



Questionmark Case Study:

Spaulding for Children

Background

Spaulding for Children is a private, non-profit child welfare agency that finds permanent homes for children that have been in the foster care and adoption system the longest. Spaulding for Children was one of the first agencies in the country that specialized in finding and training adoptive families for the placement of special needs children. Nationwide, Spaulding provides training, consultative and informational materials for professionals, organizations and parents.

Moving to Online Assessments

The Spaulding Institute for Family and Community Development, a division of Spaulding For Children, is currently providing training sessions in 32 States and some U.S. Territories. They are developing the capacity to centralize the location for disseminating surveys and collecting results. This has allowed the agency to become more flexible and efficient.

With over 800 trainers affiliated with the agency's training efforts, there was a need to create a flexible system to collect evaluation information that would ensure that the trainings were effective. Prior to the Train the Trainer courses, each trainer had the option of taking a Perception pre-test. The results assist in improving the training process.

As part of its work with regional health care providers, Spaulding uses surveys to assess the impact of various training programs. Surveys are also used to analyze how well Spaulding collaborates nationally with healthcare providers and adoption agencies. In addition to getting feedback about the training courses themselves, the surveys are also used to evaluate Spaulding's consulting processes.

Processing paper-based surveys was time consuming and inconvenient, especially since follow-up questions required staff to make phone calls. Switching to online surveys eliminated the need for recording results by hand, and follow-up conversations could take place via email.

Easy Implementation, Improved Communications

Spaulding Vice President Kris Henneman notes that, although setting up online assessments seemed intimidating at first, it turned out to be surprisingly simple.

"There was a lot of apprehension, but the robustness of Perception, combined with its simplicity, made it a viable option for us," recalls Henneman. "Math isn't usually a social worker's best subject, but once we started working with Perception we realized it was easy to author questions and use statistics effectively."

Henneman says that running online assessments are particularly helpful in getting a national perspective on the issues that adoptive families face.

"What a great opportunity to find out what's most needed, what topical areas we should be addressing, what we should anticipate around the corner. Perception allows us to pull in a large universe of people to gather information. Now we have the potential to throw out different surveys and track them... These surveys empower the families, and the kids can give feedback too. You can create a kid-friendly survey, in their language, very quickly. Perception is working very well for us, enabling us to communicate effectively not only with regional service providers but also with agencies at the state and federal level, making sure everyone is in the loop."

Future Plans

Spaulding hopes to carry its online surveys directly into the homes of children and their families, to check the quality of the services they are providing. There are also plans to use Perception as part of Spaulding's infant adoption training programs, which help ensure that healthcare providers provide accurate information about infant adoption to pregnant women.

More information

Email: info@questionmark.com

Phone: (800) 863-3950 • (203) 855-4500

Web: <http://www.questionmark.com/>

