree		
Mother (n= 69)	7%	9%	13%	15%	56%	69			
Father (n=33)	6%	3%	16%	28%	47%	32			
Grandparent (n=26)	5%	3%	14%	14%	64%	36			
Other Family Or Child (n=26)	7%	0%	11%	19%	63%	26			
Other (n=33)	12%	0%	9%	18%	61%	33			
Total (n=197)	7%	4%	13%	18%	58%	197			

Comments: Statement 1		Frequency	Percent
Valid	absolutely not. The entire system is flawed and children can die by the time anything is done	1	.4
	always. Judge is very straight forward	1	.4
	CPS has been a blessing	1	.4
	everything went real smooth	1	.4
	fair	1	.4
	I feel like the Judge should really like consider for the defendant to speak. May not know what happened.	1	.4
	I think the judge always handles it fair	1	.4
	I was happy with results	1	.4
	I wish that I would get more time with my babies	1	.4
	I'm happy	1	.4
	The Judge heard my case and now is willing to rehear me on behalf of an EPO I signed against my son who has mental and drug (heroin) issues.	1	.4
	judge listen and was very helpful	1	.4
	no it wasn't because they're using me against my girlfriend getting her kids back. They want me to take drug screens while letting the lady keep the kids with felonies.	1	.4
	no response	207	91.2
	not really	1	.4
	should have been a trial	1	.4
	the court gives parents way to many chances	1	.4
	the judge did a great job handling my case	1	.4
	they should of seen where CPS has placed them in a dangerous situation	1	.4
	they were very nice and very respectful	1	.4
	yes	1	.4
	Total	227	100.0

2. I feel like having other people in the courtroom, who are not part of the case, had a positive effect on the child(ren) involved in the case.	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree				Total
	Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree		
Mother	37%	6%	31%	12%	14%			65	
Father	23%	19%	46%	4%	8%			26	
Grandparent	17%	17%	31%	14%	22%			36	
Other Family Or Child	28%	16%	32%	8%	16%			25	
Other	12%	12%	36%	6%	33%			33	
Total	25%	12%	34%	10%	18%			185	































Comments: Statement 2		Frequency	Percent
Valid	agreed only involved parties should be allowed in courtroom	1	.4
	child is not old enough to know a difference	1	.4
	depends	1	.4
	did not matter	1	.4
	didn't make a difference either way	1	.4
	didn't matter either way	1	.4
	didn't really affect me	1	.4
	don't think it had any effect	1	.4
	due to the sensitive nature of children involved only individuals directly involved should be present	1	.4
	I feel like other people in the courtroom be just being nosy and I really hate that they have rights to stay	1	.4
	if they are there to speak on the case	1	.4
	it would	1	.4
	n/a	4	1.8
	no impact	1	.4
	no response	201	88.5
	no.	4	1.8
	not a problem	1	.4
	not really	1	.4
	the judge was fair I never seen her this nice	1	.4
	unknown	1	.4
	yes	1	.4
Total	227	100.0	

3. I feel like having other people in the courtroom, who are not part of the case, was helpful to me.	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree				Total
	Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	
Mother	33%	11%	33%	15%	8%				64
Father	41%	14%	41%	0%	4%				29
Grandparent	29%	6%	35%	12%	18%				34
Other Family Or Child	32%	16%	36%	8%	8%				25
Other	24%	0%	46%	6%	24%				33
Total	32%	9%	37%	10%	12%				185

Comments: Statement 3		Frequency	Percent
Valid	didn't apply	1	.4
	I don't think it made a difference	1	.4
	I feel like having others in courtroom is just not helpful to me at all	1	.4
	n/a	4	1.8
	no impact	1	.4
	no one in court except party involved	1	.4
	no other people in court room	1	.4
	no response	207	91.2
	no.	5	2.2
	not important	1	.4
	they don't apply to my issues	1	.4
	unknown	1	.4
	would have been	1	.4
	yes makes me feel more accountable for my actions	1	.4
Total	227	100.0	

4. I feel like the Judge listened more closely to me or others involved in the case because the proceeding was open to the public.	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree				Total
	Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	
Mother	30%	4%	29%	14%	23%				66
Father	27%	20%	23%	17%	13%				30
Grandparent	35%	3%	27%	12%	23%				34
Other Family Or Child	19%	8%	34%	8%	31%				26
Other	18%	3%	37%	12%	30%				33
Total	27%	7%	29%	13%	24%				189

Comments: Statement 4		Frequency	Percent
Valid	did not (illegible) anything relevent or let us present any proof of neglect	1	.4
	didn't affect me	1	.4
	equal to all	1	.4
	I couldn't tell a difference	1	.4
	Judge is very attentive all the time	1	.4
	n/a	3	1.3
	no impact	1	.4
	no it is not open in EPO cases	1	.4
	no response	207	91.2
	no.	3	1.3
	she great either way	1	.4
	the judge always took time to hear what I had to say	1	.4
	the judge didn't act any different than she normaly does	1	.4
	the judge doesn't listen to me she listen to my lawyer	1	.4
	they do well regardless	1	.4
	unknown	1	.4
	yes	1	.4
Total	227	100.0	

5. I feel like my attorney has spent more time on, and paid more attention to, this case because the proceeding was open to the public.	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total
Mother		33%		6%		27%		18%		16%	51
Father		32%		8%		44%		12%		4%	25
Grandparent		21%		17%		16%		21%		25%	24
Other Family Or Child		25%		8%		59%		0%		8%	12
Other		16%		5%		32%		5%		42%	19
Total		28%		8%		32%		14%		18%	131

Comments: Statement 5		Frequency	Percent
Valid	fair	1	.4
	I have no legal representation	1	.4
	my attorney didn't do anything she didn't even know my name	1	.4
	my attorney has always did her best with my case	1	.4
	my attorney is very wonderful	1	.4

my attorney pays the same amount of attention to my case either way	1	.4
my lawyer was not present was in another court	1	.4
n/a	4	1.8
no impact	1	.4
no response	209	92.1
not applicable	1	.4
not at all	1	.4
they do well regardless	1	.4
was represented by chip adams attorney at law	1	.4
yes but for my benefit not because of it being public	1	.4
yes. My lawyer	1	.4
Total	227	100.0

6. I feel like the social worker(s) paid more attention to this case because the proceeding was open to the public.	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree				Total
	Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree		
Mother	34%	9%	30%	13%	14%			64	
Father	39%	16%	29%	10%	6%			31	
Grandparent	38%	12%	21%	12%	17%			34	
Other Family Or Child	22%	13%	43%	9%	13%			23	
Other	19%	0%	38%	12%	31%			32	
Total	32%	10%	31%	11%	16%			184	

Comments: Statement 6		Frequency	Percent
Valid	didn't affect me	1	.4
	didn't make a difference	1	.4
	I felt they did their job to there best	1	.4
	my daughters attorney and case worker was very involved	1	.4
	n/a	6	2.6
	no impact	1	.4
	no opinion	1	.4
	no response	205	90.3
	NO.	1	.4
	no. cps does not care about the kids safety (illegibile)	1	.4
	she great either way	1	.4
	social workers suck	1	.4
	still have never met the social worker	1	.4
	the social workers do pay attention to kids and important cases	1	.4
	they do well regardless	1	.4

unknown	1	.4
wasn't open	1	.4
yes but not for that reason	1	.4
Total	227	100.0

7. I feel like there were more services offered to me, or the child, or the family involved because the proceeding was open to the public.	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total
Mother	32%	14%	35%	10%	9%	66					
Father	29%	26%	32%	13%	0%	31					
Grandparent	40%	12%	17%	11%	20%	35					
Other Family Or Child	26%	13%	35%	13%	13%	23					
Other	20%	0%	44%	13%	23%	30					
Total	30%	13%	33%	12%	12%	185					

Comments: Statement 7		Frequency	Percent
Valid	?	1	.4
	didn't make a difference to my case	1	.4
	I don't know	1	.4
	n/a	6	2.6
	no	1	.4
	no impact	1	.4
	no it was not open and yes the Judge was and is very informative to me as a parent to an adult in need of protective services	1	.4
	no response	209	92.1
	NO.	1	.4
	nothing offered or done	1	.4
	services has always been offered to me	1	.4
	unknown	1	.4
	yes thanks to Mrs Jackie Mukie that I had any resources	1	.4
	yes.	1	.4
	Total	227	100.0

8. Overall, I feel like opening these types of proceedings to the public will have a positive effect on children and families involved in Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse Cases and/ or Termination of Parental Rights.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Mother (n=69)	33%	9%	27%	9%	22%	69
Father (n=31)	32%	10%	29%	16%	13%	31
Grandparent (n=35)	26%	6%	25%	6%	37%	35
Other Family Or Child (n=23)	17%	9%	35%	13%	26%	23
Other (n=33)	18%	3%	21%	15%	43%	33
Total (n=191)	27%	7%	28%	11%	27%	191

Comments: Statement 8		Frequency	Percent
Valid	doesn't matter	1	.4
	I believe open court can help others who are going through similar situations	1	.4
	I believe these types of cases should remain private and only the parties involved should be present	1	.4
	I do believe that open courtrooms could provide beneficial information for future cases.	1	.4
	I don't believe so it's a family matter not public	1	.4
	I feel that these types of cases really n	1	.4
	I think in some cases, other people being present will make others be more fair towards the people in the case	1	.4
	I want my children	1	.4
	it will show that not every parent that has lost there child to CPS is bad and parents like myself can overcome the impossible to win custody of my child back	1	.4
	let the public see!	1	.4
	most importantly protecting a child's identity and right to having his or her life of possible abuse be confidential for that child to decide who or if they want to share their experience when they choose if ever.	1	.4
	NO I don't.	1	.4
	no response	211	93.0
	they help me more than anything	1	.4
	unknown	1	.4
	won't have a positive impact for children	1	.4
	yes. We want everyone to know how awful we are being treated	1	.4
	Total	227	100.0

Additional Comments: Family Members

	Additional Comments	Frequency	Percent
Valid	adoptions are important to see the struggle families go through may help bring more attention to the rights aspect of it.	1	.4
	Because it was first day for their (illegible) a bit confusing. I think it will work fine.	1	.4
	CPS is the last place I wanted to be but it has helped my family.	1	.4
	didn't call her name	1	.4
	estube esperando 6 horas	1	.4
	everybody was helpful and cordial because the public was watching.	1	.4
	Families have the right to work with their lawyer and discuss family matters openly in the courtroom without fear of having that information reported to the public	1	.4
	I do not feel comfortable being heard in public.	1	.4
	I don't think it matters.	1	.4
	I don't want my children in foster care I need them with me more	1	.4
	I feel some cases this would benefit and some cases it could be harmful. Case by case would be more appropriate.	1	.4
	I feel that these cases really need to be open to the public. Mainly the media because there is so much that goes on behind close doors. I think the court apponted attornies will due better in representing their clients. The judges will not talk disturbingly to the mothers and fathers and grandparents like the judge that i have has done in the past	1	.4
	I had a fair feeling about today	1	.4
	I just feel like the Judge doesn't give anybody else a chance to speak or explain everything that we go through	1	.4
	I wish it was not open to the public because of confidential reasons	1	.4
	It slowed it down caused big distraction been here since 9:00 am and it is now 3:30. Ridiculous.	1	.4
	it went fairly well. It could have been more private but it work out.	1	.4
	it would be nice to have set times for court. We waited for 1.5 hours for court to start. A lot of time was wasted just waiting.	1	.4
	keep this going it helps (step) or other parties with this process who help with children	1	.4
	kids age 8 and up shold be able to tell who they want to live with.	1	.4
look up definition of "sugar daddy" seemed to be a problem with SW.	1	.4	
no response	189	83.3	
NO.	1	.4	
none	1	.4	
not fair!	1	.4	

These are children the public should not have open access; it should be closed. These kids need protection--much protection. There is no one protecting these kids.	1	.4
Open courts? Completely disagree!! Horrible! Courts should not be open on cases (any cases) involving children! Completely disagree! No adoptions, terminations, abuse and neglect cases should be open to the public or the media!	1	.4
please have media contact us,	1	.4
Public should be aware of the neglect from the state 8 months kids removed I picked up from court and never seen or heard from anyone. Nobody could explain why kids never seen from that day	1	.4
should not be open to public.	1	.4
someone with more services is good because they should be able to set up appointments with those services	1	.4
thank you! And stay prayed up! Lilp	1	.4
the bathroom could use a changing area for babies	1	.4
The judge told me how to get the case law into affect for my son and I took those steps minutes after. Leaving her court room to file a mental inquest and now she has willing to hold court longer to help me get this done for my son. I think the "open court room" should not be open to public and praise judges such as Denise Brown.	1	.4
the whole process was over with and I wasn't able to explain my side of seeking help.	1	.4
this is a private affair	1	.4
wish court was more for law and could see or view more of the problem in the home	1	.4
would haveliked to be informed of "open court" before coming to courthouse.	1	.4
yes this is a excellent program for not only the parents but also the public as well. So people don't judge only by what they see and hear in the community and they can really see whats really going on in the court rooms.	1	.4
Total	227	100.0

Open Family Court Observations By Circuit

Circuit 30

Open Court Observations (Circuit 30)			
	Yes	No	Total
1. Did the Judge announce that the hearing was open?	42%	58%	865
2. Did anyone verbally express concern over the hearing being open?	2%	98%	844
3. Did any party exhibit body language that indicated concern that the hearing was open?	1%	99%	841
4. Did someone ask for the hearing to be closed to the public?	1%	99%	844
5. Did anyone object to closing the hearing to the public?	2%	98%	372
6. Did the Judge close the hearing to the public?	1%	99%	847
7. Did the Judge ask the parties to identify themselves?	67%	33%	826

Parties Present in Open Court (Circuit 30)			
	Yes	No	Total
8. Was a parent and/or custodian present for the hearing?	81%	19%	957
9. Was a social worker present for the hearing?	88%	12%	840
10. Was a prosecutor present for the hearing?	52%	48%	717
11. Was the GAL present for the hearing?	91%	9%	827
12. Were there people in the courtroom who were not part of the hearing?	64%	36%	641

Issue Argued Before Judge (Circuit 30)			
	Yes	No	Total
13. Did the attorneys and/or parties argue about an issue?	20%	80%	812
13a. If yes, did the Judge accept the County Attorney's recommendations?	77%	23%	323

Party's Attorney (Circuit 30)				
	Yes	No	Some Were	Total
14. Was each party's attorney given the opportunity to speak?	95%	2%	3%	745

Judge Engages Parties (Circuit 30)				
	Yes	No	No Parties Present	Total
15. Did the Judge engage the parties before issuing the order(s)?	90%	4%	6%	756

Judge Explains Decision (Circuit 30)			
	Yes	No	Total
16. Did the Judge explain his/her decisions?	96%	4%	721

Children Present (Circuit 30)	Yes	No	Total
17. Were any children present in the courtroom?*	17%	83%	856
18. Did anyone ask for a child to testify during this hearing?*	9%	91%	494
19. Did the court allow a child to testify during this hearing?*	13%	87%	253

Hearing Continued (Circuit 30)	Yes	No	Total
20. Was the hearing continued?	61%	39%	691

Final Observations	Yes	No	Unable to Determine
21. Did you observe adverse effects resulting from the open courtroom?* (n=847)	1%	68%	31%
22. Did you observe any benefit to the parties from the open courtroom?* (n=846)	10%	49%	41%
23. Did you observe any benefit to the public from the open courtroom?* (n=841)	12%	46%	42%

Circuit 4

Open Court Observations (Circuit 4)	Yes	No	Total
1. Did the Judge announce that the hearing was open?	36%	64%	140
2. Did anyone verbally express concern over the hearing being	1%	99%	140
3. Did any party exhibit body language that indicated concern that the hearing was open?	0%	100%	141
4. Did someone ask for the hearing to be closed to the public?	1%	99%	141
5. Did anyone object to closing the hearing to the public?	5%	95%	21
6. Did the Judge close the hearing to the public?	1%	99%	141
7. Did the Judge ask the parties to identify themselves?	83%	17%	134

Parties Present in Open Court (Circuit 4)	Yes	No	Total
8. Was a parent and/or custodian present for the hearing?	81%	19%	134
9. Was a social worker present for the hearing?	67%	33%	137
10. Was a prosecutor present for the hearing?	99%	1%	136
11. Was the GAL present for the hearing?	95%	5%	141
12. Were there people in the courtroom who were not part of the hearing?	27%	73%	132

Issue Argued Before Judge (Circuit 4)	Yes	No	Total	
13. Did the attorneys and/or parties argue about an issue?		4%	96%	134
13a. If yes, did the Judge accept the County Attorney's recommendations?	100%		0%	16

Party's Attorney (Circuit 4)	Yes	No	Some Were	Total
14. Was each party's attorney given the opportunity to speak?	95%	3%	2%	134

Judge Engages Parties (Circuit 4)	Yes	No	No Parties Present	Total
15. Did the Judge engage the parties before issuing the order(s)?	85%	2%	13%	135

Judge Explains Decision (Circuit 4)	Yes	No	Total
16. Did the Judge explain his/her decisions?	97%	3%	127

Children Present (Circuit 4)	Yes	No	Total	
17. Were any children present in the courtroom?*		13%	87%	136
18. Did anyone ask for a child to testify during this hearing?*		0%	100%	27
19. Did the court allow a child to testify during this hearing?*		18%	82%	22

Child Testified (Circuit 4)	In Open Court	In Chambers	Other	Total	
19a. If yes, how did the child testify?*	80%		0%	20%	5

Hearing Continued (Circuit 4)	Yes	No	Total	
20. Was the hearing continued?		28%	72%	129

Final Observations (Circuit 4)	Yes	No	Unable to Determine	
21. Did you observe adverse effects resulting from the open courtroom?* (n=133)		1%	47%	52%
22. Did you observe any benefit to the parties from the open courtroom?* (n=133)		1%	16%	83%
23. Did you observe any benefit to the public from the open courtroom?* (n=133)		0%	17%	83%

Circuit 18

Open Court Observations (Circuit 18)	Yes	No	Total	
1. Did the Judge announce that the hearing was open?	78%		22%	98
2. Did anyone verbally express concern over the hearing being open?		2%	99%	97
3. Did any party exhibit body language that indicated concern that the hearing was open?		0%	100%	99
4. Did someone ask for the hearing to be closed to the public?		0%	100%	99
5. Did anyone object to closing the hearing to the public?		0%	100%	22
6. Did the Judge close the hearing to the public?		2%	98%	97
7. Did the Judge ask the parties to identify themselves?		27%	73%	96

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Open Courts Pilot Project: Observations and Evaluation Report
September 1, 2018**

Parties Present in Open Court (Circuit 18)	Yes	No	Total
8. Was a parent and/or custodian present for the hearing?	73%	27%	95
9. Was a social worker present for the hearing?	92%	8%	98
10. Was a prosecutor present for the hearing?	99%	1%	97
11. Was the GAL present for the hearing?	91%	9%	97
12. Were there people in the courtroom who were not part of the hearing?	88%	12%	98

Issue Argued Before Judge (Circuit 18)	Yes	No	Total
13. Did the attorneys and/or parties argue about an issue?	19%	81%	92
13a. If yes, did the Judge accept the County Attorney's recommendations?	77%	22%	18

Party's Attorney (Circuit 18)	Yes	No	Some Were	Total
14. Was each party's attorney given the opportunity to speak?	89%	6%	5%	96

Judge Engages Parties (Circuit 18)	Yes	No	No Parties Present	Total
15. Did the Judge engage the parties before issuing the order(s)?	82%	3%	15%	94

Judge Explains Decision (Circuit 18)	Yes	No	Total
16. Did the Judge explain his/her decisions?	87%	13%	92

Children Present (Circuit 18)	Yes	No	Total
17. Were any children present in the courtroom?*	5%	95%	98
18. Did anyone ask for a child to testify during this hearing?*	0%	100%	11
19. Did the court allow a child to testify during this hearing?*	0%	100%	10

Child Testified (Circuit 18)	In Open			Total
	Court	In Chambers	Other	
19a. If yes, how did the child testify?*	0%	0%	0%	0

Hearing Continued (Circuit 18)	Yes	No	Total
20. Was the hearing continued?	15%	85%	93

Final Observations (Circuit 18)	Yes	No	Unable to Determine
21. Did you observe adverse effects resulting from the open courtroom?*(n=97)	0%	49%	51%
22. Did you observe any benefit to the parties from the open courtroom?*(n=97)	1%	38%	61%
23. Did you observe any benefit to the public from the open courtroom?*(n=97)	1%	35%	64%

Closed Courts Observations

Closed Court Observations	Yes	No	Total
1. Did the Judge announce that the hearing was closed?	14%	86%	682
2. Did the Judge ask the parties to identify themselves?	83%	17%	662
3. Was a parent and/or custodian present for the hearing?	76%	24%	652
4. Was a social worker present for the hearing?	93%	7%	669
5. Was a prosecutor present for the hearing?	96%	4%	675
6. Was the GAL present for the hearing?	90%	10%	663
7. Were there people in the courtroom who were not part of the hearing?	67%	34%	671
8. Did anyone ask the court to remove anyone from the courtroom?	2%	98%	672
9. Did the Judge make anyone leave the courtroom?	2%	98%	672

Issues Argued Before Judge in Closed Court	Yes	No	Total
10. Did the attorneys and/or parties argue about an issue?	16%	84%	637
10a. If yes, did the Judge accept the County Attorney's recommendations?	88%	12%	260

Judge Engages in Closed Court	Yes	No	No Parties Present	Total
12. Did the Judge engage the parties before issuing the order(s)?	87%	6%	7%	634

Party's Attorney in Closed Court	Yes	No	Some Were	Total
11. Was each party's attorney given the opportunity to speak?	89%	6%	5%	639

Judge Explains and Children in Closed Court	Yes	No	Total
13. Did the Judge explain his/her decisions?	89%	11%	637
14. Were any children present in the courtroom?*	7%	93%	665
15. Did anyone ask for a child to testify during this hearing?*	2%	98%	112
16. Did the court allow a child to testify during this hearing?*	2%	98%	90

Children Testify in Closed Court	In Open Court	In Chambers	Other	Total
16a. If yes, how did the child testify?*	33%	0%	67%	3

Closed Court Hearing Continued	Yes	No	Total
17. Was the hearing continued?	33%	67%	645

Final Observations about Closed Courts	Yes	No	Unable to Determine	Total
18. Do you feel that the outcome of the hearing would have been different if it had been open to the public?	0%	56%	44%	656
19. Did the closed courtroom benefit the parties?*	14%	16%	70%	658
20. Did the closed courtroom benefit the public?*	1%	21%	78%	670



Family Court Survey: Professionals

For Internal Use Only

Location Code: _____

Date: _____

In order to determine whether "Open Courts" might potentially benefit the citizens of the Commonwealth, Senate Bill 40 was passed into law in April of 2016 and became effective on July 15, 2016. This led the Supreme Court to institute a pilot project "to study the feasibility and desirability of the opening or limited opening" to the public of court proceedings related to dependency, neglect, and abuse (DNA) and termination of parental rights (TPR). KRS 21A.190; KRS 21A.192; and, KRS 610.072.

The pilot project includes the county where your court hearing is taking place today. To comply with this legislation, we are collecting information to document the ways in which Open Court practices impact those who attend these hearings.

Please select the type(s) of hearings you participated in today:

- Temporary Removal/Custody
 Adjudication
 Disposition
 Annual Permanency Review
 Termination of Parental Rights

Please indicate your professional role(s) in your case(s) today:

- Judge
 Media representative
 DCBS Staff
 Print
 Attorney for Parent/Custodian
 TV/Radio
 County (or Assistant County) Attorney
 Internet/Blog
 School Representative
 Other: _____
 Court Staff
 Other professional (*specify*): _____

Did any of the following occur regarding your case(s) today? (please leave blank if unsure)

- The Judge asked everyone in the courtroom to identify himself/herself. Yes No
 People who were not involved in today's cases were in the courtroom. Yes No
 A party asked the Court to close a case on today's docket. Yes No
 The Judge closed a proceeding. Yes No
 The Judge left a case open despite a motion to close that case. Yes No
 One, or more, of your cases today received media attention prior to court. Yes No
 You were contacted by the media about a case on today's docket. Yes No
 You were interviewed by the media about a case on today's docket. Yes No
 A service provider attended today's proceedings. Yes No
 A member of the faith community attended today's proceedings. Yes No

Directions: Please take a few moments to complete the survey at the conclusion of today's docket. The questions pertain only to the DNA or TPR proceeding(s) that took place today. Circle a number to answer each question, where 1 indicates you *strongly disagree* with the statement and 5 indicates you *strongly agree* with the statement.

Thinking about the proceedings today, I would say:

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. I believe that having my case(s) open to the public today affected the following: Preparation of the participants. Efficiency of conducting the proceeding(s). Dignity of the proceeding(s) (e.g., respect shown for participants). Quality of the proceeding(s) (e.g., issues discussed, decisions made). Witness testimony (<i>Please leave blank if no witness testified under oath</i>). Content of court statements, reports, or exhibits. Services offered to the family. Comments:	1	2	3	4	5
2. I believe that having my case(s) open to the public today had a positive impact on the child(ren) involved in the case(s). Comments:	1	2	3	4	5
3. I believe that having my case(s) open to the public today was beneficial to the parties involved. Comments:	1	2	3	4	5
4. I believe that having my case(s) open to the public today was beneficial to the non-parties and members of the public in attendance. Comments:	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
5. I believe today's case(s) took longer because court was open to the public. Comments:	1	2	3	4	5	
6. I directed more time and attention to my case(s) today because the proceeding(s) was open to the public. Comments:	1	2	3	4	5	
7. Because court was open today, I found it easier to work with the following professionals: <i>(Use "N/A" if you are the professional indicated)</i> Parent(s) or Non-Parent Custodian(s) Attorney for Parent or Non-Parent Custodian Child(ren) GAL for child(ren) Judge County (or Assistant County) Attorney DCBS Staff Comments:	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
8. I believe that having my case(s) open to the public today had a positive impact on the accountability of the following professionals to the child(ren) involved in the proceeding(s): <i>(Use "N/A" if you are the professional indicated)</i> Attorney for Parent/Custodian GAL for child Judge County (or Assistant County) Attorney DCBS Staff Service Providers Comments:	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
	N/A	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
9. Overall, I anticipate positive effects on the child(ren) or family(ies) as a result of opening these proceedings to the public.					
Comments:	1	2	3	4	5

Additional Comments:

If you have any additional comments, please write your thoughts below.

**Thank you for your time and attention to the Open Courts Pilot Project.
Please return the Survey to an AOC staff member.**

If you have any further questions, comments, or concerns, please direct them to:

Nathan Goins, Family Court Liaison
nathanielgoins@kycourts.net
502-573-2350 Ext. 50529

**For Internal Use Only**

Location Code: _____

Date: _____

Family Court Survey: Family Member

The Supreme Court of Kentucky has been asked by the Legislature to study the opening of court proceedings in cases concerning Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse (DNA) and Termination of Parental Rights (TPR). These proceedings are normally closed to the public, but in response to the Legislature's request, the Supreme Court has identified several counties to study, where these proceedings will be "open." An "open" court proceeding means the public has a right to attend. The county where your hearing took place today is one of the counties included in the study. We are collecting information on how Open Court practices affect families like your own.

Thank you for taking the time to share your opinions and thoughts.

Please mark your role in this case: Mother Father Grandparent Aunt or Uncle I am the child/youth named in the case Other family member (*specify*): _____ Foster Parent Adoptive Parent (TPR) Other (*specify*): _____**Did any of the following occur regarding your case today?**

Before the hearing started, I was told it was open to the public.

 Yes No I Don't Know

The Judge asked everyone in the courtroom to identify himself/herself.

 Yes No I Don't Know

People who were not part of the case were in the courtroom.

 Yes No I Don't Know

Someone asked for the proceeding to be closed to the public.

 Yes No I Don't Know

The Judge closed the proceeding to the public.

 Yes No I Don't Know

This proceeding, or case, has received media (TV, newspaper, radio) attention.

 Yes No I Don't Know

I was contacted by the media (TV, newspaper, radio) about this case.

 Yes No I Don't Know

I was interviewed by the media (TV, newspaper, radio) about this case.

 Yes No I Don't Know

Directions: Please take a few moments to complete this survey when the proceeding is over. Think about your case and what happened today in court. Read each statement and circle a number, where 1 indicates you *strongly disagree* with the statement and 5 indicates you *strongly agree* with the statement.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree	
1. The way the case was handled today was fair. Comments:	1	2	3	4	5	
2. I feel like having other people in the courtroom, who are not part of the case, had a positive effect on the child(ren) involved in the case. Comments:	1	2	3	4	5	
3. I feel like having other people in the courtroom, who are not part of the case, was helpful to me. Comments:	1	2	3	4	5	
4. I feel like the Judge listened more closely to me or others involved in the case because the proceeding was open to the public. Comments:	1	2	3	4	5	
5. I feel like my attorney has spent more time on, and paid more attention to, this case because the proceeding was open to the public. (Circle "N/A" if you were not represented by an attorney.) Comments:	N/A	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
6. I feel like the social worker(s) paid more attention to this case because the proceeding was open to the public. Comments:	1	2	3	4	5
7. I feel like there were more services offered to me, or the child, or the family involved because the proceeding was open to the public. Comments:	1	2	3	4	5
8. Overall, I feel like opening these types of proceedings to the public will have a positive effect on children and families involved in Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse cases and/or Termination of Parental Rights cases. Comments:	1	2	3	4	5

Additional Comments:

If you have any additional comments, please write your thoughts below.



Open Court Observation Form

Date: _____

County: _____

Division: _____

Hearing Type: _____

1. Did the Judge announce that the hearing was open?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2. Did anyone verbally express concern over the hearing being open?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3. Did any party exhibit body language that indicated concern that the hearing was open?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4. Did someone ask for the hearing to be closed to the public?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5. Did anyone object to closing the hearing to the public?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
6. Did the Judge close the hearing to the public?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
7. Did the Judge ask the parties to identify themselves?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
8. Was a parent and/or custodian present for the hearing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
9. Was a social worker present for the hearing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
10. Was a prosecutor present for the hearing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
11. Was the GAL present for the hearing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
12. Were there people in the courtroom who were not part of the hearing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I Don't Know
13. Did the attorneys and/or parties argue about an issue?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
13a. If yes, did the Judge accept the County Attorney's recommendations?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
14. Was each party's attorney given the opportunity to speak?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Some Were
15. Did the Judge engage the parties before issuing the order(s)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> No Parties Present
16. Did the Judge explain his/her decisions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
17. Were any children present in the courtroom?*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
18. Did anyone ask for a child to testify during this hearing?*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
19. Did the court allow a child to testify during this hearing?*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
19a. If yes, how did the child testify?*	<input type="checkbox"/> In Open Court <input type="checkbox"/> In Chambers <input type="checkbox"/> Other
20. Was the hearing continued?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
21. Did you observe adverse effects resulting from the open courtroom?*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Determine
22. Did you observe any benefit <i>to the parties</i> from the open courtroom?*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Determine
23. Did you observe any benefit <i>to the public</i> from the open courtroom?*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Determine

***PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS FORM.**

**Closed Court Observation Form**

Date: _____

County: _____

Division: _____

Hearing Type: _____

1. Did the Judge announce that the hearing was closed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2. Did the Judge ask the parties to identify themselves?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3. Was a parent and/or custodian present for the hearing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4. Was a social worker present for the hearing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5. Was a prosecutor present for the hearing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
6. Was the GAL present for the hearing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
7. Were there people in the courtroom who were not part of the hearing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
8. Did anyone ask the court to remove anyone from the courtroom?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
9. Did the Judge make anyone leave the courtroom?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
10. Did the attorneys and/or parties argue about an issue?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
10a. If yes, did the Judge accept the County Attorney's recommendations?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
11. Was each party's attorney given the opportunity to speak?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Some Were
12. Did the Judge engage the parties before issuing the order(s)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> No Parties Present
13. Did the Judge explain his/her decisions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
14. Were any children present in the courtroom?*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
15. Did anyone ask for a child to testify during this hearing?*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
16. Did the court allow a child to testify during this hearing?*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
16a. If yes, how did the child testify?*	<input type="checkbox"/> In Open Court <input type="checkbox"/> In Chambers <input type="checkbox"/> Other
17. Was the hearing continued?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
18. Do you feel that the outcome of the hearing would have been different if it had been open to the public?*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Determine
19. Did the closed courtroom benefit the parties?*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Determine
20. Did the closed courtroom benefit the public?*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Determine

***PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS FORM.**

