

***How Child Welfare Professionals
Access, Use, and Share Information:
Results From the National Child
Welfare Information Study***

Updated:
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This report reflects the efforts of a number of individuals who provided guidance and input over the course of the study.

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Executive Summary

Current and future members of the child welfare workforce need to have access to useful and trusted information, resources, and services. However, the ways in which child welfare professionals access information are rapidly changing, and the technologies and types of resources that are most useful are evolving for a digital age. With so many options and so much information competing for limited time and attention, information clearinghouses and technical assistance providers must understand and respond to the changing needs and preferences of a diverse workforce to help child welfare professionals better support the children, families, and communities they serve.

The goal of the National Child Welfare Information Study—conducted by Child Welfare Information Gateway and funded by the Children’s Bureau—is to better understand how child welfare professionals working in State and local child welfare agencies, with Tribes, and in courts search for, access, and share information. Ultimately, this study seeks to support the enhanced design and reach of information, resources, and services for agency administrators, program managers, supervisors and caseworkers, judges and attorneys, and future members of the child welfare workforce so that they are more accessible, consumable, useful, and effective for improving child welfare practice (exhibit ES-1).

Exhibit ES-1: High-Level Research Questions for the National Child Welfare Information Study

- How do child welfare agency and legal professionals currently get and share information that they use in their jobs?
- What makes professionals more likely to use new technologies (such as mobile devices and social media) to consume information, and what types of information are they most likely to access through those technologies?
- In what ways do professionals’ information habits and preferences vary based on their characteristics, including their role and the populations with whom they work?
- In what ways can we expect professionals’ information habits and preferences to change in the future?

The National Child Welfare Information Study targeted four distinct audiences:

- Child welfare professionals working in State, local, and private agencies
- Child welfare professionals working with Tribes
- Legal and judicial professionals that work in child welfare (hereafter referred to as “legal professionals”)
- Students in graduate or undergraduate social work programs who are likely to enter the child welfare field (hereafter referred to as “students”)

To ensure the study design and instruments were informed by child welfare researchers, technical experts, communication specialists, and stakeholders in the field, the study team formed two types of stakeholder groups: a Technical Workgroup (TWG) composed of experts in child welfare systems, issues,

policies, technology, communications, and research methodologies; and four Organizational Stakeholder Groups (OSGs) representing each of the target respondent audiences.

Respondents were invited to participate in the study through a variety of channels, including through the agencies for which they worked, through intermediary organizations such as professional associations, and through contacts at university social work programs. Because of the different contexts of each of the four audiences, the study team individualized recruitment approaches and used multiple methods to maximize response.

- For child welfare professionals working in both public and private settings, the study team targeted a representative and geographically diverse sample to ensure greater external validity of study findings. The study team identified and recruited an intentional sample of six States of varying population sizes and representing diverse geographic regions. Recruitment commenced with outreach to the State agency director through an official invitation from the Children's Bureau and Child Welfare Information Gateway and then varied individually based on State context.
- For legal professionals and child welfare professionals working with Tribes, organizational partners—including those participating in the OSGs—disseminated tailored information about the study through membership newsletters, listservs, social media, and event-based distribution of fliers (e.g., at conferences). Some organizational partners also distributed a brief informational video.
- To recruit students, the study team worked with the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, university contacts, and the Children's Bureau to create a list of program contacts for title IV-E stipend programs and supplemented it with an additional list of professional contacts at university programs.¹ The study team then invited programs to participate in an informational webinar about the study and partner with the study team to facilitate recruitment of students in their programs through email, text, social media, and online learning management systems.

To supplement survey data, focus groups and interviews were conducted to gather additional detailed and contextual information about the ways in which child welfare professionals access, receive, and share information. Across the four audiences of interest, a total of 4,134 respondents took the survey, and 82 professionals and students participated in focus groups and interviews.

Survey data are expected to be available for secondary analysis later in 2020, through the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) data archiving repository. These data will be freely available to analysts, along with a codebook and user's guide that will explicate this data collection effort for secondary users of the data.

The following pages highlight key findings from the study.

¹ These programs provide professional education and monetary support to undergraduate and graduate social work students who intend to pursue or continue a career in the field of public child welfare.

General Information Habits and Preferences

- Over half of respondents in all audiences said that they search for content on the internet and read about news or current events at least several times a week. At least a quarter said that they download or view informational products, publications, or resources; play online games or apps; and watch online video at least several times a week. Students participated in almost all of these activities more frequently than child welfare or legal professionals.

Access to Information About Child Welfare

- At least half of respondents in all audiences said that they have reliable access to the internet always or almost always, and at least 90 percent said they have access at least most of the time.
- Across all audiences, about two-thirds of respondents agreed that they have enough access to information about child welfare to do their work effectively. Between 14 and 17 percent of respondents disagreed that they have enough access, depending on the audience; the remainder neither agreed nor disagreed.
- When child welfare professionals were asked to identify areas in which they need more information, the three categories that were mentioned most frequently were information about local services, information about laws and policies, and information about educational and professional development opportunities. Legal professionals and students also mentioned the need for child welfare-related research and statistics.
- Barriers to information access cited by respondents included a lack of time to search for information, workplace policies (such as policies that block social media websites), and the cost of some resources.

Searching for Information About Child Welfare

- At least a quarter of child welfare professionals reported searching at least several times a week for information or resources to share with clients, news about child welfare-related topics, and information about laws and policies. Frontline workers search most frequently for client-focused information and resources, while more senior-level professionals (such as administrators and directors) search more frequently for other types of information.
- Legal professionals search more frequently than child welfare professionals for child welfare news and information about laws and policies, but they search less frequently for client-focused resources. Students were generally less active in searching for child welfare information, although they search more frequently than current child welfare professionals for research-related information.
- Among all audiences, the most common approach to searching for information is using the internet, either through search engines or by going to a specific website. However, about a third

of frontline workers typically ask a colleague or other professional contact rather than searching online—a higher percentage than child welfare professionals in other roles.

Receiving Information About Child Welfare

- Over a third of child welfare professionals—and half of legal professionals—reported receiving child welfare information that they had not specifically searched for at least several times a week. The most important ways that professionals receive information are by email; through trainings, conferences, and workshops; and through electronic listservs or newsletters.
- The formats in which child welfare professionals most prefer to receive information are through PowerPoint presentations, videos, and briefing documents or executive summaries. Visual formats, such as videos or pamphlets, are more popular among frontline workers, while more formal formats, such as reports or peer-reviewed journal articles, are more popular among professionals in more senior roles. Younger respondents were also more likely than older respondents to prefer videos and podcasts.
- Like directors and administrators of child welfare agencies, legal professionals were more likely to prefer to receive information in the form of briefing documents, reports, or peer-reviewed articles. Peer-reviewed articles were also the most popular format among students, followed by videos.
- About a third of child welfare professionals overall subscribe to at least one electronic listserv, newsletter, or subscription list through which they receive child welfare information on a regular basis. Respondents who do subscribe to listservs or electronic newsletters were asked to describe what characteristics stand out as effective in such resources. The three most common responses were the extent to which these resources are (a) concise, (b) up to date, and (c) directly relevant to the specific needs of the audience.

Sharing Information About Child Welfare

- About half of child welfare and legal professionals reported sharing information about child welfare with colleagues or other professional contacts at least several times a week.
- The most common ways in which child welfare and legal professionals share information are through face-to-face conversations, email, and at organizational meetings. Frontline child welfare staff are most likely to share information with colleagues face-to-face, while legal professionals and child welfare professionals in senior roles are most likely to share by email.
- Students are most likely to share information through face-to-face conversations or through in-person or online class discussions. They are also much more likely than other audiences to share child welfare information using social media—a third of students who share child welfare information report doing so through social media, compared to less than 10 percent of other audiences.

Training and Professional Development

- Among all audiences, about three-quarters of respondents said that they prefer in-person training to online or virtual training.
- The three ways in which respondents were most likely to learn about training opportunities were through emails, listservs or electronic newsletters, or from colleagues in person or by telephone. Frontline child welfare staff were more likely than other respondents to hear about training opportunities from colleagues, while directors and administrators were more likely to hear about them through listservs or electronic newsletters.

Use of Mobile Devices

- At least 97 percent of respondents in all audiences have a smartphone or tablet that they use for personal or professional use. Younger child welfare professionals were typically more active users of their mobile devices than their older colleagues and were more likely to use mobile devices to watch videos, listen to podcasts, play online games, or read online reviews.
- Over a third of child welfare and legal professionals reported using a mobile device at least several times a week to search for, access, or share information about child welfare. Child welfare-related tasks that professionals most frequently complete using their mobile devices are typically related to communication (e.g., checking email, communicating with colleagues about cases, or communicating with clients) or information access (e.g., researching information or looking up policies and procedures).
- Across all audiences, about half of respondents indicated that one reason they do not use their mobile devices more frequently for child welfare purposes is a lack of mobile applications relevant to their work.
- A relatively small percentage of child welfare professionals (less than one-quarter) cited their own technology skills as a reason they do not use mobile devices more often for child welfare purposes.

Use of Social Media

- About half of child welfare professionals reported using social media to search for, access, or share child welfare information at least occasionally. In most cases, however, this usage was relatively infrequent; in all respondent groups, only a small percentage used social media for child welfare-related purposes several times a week or more. Facebook was the platform that respondents used most frequently for child welfare purposes, by a large margin.

Child Welfare Professionals Working with Tribes

- In general, child welfare professionals who work with Tribes seemed to be more active in terms of information gathering and sharing than their peers who work with other populations. Respondents who work with Tribes searched for, received, and shared child welfare information more frequently; participated in more trainings and conferences; and were more likely to use social media for child welfare purposes.

Future Child Welfare Professionals

- In an effort to make predictions about how information habits and preferences might change as new child welfare workers enter the field, the study team analyzed responses from a set of “future professionals,” defined as bachelor of social work (B.S.W.) and master of social work (M.S.W.) students who had not previously worked for a child welfare organization for more than a year. The analysis showed that future professionals use mobile devices more frequently than current professionals for a wide range of activities and cite their technological skills less frequently as a barrier to using mobile devices for child welfare purposes.
- Future professionals also use social media more frequently than current frontline professionals to search for, access, and share child welfare information.

1. Background and Methodology

Child welfare professionals are committed to helping children and families thrive in their communities. To serve families well, current and future members of the child welfare workforce need to have access to useful and trusted information, resources, and services. However, the ways in which child welfare professionals access information are rapidly changing, and the technologies and types of resources that are most useful are evolving for a digital age. With so many options and so much information competing for limited time and attention, information clearinghouses and technical assistance providers must understand and respond to the changing needs and preferences of a diverse workforce to help child welfare professionals better support the children, families, and communities they serve.

Child Welfare Information Gateway, funded by the Children’s Bureau, conducted a national research study to better understand how professionals working in State and local child welfare agencies, with Tribes, and in courts access information and use technology to inform their practice. In this report, the study is referred to as the National Child Welfare Information Study. This introductory chapter presents the overarching goal of the study and outlines the questions driving the study design. It also describes the key stakeholders and technical experts who were instrumental in informing and guiding the direction of the study. The study methods are also presented, including a review of the data sources, data collection activities, and the data analysis techniques employed.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The goal of this study is to support improved design and reach of information, resources, and services so that they are more accessible for agency administrators, program managers, supervisors and caseworkers, judges and attorneys, and future members of the child welfare workforce. Ultimately, study findings seek to support the improved effectiveness of available information, resources, and services to enhance child welfare systems and their practice.

1.2 Research Questions

To help inform the design and focus of the study, the study team conducted an extensive review of the research literature on marketing and communication strategies. The literature review sought to provide insight on how specific marketing strategies, such as push versus pull dissemination strategies (see text box), might be used in a child welfare context.

The results of this literature review had important implications for the study. Most significantly, it underscored the need for this type of research because of how critical it is for organizations (e.g., technical assistance providers) to understand the information needs and preferences of the audiences they hope to reach and serve. To properly target dissemination strategies, organizations must

Definition of Push and Pull Dissemination Strategies

- **Push Strategies:** Disseminators of products “push” information about products out to intermediaries or end users, who may not be aware these products exist.
Examples: Television advertisements, listservs, social media posts
- **Pull Strategies:** Disseminators of products make an effort to “pull in” end users who are already looking for specific types of resources.
Examples: Search engine optimization, word of mouth

understand the needs of distinct segments of their audience, as well as what characteristics define each segment. The review of the research literature also helped prioritize and refine the study’s research questions and identified important topics for further study, including how respondents view different sources of information and how they decide which information sources are trustworthy; identification of the time and effort it takes to access information or products—what the behavioral economics literature refers to as “hassle factors” (Richburg-Hayes et al., 2014) that respondents encounter when searching for information—and how these factors affect behavior; and how respondents recognize and prioritize needs for information resources. The four overarching questions the study examined are outlined below.

High-Level Research Questions for the National Child Welfare Information Study

- How do child welfare professionals who work in State and local agencies, Tribes, and courts currently get information that they use in their jobs?
 - Through what channels do they obtain information, and what devices do they use to access it?
 - How do they determine what information is most trustworthy?
- What newer information channels (including social media) do child welfare professionals use more frequently?
- In what ways do child welfare professionals’ information habits and preferences vary based on the type of organization in which they work, their role within the organization, or their service areas?
- In what ways have child welfare professionals’ information habits changed in recent years, and how do they expect them to change in the future?

Through comprehensive answers to these research questions, the Children’s Bureau, Federal and non-Federal technical assistance providers, agencies, and community organizations may be able to:

- Better align push and pull dissemination strategies to specific types of content, or specific audiences
- Define the communication and dissemination approaches that might be most effective with specific segments of the target population—for example, professionals who work in different content areas, those with more or fewer years of experience in the field, or those who work for different types of organizations (e.g., State-administered versus county-administered agencies)
- Identify the most appropriate role for newer communication channels, such as social media, within a larger dissemination strategy
- Provide information about how child welfare professionals’ habits and preferences have changed, and how they are likely to change in the future

1.3 Role of the Technical Workgroup and Organizational Stakeholder Groups

To ensure the study design and instruments were informed by child welfare researchers, technical experts, communication specialists, and stakeholders in the field, the study team formed two

stakeholder groups: (1) a **Technical Workgroup (TWG)** composed of experts in child welfare systems, issues, policies, technology, communications, and/or research methodologies; and (2) four **Organizational Stakeholder Groups (OSGs)** representing each of the target respondent audiences described further in section 1.4, including child welfare professionals working in State agencies, child welfare professionals working in Tribal agencies or governments, legal professionals, and students of social work. In addition to the technical experts and key stakeholders, representatives from the Children's Bureau, Child Welfare Information Gateway, and the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative also served on the TWG and OSGs throughout the course of the study. Additional information about the TWG and OSG membership is provided in an appendix to this report. The role of each group is described below.

Technical Workgroup (TWG)

The TWG was engaged periodically to specifically support and directly inform the development of research constructs, study design, recruitment approaches, instruments, data collection methods, and the sharing of findings with the field.

Organizational Stakeholder Groups (OSGs)

The four OSGs provided a review mechanism for obtaining and using input from key child welfare stakeholders. The OSGs were convened to provide specific input on instrument development, participant recruitment, data collection, sharing of findings, and potential product recommendations. OSG members also directly supported cognitive testing of study instruments and were key partners for participant recruitment.

1.4 Description of Respondent Audiences

The study team examined the information habits and preferences of four distinct audiences: 1) child welfare professionals working in State, local, and private agencies; 2) child welfare professionals working with Tribes; 3) legal and judicial professionals that work in child welfare; and 4) students in graduate or undergraduate social work programs that are likely to enter the child welfare field. The working definitions of each audience within the context of the study are provided below.

Child Welfare Professionals Working in State, Local, and Private Agencies

Child welfare professionals working in State, local, and private agencies included current frontline workers (e.g., caseworkers, direct service providers), supervisors, managers, directors and administrators.

Child Welfare Professionals Working with Tribes

Child welfare professionals working with Tribes included people working for Tribal governments or agencies, such as Tribal child welfare caseworkers, administrators, and program leaders.

Legal and Judicial Professionals

Legal and judicial professionals working directly with children and families involved with the child welfare system (hereafter referred to as legal professionals) included those judges and attorneys who spend at least 10 percent of their time on child welfare cases.

Students of Social Work

Students in graduate or undergraduate social work programs (hereafter referred to as students) included those individuals who are currently enrolled full or part time in a bachelor of social work (B.S.W.) or a master of social work (M.S.W.) program at an accredited college or university and who could potentially plan to enter the field of child welfare.

1.5 Methodology

The study team employed a mixed-methods design; hence, the primary methods included both quantitative data collection and analyses (e.g., surveys of child welfare professionals working in State and local agencies, child welfare professionals working with Tribes, legal professionals, and students of social work) and qualitative data collection and analyses (e.g., telephone focus groups and interviews). This section describes the data sources, study recruitment and data collection activities, and data analyses used.

Data Sources

The data sources for the study included online surveys and telephone focus groups and interviews with representatives of each respondent audience.

Online Surveys

To address the research questions, tailored surveys were created for each audience.² The survey items were developed to capture information on the following topics:

- *Characteristics and context of respondents*—This section collected demographic information about respondents, including age and gender, as well as information about their role, program area, years of experience, location of their work (e.g., primarily in an office environment or in the field), and types of technology they use in their work.
- *General information habits and preferences*—Items assessed the frequency with which respondents engage in information-related activities in their general lives, including the frequency and ways in which they use mobile devices and social media.
- *General level of access to child welfare information*—Items examined respondents' satisfaction with their access to child welfare information, as well as perceived gaps in and barriers to their information access.
- *Habits and preferences related to proactive searching for child welfare information*—Items examined the types of information for which respondents search and where they search for information (e.g., specific websites).

² All survey elements were constructed and tailored for the purposes of the present study. However, additional questions related to respondents' awareness and use of Child Welfare Information Gateway and National Adoption Month resources also were included for internal evaluative purposes. Data from these questions are not presented in this report and will not be included in the public dataset that will be produced through this research.

- *Habits and preferences related to the receipt of child welfare information*—Items measured the frequency with which respondents receive child welfare information and resources through “push channels,” such as listservs or social media, and the formats in which respondents prefer to receive information through these means.
- *Habits and preferences related to the sharing of information*—Items assessed the frequency with which respondents share information resources with others in their field and the channels through which they do so.
- *Habits and preferences related to training*—Items assessed respondents’ recent training participation, including their reasons for participating, how they learned about the training, and preferences related to training format.
- *Use of mobile technology to access child welfare information*—Items measured the frequency with which respondents use their mobile devices to access child welfare information, as well as any barriers to this use.
- *Use of social media to access and share child welfare information*—Items assessed the frequency with which respondents use social media to access or share child welfare information, as well as the platforms that they use most frequently to do so.

The survey instrument was developed and then adapted for administration to the four study audiences. Members of the TWG and OSGs provided input on the tailored survey items to ensure relevance to the respondent audiences and the collection of usable data. Federal staff within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and current students of social work also reviewed survey instruments and provided input and feedback on survey items and survey design.

Following initial survey design and development, the study team conducted cognitive testing of each instrument. Unlike basic instrument testing, which focuses specifically on whether directions are clear to respondents and whether any items are perceived as confusing, cognitive testing is a more in-depth methodology that assesses how participants are interpreting items and what their thought processes are as they are answering them. The study team developed a testing protocol and conducted nine telephone interviews, each lasting approximately 1 hour. Participants were purposefully sampled to ensure the inclusion of members from key respondent populations, such as professionals who worked in large versus small agencies, professionals working with Tribes, and staff with more versus less work experience. Each participant was asked to complete the survey while thinking aloud and describing their thought processes as they answered each question. Participants also verbally identified any aspects of the questions that confused or surprised them. The interviewer asked probing questions to assess participant interpretations of questions and response options. The design team then incorporated edits based on cognitive testing results before finalizing survey instruments.

Telephone Focus Groups and Interviews

Quantitative data collected through the online surveys were supplemented with qualitative data collected through focus groups and interviews with representatives from the four respondent audiences. The goal of the focus groups and interviews was to gather more detailed and contextual information about the ways in which child welfare professionals access, receive, and share information.

The study team developed a detailed focus group protocol that further explored the questions included in the surveys. Protocol questions focused on how participants search for, receive, and share child welfare-related information and resources. Focus groups also explored participants' use of social media and mobile devices (e.g., smartphones and tablets) to access, search for, and share child-welfare related information and resources. Separate focus groups were held with members of each of the four audiences, to ensure that the content and context of the discussion could be tailored to their specific situation.

Recruitment and Data Collection Activities

Data were collected through surveys, focus groups, and interviews with representatives from each of the respondent audiences. Recruitment and data collection activities conducted by the study team for each audience are described below.

Survey Data

Because of the different contexts of each of the four audiences, the study team developed individualized recruitment approaches for each audience. The recruitment processes used by the study team and the associated data collection activities are detailed below. In addition to activities described in this section, the study team also used the Children's Bureau's Facebook page to share information about the study and encourage survey completion across all audiences.³ Exhibit 1 provides the total number of respondents to the online survey by audience.

	Child welfare professionals in State, county, and private agencies	Child welfare professionals working with Tribes	Legal professionals working in child welfare	Undergraduate and graduate students in child welfare
Number of survey respondents	3, 191	122	371	450

* Respondent totals include both completed and partial survey responses.

Recruitment of State Professionals

The study targeted child welfare professionals working in both public and private settings including frontline workers, managers, supervisors, and directors. To support data collection from a broadly representative and geographically diverse sample and ensure greater external validity of study findings, the study team identified and recruited an intentional sample of State and county agencies in States of varying population sizes and representing diverse geographic regions. In order to reach professionals from diverse settings that are as representative as possible of the national child welfare workforce, the study team used a maximum variation sampling approach. Through this purposive sampling method, an initial list of six States was compiled to be heterogeneous across the following factors: ACF region, State population size, administration type, privatization, urbanicity, child entry rates, and rate of permanency within 12 months for children who enter care. Two of the six States identified as part of this initial

³ Because the purpose of the survey was to learn about how professionals get information about child welfare, the study team purposefully did not promote the survey through Child Welfare Information Gateway in an effort to collect a nonbiased, representative sample.

sample were unable to participate in the study. As a result, two alternate States meeting similar sampling criteria were identified. Exhibit 2 illustrates the key characteristics of the final sample of six States that were selected to participate in the study.

Exhibit 2: Characteristics of the Final Sample of States Included in the Study						
State	Population size	Administration	Privatization ⁴ (yes/no)	Urbanicity tier*	Entry rate tier**	Permanency rate tier***
State A	Large	County	No	3	1	1
State B	Small	State	Yes	2	3	2
State C	Large	State	No	3	1	2
State D	Medium	State	Yes	2	2	2
State E	Small	State	Yes	1	3	3
State F	Large	County	No	2	1	1

* Three tiers were identified for this factor, with tier 1 representing the least urban areas and tier 3 representing the most urban areas.

** Three tiers were identified for this factor, with tier 1 representing those States with the lowest child entry rates and tier 3 representing those States with the highest child entry rates.

*** Three tiers were identified for this factor, with tier 1 representing those States with the lowest permanency rates and tier 3 representing those States with the highest permanency rates.

Following the identification of the State sample, the study team's approach to recruitment was informed by multiple discussions with the OSG. The team discussed the study with each of the applicable Children's Bureau Regional Offices, and then recruitment began with an official invitation to the six State agency directors from the Children's Bureau. An introductory meeting via telephone was conducted with each agency director and the study team to discuss the study and answer any questions. Each agency director was encouraged to invite any relevant agency staff or, in county-administered States, local agency directors. Materials to support recruitment included a study overview document and list of proposed study activities. In many instances, recruitment involved multiple meetings to answer questions and discuss logistics, particularly with county-administered States. Necessary requirements for local institutional review board approval were discussed with each agency director.

Upon agency agreement to participate, the study team worked with the agency to identify a logistics point of contact and ensure all necessary approvals (e.g., institutional review board, legal, etc.) were in place. All communication materials were provided to the logistics point of contact and individual communication strategies were defined for each agency. The State agencies then distributed survey invitations to their staff via email, each of which included a survey link and was distributed according to each agency agreement. Invitations for professionals working with private agencies were distributed through the State or local agency or through the private provider, depending on the communication strategy identified in partnership with the State or local agency and provider. Each agency director and

⁴ For the purposes of this study, "privatized" States contain child welfare systems in which one or more of the core mandated functions (e.g., CPS, Foster Care Case Management) formerly provided by the public agency has shifted to the private sector, while still monitored by the public agency. This includes States that have privatized core functions across their State or only in some of their localities or regions.

their designated logistics point of contact were asked to support and advocate for survey completion in order to reach sufficient response rates.⁵

Recruitment of Child Welfare Professionals Working With Tribes and Legal Professionals

Recruitment of child welfare professionals working with Tribes and legal professionals also was informed by multiple conversations with the respective OSGs for each audience. Organizational partners, including those participating in the OSGs, disseminated tailored information about the study, including the invitation link to the online survey, through email distribution lists, listservs, and social media. Study invitations were included in membership newsletters, and fliers were distributed at conferences and other events. To help encourage and increase responses to the survey by legal professionals, a brief informational video was developed and distributed by organizational partners. Additionally, an informational call was held with Children's Bureau Regional Office staff working directly with Tribes to provide an overview of the study and encourage staff to share information about the study, including the survey invitation link, with their contacts working for Tribal agencies or Tribal governments.

Recruitment of Students

To recruit graduate and undergraduate students of social work planning to enter the field of child welfare, the study team compiled a list of program contacts for title IV-E stipend programs that provides professional education and monetary support to undergraduate and graduate social work students who intend to pursue or continue a career in the field of public child welfare. This list was supplemented by personal and professional contacts at university programs compiled by Child Welfare Information Gateway and the study team.

Strategies to Support Recruitment of Child Welfare Professionals

The study team encountered several challenges in reaching and recruiting busy child welfare and legal professionals to participate in the survey and focus groups. The study team identified the following strategies to overcome these challenges and support future research efforts:

- Emphasize the potential impact of the study findings to inform and support practice.
- Clearly articulate how participants' data and findings from the study will be used.
- Identify champions for the study, including local agency directors, community and organization leaders, and Federal staff, to advocate for survey completion.
- Conduct an informational call, meeting, or webinar at the start of data collection to provide greater context for the study and clearly outline study activities.
- Meet with potential respondents face-to-face during in-person events to encourage participation, if possible.
- Tailor messages to each audience by using language and images that will resonate and make participation meaningful.
- Send multiple reminders using multiple methods of communication (e.g., email, text, online message boards, and social media).

⁵ While the recruitment effort for child welfare professionals focused on six specific States, smaller numbers of professionals in other States also completed the survey and are included in the analysis. These professionals may have been forwarded the survey invitations from colleagues in the six focus States, or they may have been on email lists that were used for recruitment of the other three audiences.

The study team invited these program stakeholders and university contacts to participate in an informational webinar that provided an overview of the study, including the background, purpose, objectives, and activities to gain buy-in and support in advance of recruitment. Following the webinar, university program stakeholders and contacts were asked to sign up as university partners to distribute information about the study, including the survey invitation link, to students in their programs via email and other communication methods (e.g., text, social media, or through online learning management systems). Multiple customized reminders were sent to these university partners to encourage student completion of the survey.

Focus Groups and Interviews

At the conclusion of survey data collection, respondents were asked to indicate whether they were interested in participating in a follow-up telephone focus group. After surveys were closed, respondents who indicated their willingness to participate were contacted by the study team for inclusion in focus groups and interviews.

Due to the limited number of child welfare professionals working with Tribes who responded to the survey, the study team used supplementary techniques to recruit focus group and interview participants from this audience. The study team engaged members of the OSG to support recruitment, including the Child Welfare Capacity Building Center for Tribes, Tribal partner representatives, the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA), and the National Congress of American Indians. Children's Bureau Regional Office staff also supported the recruitment of child welfare professionals working in Tribal agencies and Tribal governments by reaching out directly to their contacts working in these contexts and encouraging their participation in focus groups.

Focus groups ranged in size from 2 to 12 participants and were completed over the course of 1 month. Due to scheduling constraints, some individuals participated in individual interviews instead of in a focus group. A total of 82 individuals participated in focus groups and interviews. Exhibit 3 provides the number of focus group and interview participants by audience. Each of the focus groups and interviews was recorded and transcribed.

	Child welfare professionals in State, county, and private agencies	Child welfare professionals working with Tribes	Legal professionals working in child welfare	Undergraduate and graduate students in child welfare
Number of focus group / interview participants	36	17	19	11

Participants in the focus group for child welfare professionals in State, county, or private agencies represented 10 different States. Over half (55 percent) were affiliated with State agencies, and 44 percent were frontline workers. Professionals who work with Tribes included judges, directors of Tribal child welfare, and Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) coordinators and specialists; most worked for Tribal governments or courts. About half (52 percent) of legal professionals who participated in focus groups were attorneys for parents, children, and families; others were judges and attorneys for child welfare

agencies. Student focus group participants were affiliated with 10 different universities; over three-quarters of participants were M.S.W. students, while the remainder were in B.S.W. programs.

Data Analysis

Survey data collection resulted in four separate datasets. Preliminary coding and cleaning took place with each dataset (e.g., recoding of variables) prior to data analysis. The techniques used to analyze survey data were descriptive in nature; some were conducted on individual datasets, while others were conducted on combined data from different audiences. As a first step, the study team reviewed response frequencies from all survey items. In some cases, response categories were collapsed for analysis (e.g., combining respondents that answered “agree” and “strongly agree”) when the study team felt that doing so did not sacrifice meaningful distinctions and made the results easier to interpret and describe. In addition to response frequencies, the study team ran cross-tabulations to compare subgroups of respondents by their role, age, urbanicity (i.e., urban versus suburban versus rural), and whether or not they work primarily with Tribes. These four variables were selected because the study team felt they were key characteristics that (a) might affect information habits and preferences and (b) would be most relevant for organizations that support these audiences. While cross-tabulations were run on all survey items, results are not provided for all survey items, but only in cases where the comparison yielded information that the study team deemed particularly relevant and useful.

The goal of cross-tabulations was not to identify statistically “true” differences between subsets of respondents, but to provide a more detailed picture of different audiences’ information habits and preferences so that readers could identify patterns that would be specifically relevant in their own work. For this reason, the study team did not conduct significance testing as part of its analysis.

While child welfare professionals who work primarily with Tribes were treated as a separate audience during the recruitment and data collection phases of the study, for the purposes of analysis they were integrated into the larger child welfare professionals dataset. This decision was made because the smaller number of survey respondents working with Tribes limited the extent to which independent analyses could be conducted and because integrating the datasets in this way facilitated comparisons between professionals who primarily work with Tribes and those that do not. Responses from the specific set of professionals who work with Tribes are described in the discussion provided in chapter 5 and are also detailed in appendix C1.

Content analyses of qualitative data were conducted to summarize findings from the telephone focus groups and interviews. First, a coding guide was developed for coding notes from the focus groups and interviews. The coding guide was aligned with the research constructs and provided a framework for analysts to organize the data and identify common themes. Data on focus group and interview participants’ roles and years of experience were also included. Two analysts coded notes from the focus groups and interviews using the coding guide. The lead analyst conducted a training on how to use the coding guide to analyze the data. Regular meetings were held during the coding process to make sure coders were operating under the same assumptions. Select sets of notes completed by one analyst were reviewed by the other analyst to ensure that there was reliability across coders. Once coding was completed, the analysts reviewed the data by code to extract common themes by respondent audience. Conclusions and interpretations were derived directly from the data obtained and are presented in the subsequent chapters along with survey findings.

1.6 Potential Limitations of the Study

The findings from the National Child Welfare Information Study provide useful insights into the information habits and preferences of child welfare professionals, legal professionals, and B.S.W. and M.S.W. students. At the same time, however, it is important to note a few potential limitations of the study.

As described earlier in this chapter, the study team used a variety of recruitment techniques in order to maximize participation in the survey. These techniques were determined to be the best ways to reach potential participants, based on feedback received from the stakeholder groups that were consulted. However, the strategies that were used make it impossible to calculate accurate response rates for the survey. In some cases, the methods through which survey invitations were distributed were decentralized, and therefore it would be very difficult for the study team to determine exactly who received an invitation. For example, university contacts were asked to distribute information about the survey in whatever ways they felt would be most effective in their programs, and many used approaches (e.g., putting information about the study on learning management systems) that make it impossible to calculate the number of qualified potential respondents who saw the information.

Even when more centralized and structured methods were used, such as when survey invitations were sent by State child welfare agencies through staff distribution lists, it was often impossible to calculate the number of potential respondents. Most States, for example, could not provide an estimate of how many staff members on their distribution lists met qualification criteria for the survey—which makes the calculation of a meaningful response rate impossible.⁶ While the lack of accurate response rates is not ideal, the study team believed—and still believes—that the recruitment strategies were the most appropriate given the audiences we were trying to reach.

As with all research studies, one important factor to consider is the potential for coverage bias—that is, the possibility that certain segments of the audience may have been underrepresented or overrepresented in the set of potential respondents that received survey invitations. We believe that the potential for coverage bias is very small among child welfare professionals who work for State, county, and private agencies since, in these cases, recruitment was conducted through State and county agencies that distributed study information to their workforces. For other audiences, this sort of uniformity was not possible, and therefore the study team conducted recruitment through intermediaries—primarily, professional organizations in the case of legal professionals and child welfare professionals who work with Tribes, and university liaisons in the case of students. It is difficult to assess the potential for coverage bias in these audiences due to the variety of recruitment strategies that were used (including email distribution lists, social media notifications, and outreach through professional networks), and we believe that this multimethod approach to recruitment limited potential coverage bias issues. In the report, however, we have flagged a few instances in which we believe coverage bias could have affected the results.⁷

⁶ For example, support staff in child welfare agencies, such as administrative or facilities staff, may have received survey invitations but were not part of the target audience. These respondents were filtered out through questions at the beginning of the instrument.

⁷ For example, legal professionals and professionals who work with Tribes were both much more likely to say that they subscribe to listservs than the general child welfare professional population. However, this could be explained in part because some of these respondents actually received information about the study through listservs of professional organizations.

As described earlier, one of the primary audiences of interest for this study was B.S.W. and M.S.W. students who are likely to enter the child welfare field. To reach this audience, the study team recruited through university contacts and told them to distribute information about the study specifically to students in their programs that were likely to enter child welfare. We gave the university contacts flexibility to use a variety of methods to identify this subset of students, including enrollment in specific child welfare-related classes, membership in organizations, or based on specific majors or concentrations. The study team believes that the instructions we provided were clear, and that university contacts did an effective job of targeting survey invitations in this way. However, respondents to the student survey were not asked to confirm that they specifically intended to enter the field of child welfare after completing their education. As a result, it is possible that a small percentage of the B.S.W. and M.S.W. students that took the survey may not have a specific interest in child welfare, but instead may be intending to enter a different social work field.

1.7 Accessing the Public Dataset

Survey data are expected to be available for secondary analysis later in 2020, through the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) data archiving repository. These data will be freely available to analysts, along with a codebook and accompanying User's Guide that will provide study level metadata as well as notes on unique attributes of the dataset. Survey instruments used will be available on the "Measures Index" page of the NDACAN website and linked to the dataset. The data file will be readable in SAS, SPSS, or Stata.

Once the dataset is available for use, it will be announced via the Child-Maltreatment-Research-Listserv (CMRL), and it will be added to NDACAN's Datasets listings. Those interested in accessing the data will be able to view the dataset's identifying characteristics on NDACAN's Datasets page. Interested analysts can then complete the 'Order Dataset' steps to request access, including providing contact information and submitting a Term of Use Agreement.

1.8 Structure of This Report

The rest of this report is divided into four chapters. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 provide a detailed description of research findings from three different audiences, respectively: child welfare professionals (including those who work with Tribes), legal professionals, and students. Each of these chapters provides a summary of descriptive findings for each topic covered in the study, including both quantitative survey results and qualitative themes that arose from focus groups and interviews. These chapters also include some results of cross-tabulations comparing respondents' responses by role, age, urbanicity, and whether or not they work primarily with Tribes. These cross-tabulations are not provided for all survey items, but only in cases where the comparison yielded information that the study team deemed particularly relevant and useful. When cross-tabulations are not provided for a particular item, readers should assume it is because any differences between subpopulations were small.

While the focus of chapters 2, 3, and 4 is on detailed results from individual audiences, chapter 5 provides a broader discussion of themes across all audiences and an overview of patterns that emerged. It also includes a more comprehensive comparison of some subpopulations of child welfare professionals, including a comparison of habits and preferences by role and a comparison of professionals that work specifically with Tribes and those that work with other populations.

2. Information Habits and Preferences of Child Welfare Professionals

Key Findings

- Over half of survey respondents always or almost always have reliable access to the internet during a typical workday, and 90 percent have reliable access at least most of the time. Only 1 percent rarely or never have reliable access to the internet. (Section 2.3)
- Two-thirds of respondents agree that they have enough access to information about child welfare to do their work effectively, compared to 14 percent who feel that they do not have enough access to information. (Section 2.3)
- Over 90 percent of respondents receive information that they have not specifically searched for; 13 percent of respondents receive this type of information daily. Respondents most often receive this information through emails from colleagues or other professional contacts; trainings, conferences, or workshops; or through email listservs or electronic newsletters. (Section 2.5)
- Respondents prefer to receive child welfare information through PowerPoint presentations, videos, or briefing documents and executive summaries. (Section 2.5)
- Respondents most often share child welfare information with colleagues through face-to-face conversations, emails, and meetings at their organizations or agencies. (Section 2.6)
- Approximately three-quarters of participants said that they prefer in-person trainings over those that take place virtually. Respondents most often hear about trainings through emails from colleagues or other professional contacts. (Section 2.7)
- Almost all respondents (98 percent) have a smartphone or tablet, and about a third use this device to search for, access, or share child welfare information at least several times a week. Activities for which respondents most often use their mobile devices include checking work emails and calendars, communicating case-related information to colleagues, and communicating with clients. Over 40 percent of respondents cited a lack of mobile applications, workplace rules about using mobile devices, and limited access to Wi-Fi at their workplaces as reasons they do not use their mobile devices more frequently for child welfare-related purposes. (Section 2.8)
- Just over half of respondents (57 percent) have used social media to search for, access, or share child welfare information; 11 percent do so at least several times a week. Respondents use Facebook much more frequently than other platforms for this purpose. (Section 2.9)

2.1 Description of Respondents

A total of 3,313 child welfare professionals who work in State, county, or private agencies, or with Tribes, responded to the National Child Welfare Information Study survey. More than half of the survey respondents (53 percent) identified as frontline workers or direct service providers, while fewer respondents identified as managers or supervisors (28 percent), administrators or directors (7 percent), or “other” (12 percent). “Other” roles included consultants, permanency specialists, trainers, and quality

assurance reviewers. Appendices C2, C3, and C4 provide summary profiles by the three primary role types.

Respondents hailed from 41 States, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico. However, the large majority (94 percent) were from six States that were targeted for recruitment: four States with State-administered child welfare systems and two States with county-administered systems. Roughly one-third of respondents work in urban communities (36 percent) as well as rural areas (30 percent), while one-quarter serve suburban communities (26 percent). Respondents that work with Tribes⁸ were from 12 different regions, with the highest percentages serving communities in the Midwest region (18 percent), the Eastern region (14 percent), and the Southwest region (13 percent).

Most respondents were female (84 percent). Overall, respondents ranged in age, with 43 percent between the ages of 21 and 40, 30 percent between the ages of 41 and 50, and 24 percent above the age of 51.⁹

To put child welfare professionals' information habits and preferences in context, respondents were asked to estimate how much time they spend away from their desks during a typical workday. About one-third of respondents (36 percent) reported spending more than half of their typical workday away from their desk. Another 36 percent reported spending about half of the day away from their desk. More than one-quarter (29 percent) indicated they spend less than half of the day away from their desk (exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4: Characteristics of Respondents to the Survey of Child Welfare Professionals

Role (n=3,307)	
Frontline worker/direct services provider	1,761 (53%)
Manager/supervisor	940 (28%)
Administrator/director	221 (7%)
Other	385 (12%)
Bureau of Indian Affairs Region (n=120)	
Midwest	21 (18%)
Eastern	17 (14%)

⁸ In discussions of findings, “respondents that work with Tribes” refers to the group of respondents who indicated in the survey that they “work primarily with Tribes.” This group includes respondents who work for Tribal government agencies, child welfare agencies, or court systems, as well as a few that work for non-profits that serve Tribes.

⁹ Participants had five different age categories to choose from when answering the survey item about age: 21 to 30, 31 to 40, 41 to 50, 51 to 60, and 61 and older. The smallest categories (21 to 30 and 61 and older) were combined with other groups for the purposes of analysis, in order to make the size of analytic groups more consistent.

Southwest	15 (13%)
Eastern Oklahoma	12 (10%)
Alaska	11 (9%)
Great Plains	9 (8%)
Western	7 (6%)
Northwest	6 (5%)
Southern Plains	6 (5%)
Rocky Mountain	5 (4%)
Pacific	3 (3%)
Navajo	1 (1%)
Other	7 (6%)
Urbanicity (n=3,296)	
Urban	1,172 (36%)
Suburban	847 (26%)
Rural/frontier	984 (30%)
Don't know or n/a	293 (9%)
Age (n=2,739)	
21–30	406 (15%)
31–40	773 (28%)
41–50	817 (30%)
51–60	488 (18%)
61 or older	175 (6%)
Prefer not to answer	80 (3%)
Gender (n=2,737)	
Male	353 (13%)
Female	2,290 (84%)
Neither male nor female	10 (<1%)
Prefer not to answer	84 (3%)

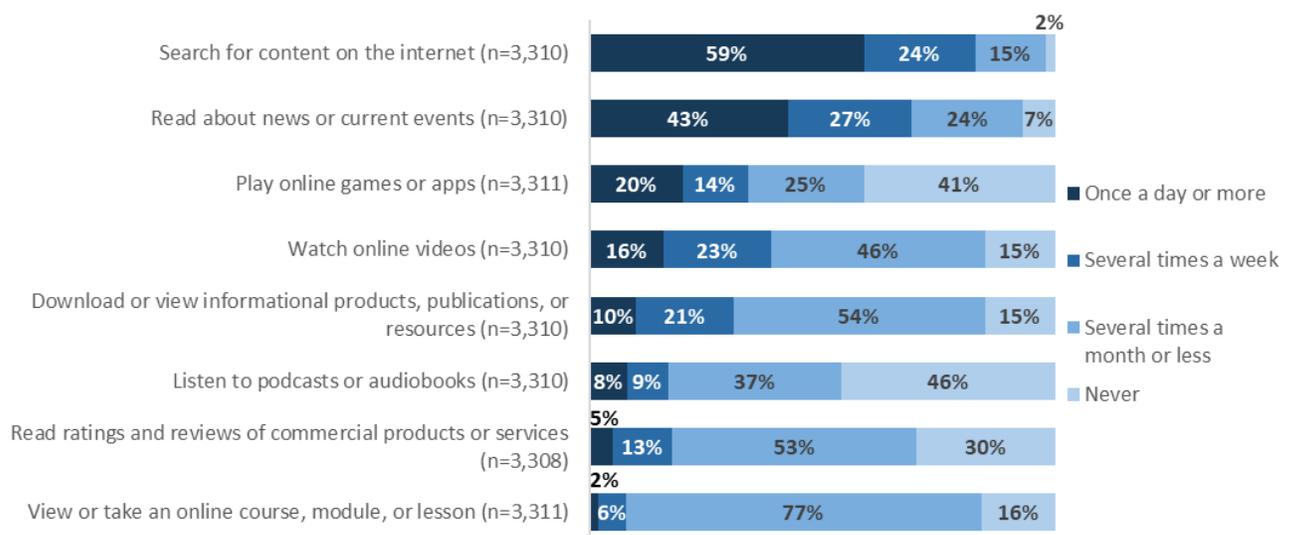
Ethnicity (n=2,719)	
Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin	316 (12%)
Non-Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin	2,234 (82%)
Prefer not to answer	169 (6%)
Race (n=2,749)	
(Note: Respondents could select all that applied.)	
American Indian/Alaska Native	98 (4%)
Asian	38 (1%)
Black or African American	484 (18%)
Pacific Islander	6 (<1%)
White	1,817 (66%)
Other	91 (3%)
Prefer not to answer	269 (10%)
How likely is it that in 5 years you will still be working in child welfare? (n=2,730)	
Very likely	1,793 (66%)
Somewhat likely	688 (25%)
Not likely	249 (9%)
During your typical workday, how much time do you spend away from your desk? (n=3,302)	
All or almost all of the time	194 (6%)
More than half the time	974 (30%)
About half the time	1,193 (36%)
Less than half the time	677 (21%)
None or almost none of the time	264 (8%)
Years of experience in child welfare (n=2,730)	
Less than 1 year to 5 years of service	734 (27%)
6 to 15 years of service	1,007 (37%)
16+ years of service	989 (36%)

2.2 General Information Habits and Preferences

Prior to asking survey respondents to reflect on how they access and share information specifically related to child welfare, respondents were asked about the ways in which they access information in their daily professional and personal lives in general. Respondents reported most frequently searching for content on the internet (83 percent said they do so at least several times a week), reading about news or current events (70 percent), and watching videos online (39 percent).

Most respondents reported performing all the activities listed in the survey item at least occasionally, although at least 40 percent said that they never listen to podcasts or audiobooks (46 percent) or play online games or apps (41 percent) (exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5: How often do you do each of the following for personal or professional purposes?¹⁰



During focus group discussions, a few child welfare professionals also mentioned searching for information on university databases. Although some of these individuals may also be students, others get access to these databases through the State agencies for which they work. One participant, for example, explained that their State has an existing partnership with the State's public universities so that agency workers can access databases from postsecondary institutions.

2.3 Access to Information About Child Welfare

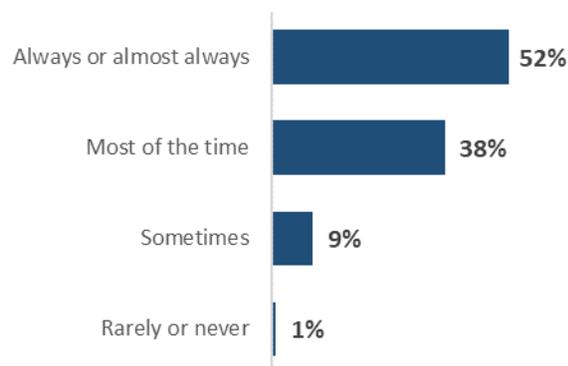
Reliability of Internet Access During the Workday

More than half of survey respondents (52 percent) said that they always or almost always have reliable access to the internet during a typical workday (exhibit 6), while another 38 percent said they have reliable access most of the time. About 9 percent of all respondents said they have reliable access to the

¹⁰ Due to rounding of percentages, some rows in this exhibit and other exhibits do not exactly equal 100 percent.

internet only sometimes, while very few (1 percent) said they rarely or never have reliable access to the internet. These findings were supported in focus group discussions in which participants generally agreed that they had consistent access to the internet. Child welfare professionals working with agencies as well as those working with Tribes reported similar results, with nearly all participants claiming to have internet access at all times. Two examples were noted by focus group participants as situations where reliable internet access may be an issue: when traveling in rural areas and during rare instances when an agency or organization's systems go down.

Exhibit 6: During your typical workday, how much of the time do you have reliable access to the internet? (n=3,308)

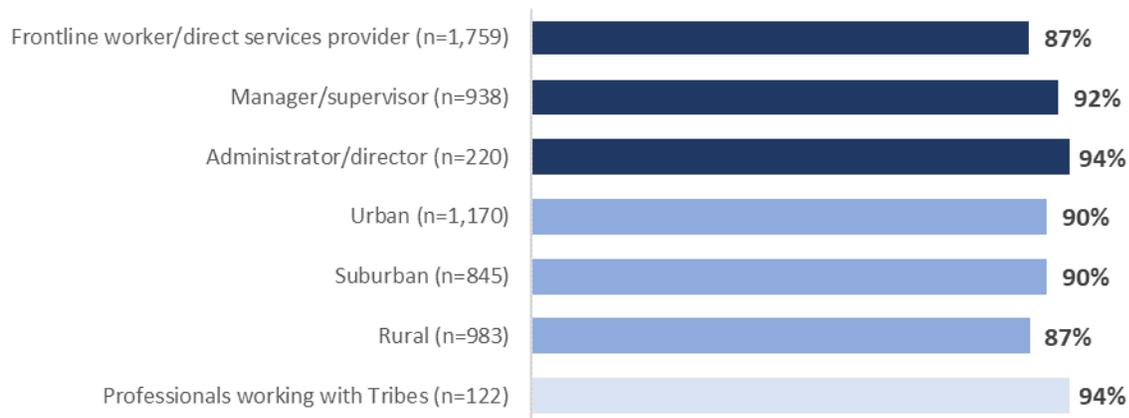


Respondents' access to the internet was consistent among different role types. Almost all managers and supervisors (92 percent) and administrators and directors (94 percent) have reliable internet access at least most of the time. Frontline workers and direct service providers (87 percent) had slightly less reliable access to the internet, although the differences between these groups are small (exhibit 7).

Urban respondents (56 percent) were more likely than suburban (52 percent) or rural (44 percent) respondents to report that they almost always have reliable access to the internet. However, a large majority of respondents across all three groups indicated that they have access to the internet at least most of the time (90 percent of urban, 90 percent of suburban, and 87 percent of rural participants).

Respondents working with Tribes reported greater internet access than the overall average, with 62 percent indicating that they always or almost always have reliable access to the internet during a typical workday and 32 percent saying they have access most of the time. The remaining 6 percent said they have access to the internet only sometimes.

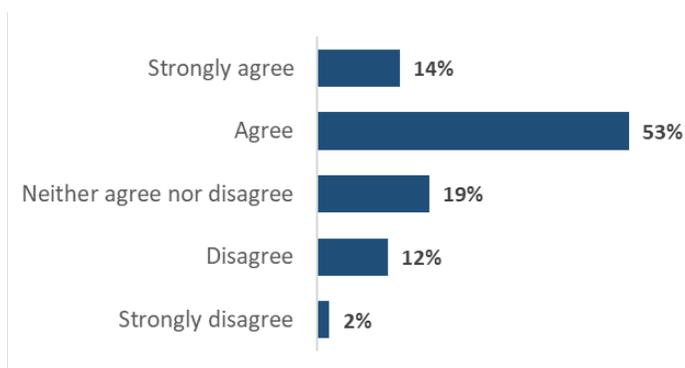
Exhibit 7: Percentage of Respondents Who Have Reliable Access to the Internet at Least Most of the Time (by Role)



Perceptions About Adequate Access to Child Welfare-Related Information

Two-thirds of respondents (67 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that they have enough access to information about child welfare to do their work effectively (exhibit 8). Nineteen percent of respondents did not agree or disagree with this statement, while 14 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Exhibit 8: Do you agree or disagree that you have enough access to information about child welfare to do your work effectively? (n=3,062)



Responses to this question did not differ substantially by age, urbanicity, or role. Professionals working with Tribes were slightly less likely than other child welfare professionals to agree that they have enough access to information about child welfare to do their work effectively; 61 percent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while 18 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Gaps in Information Access

When respondents were asked what types of information, if any, they would like more access to, 1,400 provided responses, including 66 respondents who work with Tribes. Most respondents were frontline workers, followed by supervisors and managers. Because a relatively small number of responses were

from directors and administrators, it is difficult to determine whether there are information-seeking trends specific to this group.

More than 150 child welfare professionals indicated a desire for more information about community or local services for children and families. A large majority of these respondents were frontline workers, followed by managers and supervisors. Directors and administrators rarely indicated a desire for service-related information. Respondents listed a variety of specific services they would like more information about, including services for migrants and services related to addiction, adoption, and trauma.

More than 130 respondents expressed a desire for information related to child welfare laws and policies. For example, some would like to know when State laws change and in what ways. Others would simply like it to be easier to search for State policies, while others wanted more information about how States interpret or apply particular policies on a daily basis. As one respondent said, "I have plenty of access to tools and resources to run a child advocacy center, but for child welfare, there needs to be an easier way to stay current with changes in laws and informed as to changes at the State level, such as all-county letters." Frontline workers as well as supervisor and managers more commonly asked for this information as compared to directors and administrators.

In addition, more than 100 respondents indicated a need for more access to learning opportunities, such as in-person and online conferences, workshops, and trainings. Some respondents listed specific skills they hope to learn from the opportunities, such as how to interview children and families, while others suggested broader topics, such as how other States conduct and provide child welfare services.

Themes among answers to this question from professionals who work with Tribes were generally similar. For example, several reported that they would like more information on ICWA, with some specifically requesting up-to-date trainings or manuals on the topic.

[Barriers to Information Access](#)

When respondents were asked about the factors that prevent them from having adequate access to information related to child welfare, some key themes emerged from the 1,321 child welfare professionals who provided a response. Nearly 400 said that they do not have the time to search for and read through relevant information. "There is no time in the day...to do a lot of mindful preparation and engagement," one respondent said. "[The workday] is about meeting deadlines, getting forms signed, and field visits. It is not mindful engagement in the true sense of the word because caseloads are too high, and the work demands are too great."

Approximately 150 respondents mentioned struggling with access to resources and research in the workplace, largely because their organizations or agencies block several websites from being accessed at work or on work devices. Examples of blocked websites include social media, websites with information on resources for families, and research on child welfare-related topics such as teen suicide and drug use. Some individuals indicated they are blocked from accessing information on available services for clients. Several focus group participants said that they occasionally use their personal mobile phones to look up information, often due to this persistent problem on agency-issued devices.

More than 100 child welfare professionals also mentioned struggling with knowing where to go or how to search for the information they need and suggested having a "one-stop shop" with child welfare

resources in order to address this challenge. This same suggestion came up frequently in focus groups with child welfare professionals, in which several participants mentioned that a frequently updated clearinghouse of consolidated child welfare information would be very useful. One frontline worker provided an example from her State, which formed a multiagency collaborative that drew together local service providers and assigned staff from various agencies to maintain a database of child welfare resources and service information. The focus group participant said that, although the process was time consuming, it created a process and system that are well known and well maintained. A second participant called such a resource a “dream come true,” as it would prevent professionals from having to visit multiple websites and search multiple sources to find needed information. Participants did not mention specific sites that they have found to be unhelpful, although they indicated most often having challenges when trying to find information using common search engines such as Google (i.e., search results are not as relevant for their purposes).

Aside from one-stop shops, some child welfare professionals also hope to see a rise in collaborative communities in the future. According to focus group participants, this can include online resources such as discussion boards and team sites that allow staff the opportunity to ask and answer questions with people in similar roles at the county, regional, or State levels.

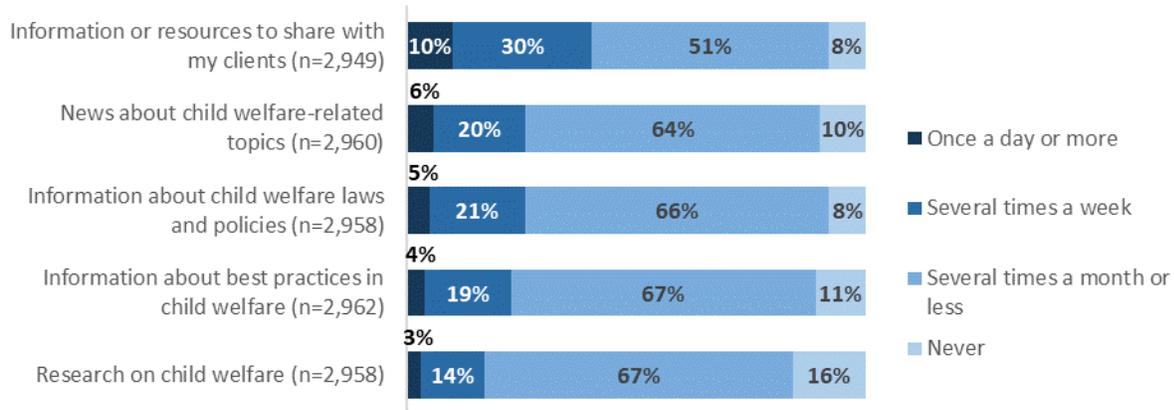
Slightly fewer than 100 child welfare professionals mentioned having trouble with unreliable or slow internet both at work and in the field. Responses from the 56 respondents that work with Tribes who answered this question were similar to those of other respondents.

2.4 Searching for Information About Child Welfare

Frequency of Searches for Information

When respondents were asked how often they search for different types of information about child welfare, 40 percent indicated they search for information or resources to share with clients at least several times a week (exhibit 9). Respondents reported searching for research on child welfare least often, with 17 percent searching for this information several times a week or more. About a quarter of respondents (26 percent) said that they search for information about child welfare laws and policies at least several times a week.

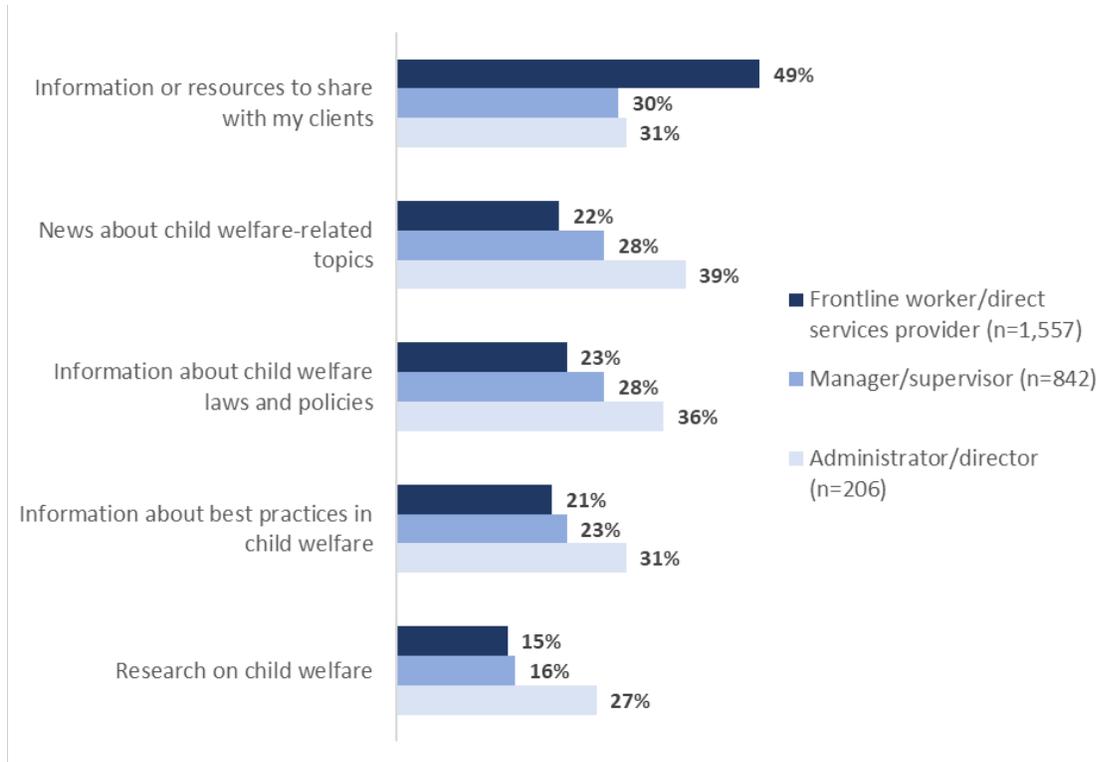
Exhibit 9: How often do you search for each of the following?



In general, focus group participants mentioned feeling overwhelmed by the amount of information generated during a search. Some said they find it difficult to sift through available information, while a few said they struggle to determine which resources are the most trustworthy. Focus group participants mentioned two specific laws about which they have searched for information—the Family First Prevention Services Act (mentioned by both professionals working with Tribes and those working with other populations) and ICWA (mentioned specifically by professionals working with Tribes). Some professionals who work with Tribes also noted in the focus groups that they find it difficult to get information about State laws and policies because different terms are often used to describe similar programs and interventions. These participants suggested that using universal terms across States would make it easier to get this information.

Responses to the question about different types of information for which child welfare professionals might search varied somewhat by respondents' roles (exhibit 10). Administrators and directors were more likely than other respondents to search for most types of information—for example, 27 percent said they search for research on child welfare at least several times a week, compared to 15 percent of frontline workers and 16 percent of managers and supervisors. However, frontline workers were much more likely than other groups to search for information or resources to share with their clients; almost half (49 percent) reported doing so at least several times a week.

Exhibit 10: Percentage of Respondents Who Search for Each Type of Information at Least Several Times a Week (by Role)

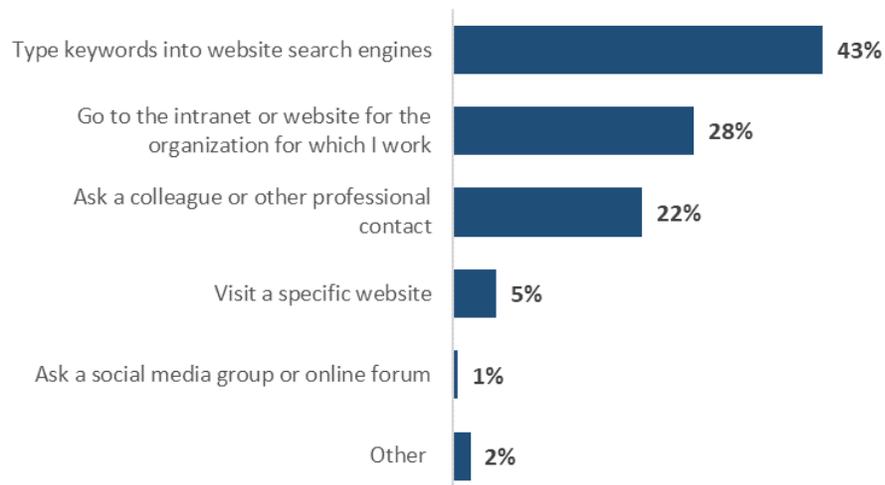


Information Search Strategies

When asked how they search for information, most respondents indicated that they search for information online. For example, 43 percent said that they typically search by typing keywords into a search engine, while 28 percent indicated that they go to their agency’s website or intranet page. About a quarter (22 percent) ask a colleague or other professional contact. A relatively small percentage of respondents (5 percent) said that they typically go to a specific website to search for information (exhibit 11).

Specific websites mentioned in the survey or in focus groups included State- or county-specific websites and the Child Welfare Information Gateway website. Professionals that work with Tribes also mentioned websites for NICWA, the Anne E. Casey Foundation, and the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative’s Center for Tribes.

Exhibit 11: When you need to search for information about child welfare, what do you do most often? (n=2,879)¹¹



Responses to this question varied by respondents’ roles. For example, 61 percent of administrators reported using a search engine to get information compared to 48 percent of managers and 36 percent of frontline workers. Frontline workers, on the other hand, were more likely to search for information by asking a colleague or other professional contact (30 percent) compared to their peers in management (14 percent) or administration (10 percent) peers. Interestingly, younger respondents were also more likely to ask a colleague or other professional contact; for example, 35 percent of frontline workers age 40 or younger said that this is how they typically searched for information, compared to only 18 percent of frontline workers who were 51 or older.

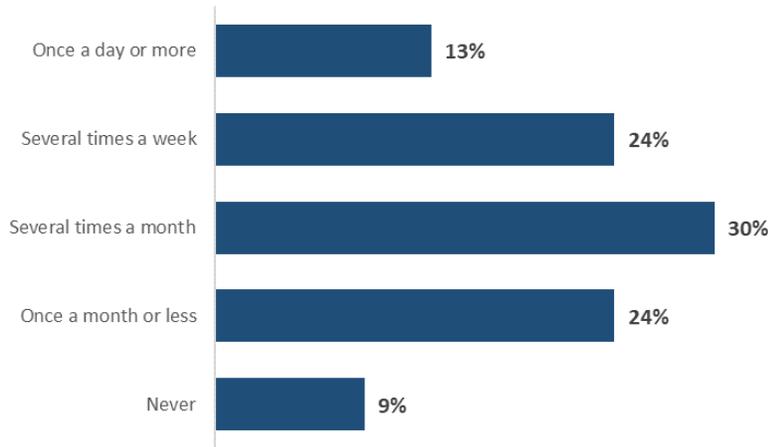
2.5 Receiving Information About Child Welfare

Frequency of Receiving Information

In addition to their searches for information, survey respondents were asked about instances in which they received information about child welfare for which they had not specifically searched (exhibit 12). Thirteen percent of respondents said that they received information they had not specifically searched for on a daily basis, while a quarter (24 percent) said that this happened several times a week. Conversely, 24 percent of respondents said that they received this information once a month or less, and 9 percent said that they never received child welfare information for which they had not searched.

¹¹ Respondents who indicated in a previous question that they never search for any information about child welfare were not asked this question and therefore are not included in the totals on which these percentages are based.

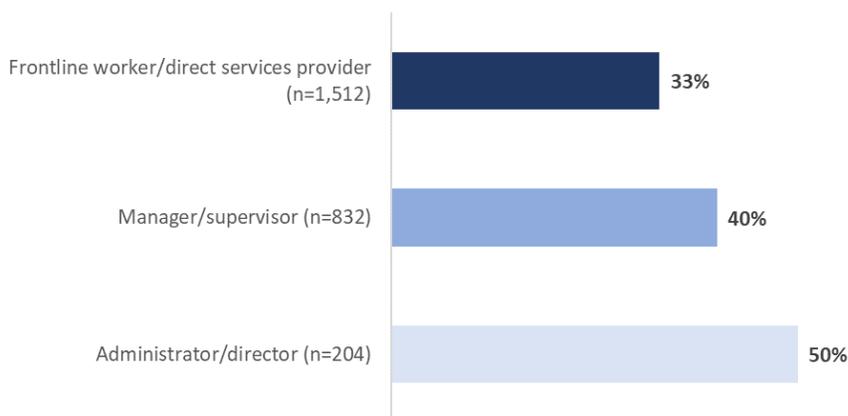
Exhibit 12: How often do you receive information about child welfare (electronically or in hardcopy) for which you have not specifically searched? (n=2,896)



Administrators and directors were more likely to say that they received information they had not searched for at least several times a week (50 percent) compared to managers and supervisors (40 percent) or frontline workers (33 percent) (exhibit 13).

Respondents who work with Tribes were also more likely to say that they receive information at least several times a week compared to their peers working with non-Tribal populations (49 versus 36 percent, respectively). This finding is likely, at least in part, because respondents working with Tribes were more likely to subscribe to electronic listservs (see the section “Use of Electronic Subscription Lists,” below).

Exhibit 13: Percentage of Respondents Who Receive Information About Child Welfare at Least Several Times a Week (by Role)



Although some participants appreciate having access to more information than in the past, others said they would prefer easier access to the specific information most relevant to their work. Finally, a few

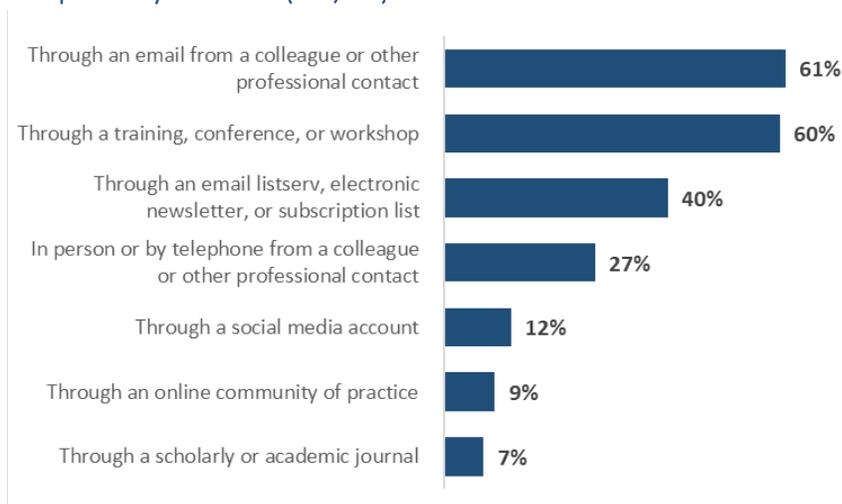
participants specifically mentioned not receiving enough up-to-date research or information on evidence-based practices.

Focus group participants indicated that when they receive child welfare information that they haven't specifically searched for, they typically skim the content and read it in depth only if it is likely to be relevant to their professional lives. However, several participants noted that, at times, they are too busy to do even that. At such times, they either ignore the information altogether or set it aside for a time when they are more available. A few focus group participants did describe instances when they read the information they received carefully. For example, one participant reported doing so with the ACEs Connection newsletter because she finds this particular newsletter very useful, while another reported reading the information carefully because she wants to be considered a credible caseworker by her peers. See the section "Use of Electronic Subscription Lists" for more information regarding what focus group participants believe will entice more professionals to read or subscribe to specific newsletters.

Perceived Importance of Channels for Receiving Child Welfare Information

When respondents were asked to report the most important ways they receive information about child welfare for which they do not specifically search, their three most frequent answers were through an email from a colleague or other professional contact (61 percent); through trainings, conferences, or workshops (60 percent); and through email listservs, electronic newsletters, and subscription lists (40 percent) (exhibit 14). Channels that respondents selected less frequently included social media accounts (12 percent), online communities of practice (9 percent), and scholarly or academic journals (7 percent).

Exhibit 14: What are the most important ways that you receive information about child welfare for which you have not specifically searched? (n=2,637)¹²



¹² Respondents were asked to select up to three responses for this question. Respondents who indicated in a previous question that they never receive any information about child welfare were not asked this question and therefore are not included in the totals on which these percentages are based.

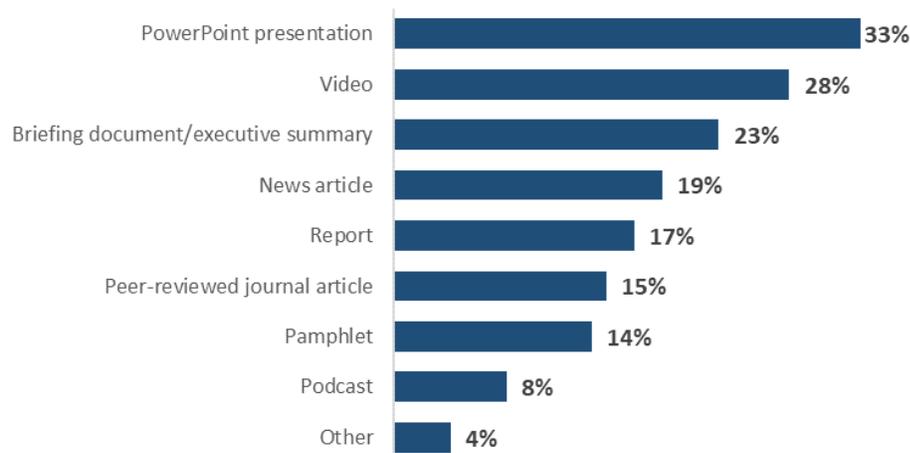
Although responses to this question from professionals working with Tribes and with other populations were generally similar, those working with Tribes were more likely to cite listservs (61 versus 39 percent) as an important channel through which they receive information. Child welfare professionals who do not work with Tribes were more likely to mention trainings, conferences, or workshops (60 percent versus 50 percent) as an important channel through which they receive information.

Some focus group participants noted that in addition to other channels, they receive regular newsletters from their own agencies or organizations. However, these participants said that while these newsletters provided a variety of content, they often did not provide information in which the participants were most interested. According to these same participants, the information they are most interested in is information that relates to their work at any given time. For example, if they are currently working with a family who has substance misuse issues, they would like to receive information about substance misuse so that they are better prepared to help the family in question.

Preferred Formats for Receiving Information

Respondents were asked in which formats they preferred to receive information about child welfare. The most frequent responses were PowerPoint presentation (33 percent), video (28 percent), and briefing document or executive summary (23 percent); the least frequent responses were pamphlets (14 percent) and podcasts (8 percent) (exhibit 15).

Exhibit 15: If you were going to receive information about a new, promising child welfare practice, in what format would you prefer to receive it? (n=2,908)



Responses to this question differed slightly by role. For example, frontline workers (28 percent) and managers and supervisors (27 percent) were more likely to prefer videos than directors and administrators (20 percent).

Frontline workers (18 percent) were also more likely to prefer pamphlets than managers and supervisors (10 percent) or directors and administrators (6 percent). Conversely, directors and

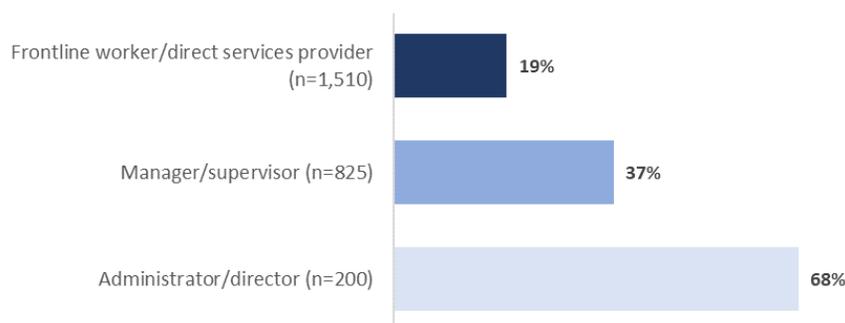
administrators (41 percent) were much more likely to prefer receiving information through briefing documents than were managers and supervisors (25 percent) or frontline workers (19 percent). In focus groups, frontline workers emphasized that they preferred formats that are easy to pass along to clients, such as pamphlets.

Responses to this question also varied by respondents' age. In some cases, patterns by age appear to be a residual effect of differences by role (i.e., because directors and administrators were typically older than frontline workers, patterns by role often appear in age analyses as well). In a few cases, however, the effect of age appeared to be independent of role. For example, in all three role categories, younger respondents were more likely than their older peers to prefer video and podcasts as ways of receiving information about child welfare. For instance, among frontline workers age 40 or younger, 31 percent preferred videos and 11 percent preferred podcasts, compared to 21 percent and 5 percent among frontline workers older than 50.

Use of Electronic Subscription Lists

About one-third (30 percent) of all respondents indicated that they receive child welfare information and resources through at least one email listserv, electronic newsletter, or other type of subscription list (exhibit 16). A pattern emerged based on role: over two-thirds (68 percent) of administrators and directors reported subscribing to listservs and newsletters, compared to about one-third (37 percent) of managers and supervisors and only 19 percent of frontline workers. Professionals working with Tribes were more likely than other child welfare professionals to subscribe to a listserv (56 versus 30 percent).¹³

Exhibit 16: Do you subscribe to any email listservs, electronic newsletters, or other types of subscription lists through which you receive child welfare information and resources on a regular basis? (By role)



Respondents who do receive information through these electronic channels were asked to think about the listserv or subscription that they found most valuable to their work and reflect on why it was a

¹³ This difference may be an artifact of how the two respondent groups were recruited—electronic listservs were used as a channel through which survey invitations were distributed to professionals who work with Tribes but were not used as a recruitment channel for other child welfare professionals.

useful resource. A total of 566 child welfare professionals answered this question in the survey. The most common responses, in order of frequency, were:

- The extent to which information is presented concisely. Concise content allows professionals to avoid spending extra time finding the information most relevant for their purposes.
- The extent to which news and research are up to date. Professionals generally expressed that they do not receive enough recent (i.e., conducted in the past few years) research or information.
- The extent to which content is relevant to the work they do on a day-to-day basis. Relevant content allows professionals to apply what they learn from information received to their work.

In focus groups, participants expressed the same desire for information that is relevant, concise, and up to date. Participants also had several specific recommendations for technical assistance providers that communicate through listservs, including:

- Putting information in a list format
- Including data and statistics
- Inserting hyperlinks
- Adding photos and infographics
- Writing article summaries
- Creating catchy titles

A few child welfare professionals also suggested that newsletters maintain consistent formatting so that readers know where to go to get the information they need, while one frontline worker suggested during a focus group that repeating information on a relatively frequent basis could be helpful, due to the high turnover rates among frontline workers. Some participants also suggested making sure newsletters were mobile friendly so that they can be read anytime and anywhere.

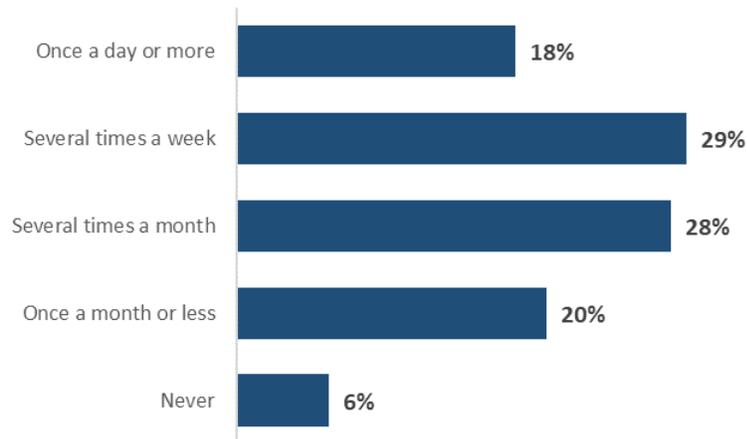
Focus group participants who work with Tribes specifically highlighted the importance of circulating success stories, and storytelling as an effective means of communication. One participant suggested that anecdotal storytelling may be more effective at reaching those who work with Tribes, compared to other communication methods about evidence-based practices that rely more heavily on data and statistics. According to this participant, “[storytelling] in the Native context is part of how we communicate...the storytelling piece will make a huge difference.”

2.6 Sharing Information About Child Welfare

Frequency of Sharing Child Welfare Information

Most respondents indicated that they share information about child welfare with colleagues either several times a week (29 percent) or several times a month (28 percent). Six percent of respondents reported never sharing child welfare information with colleagues or other professional contacts (exhibit 17).

Exhibit 17: How often do you share information about child welfare with colleagues or other professional contacts? (n=2,851)



Methods for Sharing Information

Respondents were asked to choose up to three methods of communication they use most often to share information about child welfare. The most popular response options were face-to-face conversations (70 percent), email (66 percent), and at organization or agency meetings (44 percent). The methods used least often by respondents to share information were social media (9 percent); electronic listservs, newsletters, or subscription lists (3 percent); and online communities of practice (2 percent) (exhibit 18).

Exhibit 18: When you share information about child welfare, how do you most often do so? (n=2,685)¹⁴



¹⁴ Respondents were asked to select up to three responses for this question. Respondents who indicated in a previous question that they never share any information about child welfare were not asked this question and therefore are not included in the totals on which these percentages are based.

Just as professionals working with Tribes were more likely to *receive* information through a training, conference, or workshop compared to their peers working in child welfare, they were also more likely to say that they *share* information at these same events compared to their peers (30 versus 19 percent).

Frontline workers were more likely than other groups to share information through face-to-face interactions (77 percent, versus 62 percent of managers and supervisors and 57 percent of directors and administrators). Conversely, higher level professionals were more likely to share information by email (83 percent of directors and administrators and 73 percent of managers and supervisors, versus 58 percent of frontline workers) and meetings at their agencies (54 percent of directors and administrators and 50 percent of managers and supervisors, versus 39 percent of frontline workers).

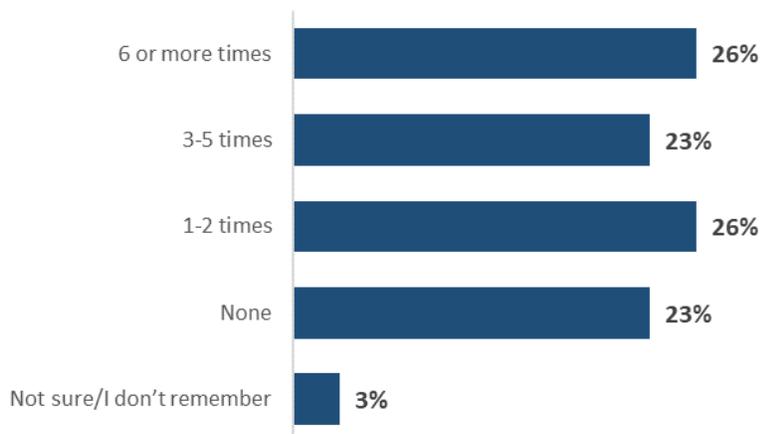
Two focus group participants noted that they believe staff are less likely to read emails with articles attached, so they print and distribute documents in hardcopy instead of sending them via email. Another professional agreed that she is more likely to read something that is printed because she feels as though someone has gone out of their way to get the information in her hands.

2.7 Training and Professional Development

Participation in Professional Development

When asked how often they had attended virtual or in-person trainings, conferences, or workshops provided by someone other than their employer, respondents were fairly evenly spread across all response categories, with about one-quarter in each category. Specifically, 26 percent reported attending training six or more times, 23 percent attended training three to five times, and 26 percent attended training once or twice in the last year. The remaining quarter (23 percent) said that they had not attended any trainings from someone other than their employer in the past year (exhibit 19).

Exhibit 19: In the past year, how many times have you attended virtual or in-person trainings, conference presentations, or workshops that were provided by someone other than your employer? (n=2,816)



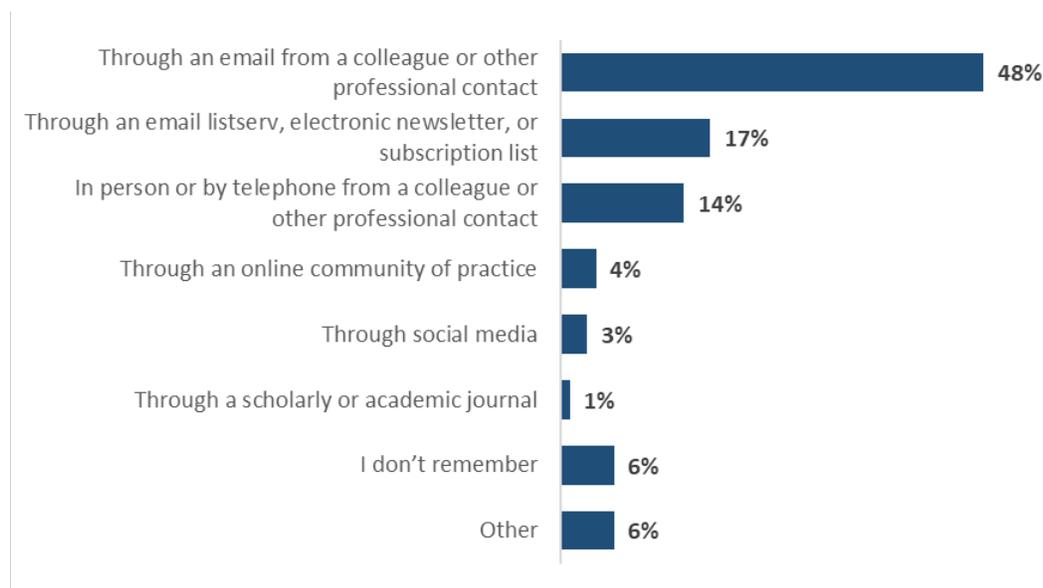
Frontline workers were least likely to attend trainings, conferences, and workshops in the last year; 27 percent said that they had not attended any of these events, compared to 20 percent of managers and 7 percent of administrators.

Given that professionals working with Tribes were more likely than other child welfare professionals to say that they share and receive information at trainings, conferences, and workshops, it is perhaps unsurprising that professionals working with Tribes were also more likely to attend these events. Ten percent said that they had not attended any trainings in the past year, compared to 23 percent of other child welfare professionals.

Communications About Professional Development

Among respondents who indicated attending trainings provided by someone other than their employer at least once in the past year, nearly half (48 percent) heard about such opportunities through an email from a colleague or other professional contact. Smaller percentages of respondents heard about these types of events through an email listserv, electronic newsletter, or subscription list (17 percent), or in person or by telephone from a colleague or professional contact (14 percent). Six percent of respondents described other ways that they found out about their most recent training, such as from their agency or through a university (exhibit 20).

Exhibit 20: Please think about the most recent training, conference, or workshop that you attended that was provided by someone other than your employer. How did you find out about this training, conference, or workshop? (n=2,147)¹⁵



¹⁵ Respondents who indicated in a previous question that they have not participated in any trainings in the past year were not asked this question and are therefore not included in this exhibit.

Preferred Formats for Professional Development

Approximately three-quarters of participants (71 percent) said that they prefer in-person trainings over online trainings. Seventeen percent indicated a preference for self-paced online trainings, while 12 percent prefer live online or telephone trainings such as a webinar or virtual conference (exhibit 21).

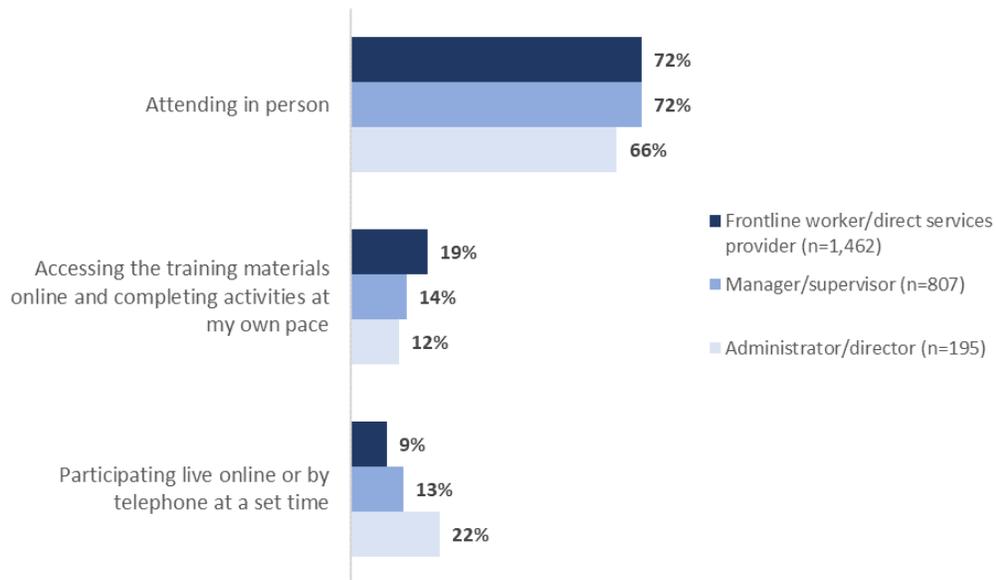
Exhibit 21: In general, in which type of training do you prefer to participate? (n=2,807)



Although the preference for in-person trainings is consistent across all subgroups, respondents serving rural populations were less likely to prefer in-person events (65 percent) than those serving suburban (75 percent) or urban populations (74 percent).

Respondents in all professional roles were most likely to prefer in-person trainings (ranging from 66 to 72 percent) (exhibit 22). With regard to self-paced online training and live online training, frontline workers were more likely to prefer self-paced online events (19 percent), while administrators and directors were more likely to prefer live online or telephone events (22 percent).

Exhibit 22: Percentage of Respondents Who Prefer Each Type of Training (by Role)

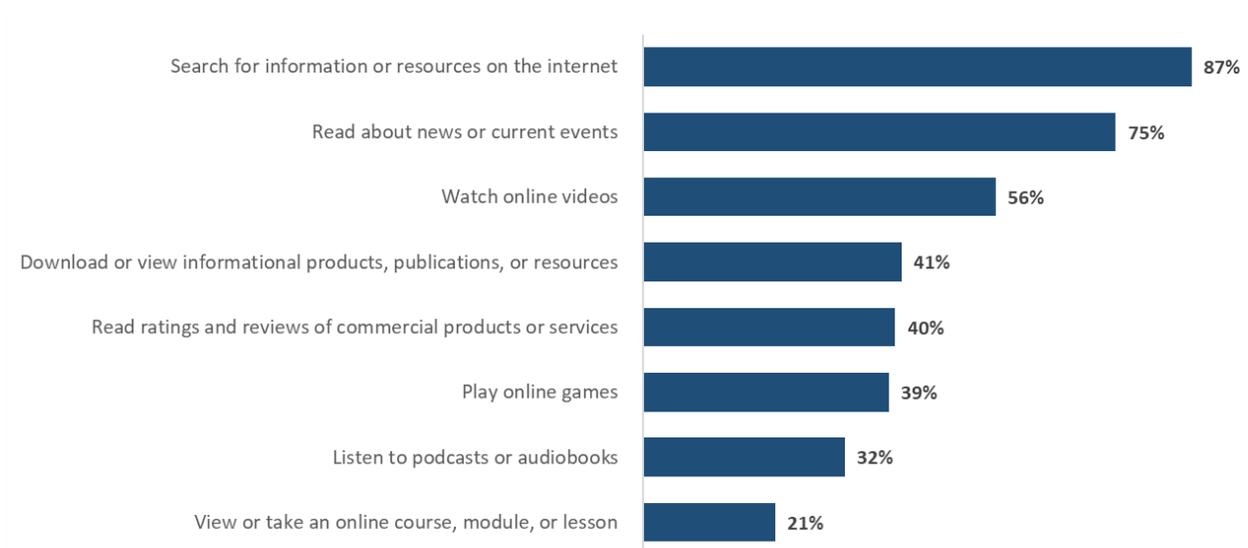


2.8 Use of Mobile Devices

General Information-Related Activities With Mobile Devices

Mobile devices were nearly ubiquitous among respondents; almost all (98 percent) indicated that they have a smartphone and/or tablet that they use for personal or professional use. When asked how they use their smartphone or tablet, professionals most often reported using these devices to search for information or resources on the internet (87 percent), read about news or current events (75 percent), or watch online videos (56 percent) (exhibit 23). Roughly 40 percent of respondents also reported using their phones to download or view informational products, publications, or resources (41 percent); read ratings and reviews of commercial products or services (40 percent); and play online games (39 percent). Smaller percentages of respondents reported using their smartphones or tablets to listen to podcasts or audiobooks (32 percent) or view or take online courses, modules, or lessons (21 percent).

Exhibit 23: Which of the following activities do you typically engage in using your smartphone and/or tablet?
(n=3,218)¹⁶

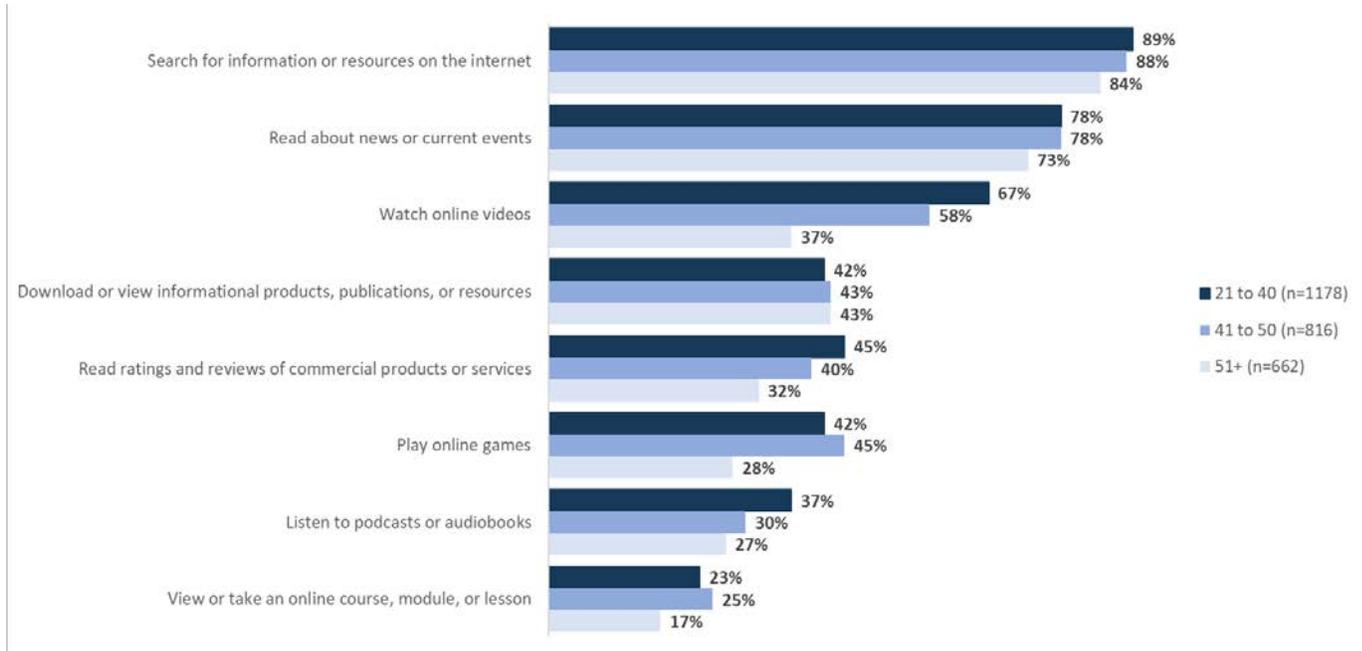


In focus groups, several frontline workers reported using mobile devices while in the field to look up or show resources to families. They also reported using smartphones to text with teenagers and young adults who, according to these workers, tend not to respond to phone calls or emails. Some other focus group participants noted that they had been given tablets and phones by their employers to facilitate their access to information and communication, and that most of their work is now done on these devices. The few focus group participants who did not use mobile devices at all work nearly all the time at desks.

When disaggregated by respondents' ages, the data show that younger professionals are more likely to watch videos, listen to podcasts, play online games, and read reviews than their counterparts in older age categories (exhibit 24). There are no activities that older professionals consistently or typically engage in more often than the younger generations on their smartphones or tablets.

¹⁶ Respondents could select all responses that applied for this item.

Exhibit 24: Use of Mobile Devices (by Age)

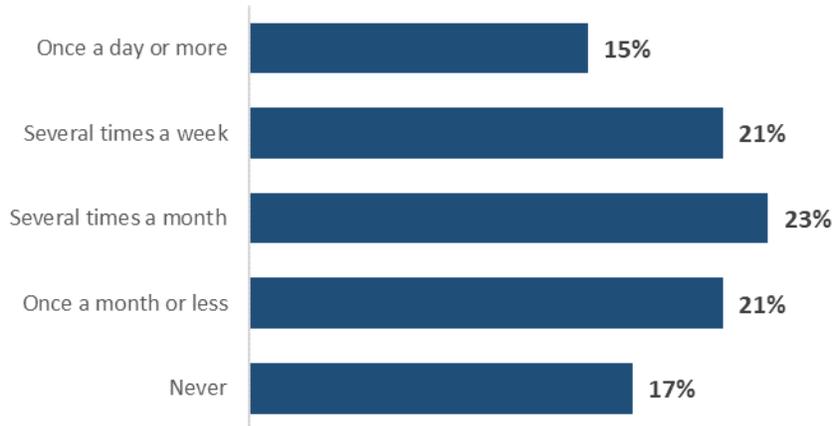


Use of Mobile Devices for Professional Purposes

More than one-third of respondents (36 percent) reported using their smartphone or tablet to search for, access, or share child welfare information at least several times a week during the past 3 months. Another quarter of respondents reported doing so several times a month (23 percent), or once a month or less (21 percent) during the same time span. On the other hand, 17 percent never used their phone or tablet for this purpose.

Younger professionals reported using their mobile devices for child welfare purposes more often than older professionals. For example, 43 percent of those age 21 to 30 reported using their mobile device for this purpose, compared to 33 percent of those over age 51.

Exhibit 25: Over the past 3 months, how often have you used your smartphone and/or tablet to search for, access, or share information about child welfare? (n=2,769)



Respondents who used their mobile devices to search for, access, or share information about child welfare were asked to describe their activities in more detail. The activities reported most often related to communication: checking email and accessing calendars for work-related purposes (66 percent), communicating case-related information with colleagues (45 percent), and communicating with clients (43 percent).

Exhibit 26: For what professional purposes have you used your smartphone and/or tablet in the past 3 months? (n=2,217)¹⁷

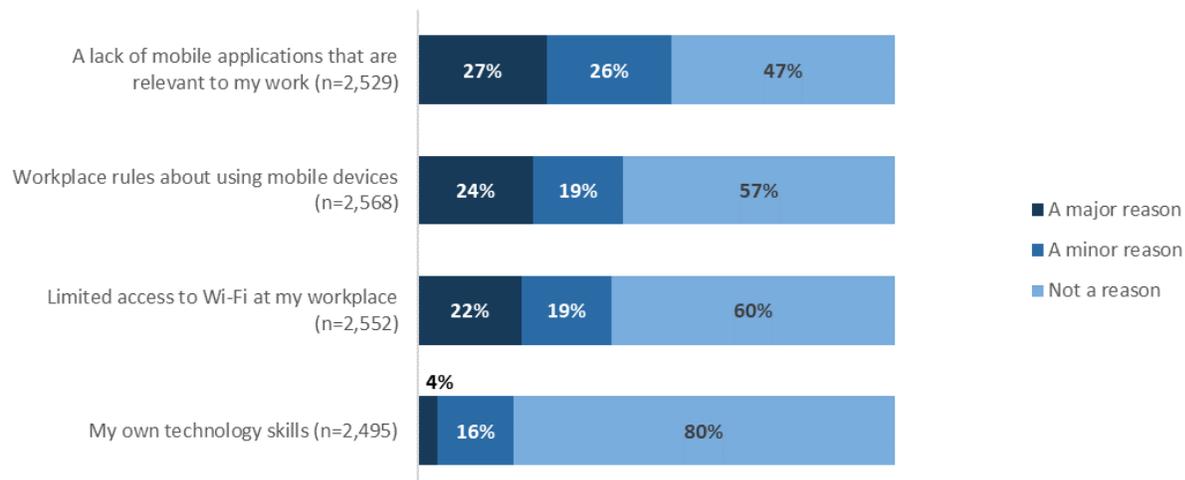


¹⁷ Respondents could select all answers that applied for this item. Respondents who indicated they never use their mobile device for professional purposes, as well as those who do not have mobile phones, are included in the totals on which percentages are based.

Respondents were asked to identify any reasons they do not use their mobile devices more frequently to search for, access, or share child welfare-related information. Slightly more than half of respondents (53 percent) cited a lack of mobile applications relevant to their work as a major reason or minor reason they do not use their mobile devices more frequently for this purpose. At least 40 percent said the same of workplace rules about using mobile devices (43 percent) and limited access to Wi-Fi at their workplace (41 percent) (exhibit 27). Fewer (20 percent) cited their own technology skills as a reason they do not use mobile devices more in their work—although this percentage was higher among respondents over the age of 50 (33 percent) and respondents that work with Tribes (31 percent). The extent to which respondents felt their technology skills hampered them from using their mobile devices also depended on their age—for example, 33 percent of respondents over age 50 cited this as a major or minor reason they did not use their mobile phones more, compared to only 9 percent of respondents age 30 or younger.

Respondents serving rural populations were less likely to cite workplace rules as a reason (37 percent) compared to suburban (44 percent) or urban respondents (47 percent). Younger respondents were also less likely to cite workplace rules as a barrier (34 percent of respondents age 30 or younger, versus 45 percent of respondents age 51 or older).

Exhibit 27: Which of the following are reasons that you do not use your smartphone and/or tablet more often to search for, access, or share information about child welfare?



When respondents were asked if there were additional reasons why they do not use mobile devices more often to search for, access, or share information about child welfare, three major themes emerged in their comments.

First, at least 70 participants said that they use their mobile devices for personal rather than professional use. In most cases, participants indicated that they did not want to spend time on personal devices while at work. In some cases, professionals indicated that they did not use their mobile devices

for work because their agency did not provide financial compensation for personal phone plans. A few people expressed frustration that they do not receive financial compensation for their personal phones.

Second, at least 45 respondents said that the screens on their mobile devices are small and difficult to read; many said they chose to access, receive, and share information on a larger laptop or desktop screen instead.

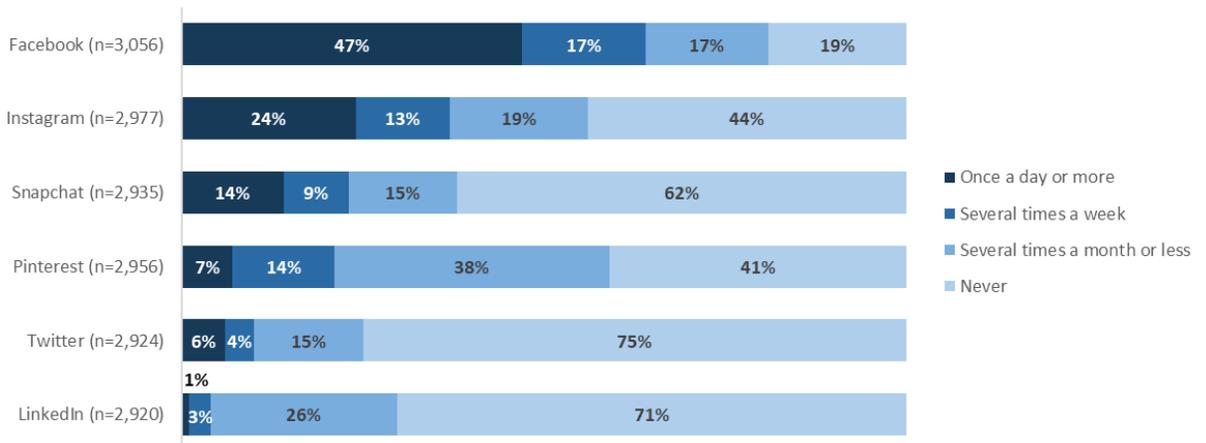
Finally, about 20 people chose not to use their mobile phones for work because they are fearful their personal devices are not secure enough for them to access, receive, or share client, health, or other potentially confidential information.

2.9 Use of Social Media

General Use of Social Media

Two-thirds of respondents (64 percent) reported using Facebook and one-third (37 percent) reported using Instagram at least several times a week for personal or professional reasons. However, most respondents reported never using Twitter (75 percent), Snapchat (62 percent), and LinkedIn (71 percent).

Exhibit 28: We would like to know how often you use social media, whether for personal or professional reasons. How often do you view or share information on the following sites?



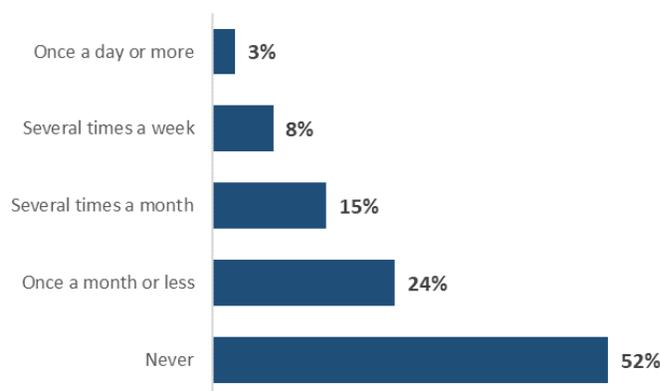
Social Media Use for Professional Purposes

In addition to their general social media use, respondents were also asked how often they specifically search for, access, or share information about child welfare through social media. More than half (52 percent) indicated they never use social media for this purpose, with an additional 24 percent reporting that they use social media for this purpose once a month or less (exhibit 29). Eleven percent said that

they use social media for searching, accessing, or sharing information about child welfare at least several times a week.

Professionals working with Tribes were more likely than others to use social media to search for, access, or share child welfare information—16 percent said they use it at least several times a week for that purpose (versus 9 percent of other child welfare professionals), and 32 percent said they never do so (versus 43 percent of other child welfare professionals).

Exhibit 29: How often do you search for, access, or share information about child welfare through social media? (n=2,781)¹⁸



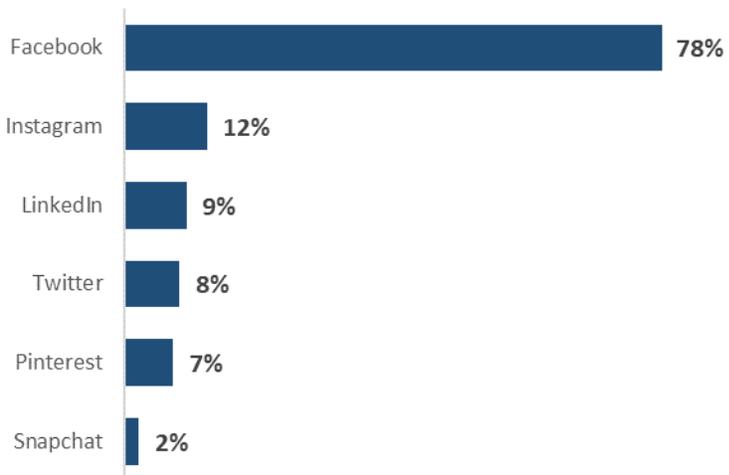
In focus groups, a few participants provided examples of situations in which they used social media platforms at work—for example, to send an interesting article to a colleague or to locate children, parents, and family members they were having trouble getting in touch with otherwise. However, several participants noted that even when they followed child welfare or social work organizations through social media, it was out of personal interest and not necessarily related to their actual work responsibilities.

Social Media Platforms Used for Professional Purposes

Among the respondents who reported using social media to search for, access, or share information about child welfare, more than three-quarters (78 percent) reported using Facebook for this purpose (exhibit 30). Other platforms used by more than 5 percent of respondents included Instagram (12 percent), LinkedIn (9 percent), Twitter (8 percent), and Pinterest (7 percent). While patterns were generally similar among respondents of different ages, younger respondents were more likely to use Facebook to search for, access, or share information about child welfare (86 percent of respondents age 30 or younger, compared to 67 percent of those age 51 or older) than they were to use LinkedIn (4 versus 15 percent).

¹⁸ For the purposes of this analysis, respondents who indicated they never use social media, as well as those who never use social media for child welfare information purposes, were assigned a value of “never.”

Exhibit 30: Which of the following social media platforms do you use to search for, access, or share information about child welfare? (n=1,346)¹⁹



¹⁹ This item does not include responses from individuals reporting that they never use social media for child welfare purposes. Respondents could select all that applied for this item.

3. Information Habits and Preferences of Legal Professionals Working in Child Welfare

Key Findings

- About two-thirds of legal professional respondents always or almost always have reliable access to the internet during a typical workday, and 94 percent have reliable access at least most of the time. Less than 1 percent rarely or never have reliable access to the internet. (Section 3.3)
- Nearly 75 percent of respondents agreed that they have enough access to information about child welfare to do their work effectively, compared to 12 percent who feel that they do not have enough access to information. (Section 3.3)
- Nearly all respondents (98 percent) receive information that they have not specifically searched for; nearly a quarter of respondents receive this type of information daily. Respondents most often receive this information through email listservs or electronic newsletters; trainings, conferences, or workshops; or emails from colleagues or other professional contacts. (Section 3.5)
- Respondents prefer to receive child welfare information through briefing documents and executive summaries, reports, or peer-reviewed journal articles. (Section 3.5)
- Respondents most often share child welfare information with colleagues through emails, face-to-face conversations, and meetings at their organizations or agencies. (Section 3.6)
- Respondents most often hear about trainings through email listservs or electronic newsletters. Approximately three-quarters of participants said that they prefer in-person trainings over virtual trainings. (Section 3.7)
- Almost all respondents (97 percent) have a smartphone or tablet, and over a third (39 percent) use this device to search for, access, or share child welfare information at least several times a week. Over half of respondents cited a lack of relevant mobile applications as a reason they do not use their mobile devices more frequently for child welfare-related purposes. (Section 3.8)
- Less than half of respondents (42 percent) have used social media to search for, access, or share child welfare information; 11 percent do so at least several times a week. Respondents use Facebook much more frequently than other platforms for this purpose. (Section 3.9)

3.1 Description of Respondents

A total of 371 legal professionals who spend at least 10 percent of their professional time working in child welfare responded to the National Child Welfare Information Study survey. Over 40 percent of respondents were attorneys for parents, children, or families, and nearly a quarter (24 percent) of respondents were judges. Fewer respondents were attorneys for child welfare agencies (11 percent) or Court Improvement Program (CIP) directors or staff (9 percent). The remaining 16 percent had a variety of other roles, including court administrators, paralegals, court attorneys, and social workers providing services in legal defense contexts. Forty-six States, along with the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, were represented. Exhibit 31 provides additional information about the respondents to this survey.

Exhibit 31: Characteristics of Respondents to the Survey of Legal Professionals

Role (n=369)	
Attorney for parents, children, or families (including guardian ad litem)	151 (41%)
Judge	87 (24%)
Attorney for child welfare agency	39 (11%)
CIP director/staff	34 (9%)
Other	58 (16%)
Urbanicity (n=368)	
Urban	161 (44%)
Suburban	76 (21%)
Rural/frontier	85 (23%)
Don't know/not applicable	46 (13%)
Age (n=302)	
20 or younger	1 (<1%)
21 to 30	4 (1%)
31 to 40	46 (15%)
41 to 50	84 (28%)
51 to 60	87 (29%)
61 or older	68 (23%)
Prefer not to answer	12 (4%)
Gender (n=302)	
Male	66 (22%)

Female	223 (74%)
Neither male nor female	1 (<1%)
Prefer not to answer	12 (4%)
Ethnicity (n=300)	
Hispanic	21 (7%)
Non-Hispanic	265 (88%)
Prefer not to answer	14 (5%)
Race (n=302)²⁰	
American Indian/Alaska Native	9 (3%)
Asian	6 (2%)
Black or African American	23 (8%)
Pacific Islander	2 (1%)
White	244 (81%)
Other	2 (1%)
Prefer not to answer	22 (7%)
Highest education level (n=301)	
Some high school or less	1 (<1%)
High school graduate	1 (<1%)
Some college	4 (1%)
College graduate	12 (4%)
Some graduate school (postcollege)	6 (2%)

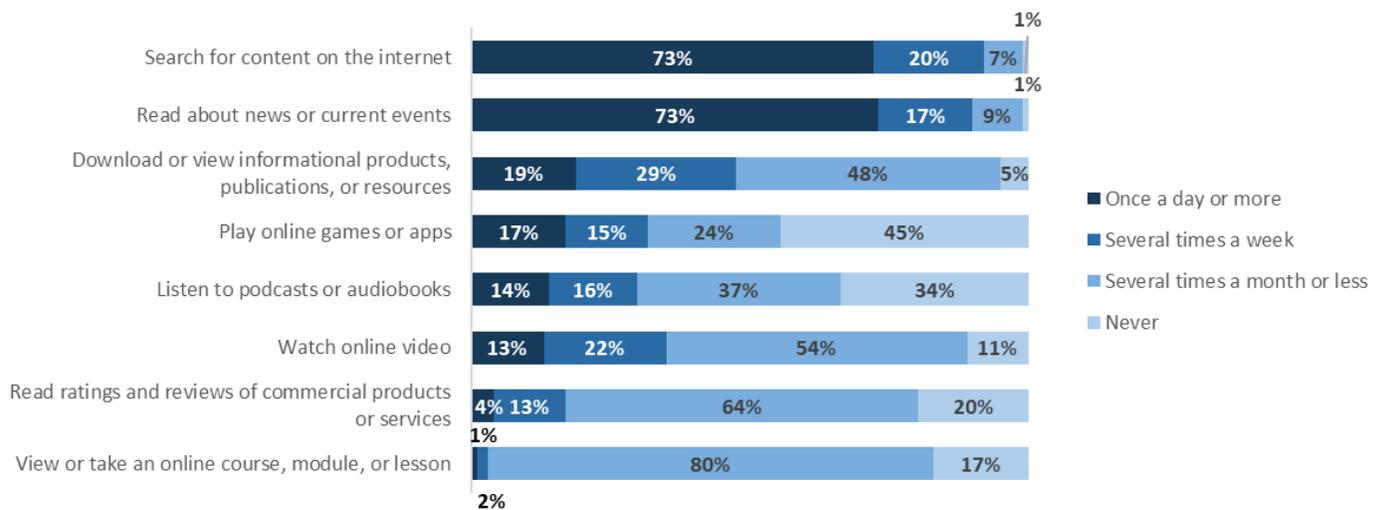
²⁰ Respondents could select all options that applied.

Master's degree	23 (8%)
Law degree (J.D.)	244 (81%)
Doctoral degree	9 (3%)
Prefer not to answer	1 (<1%)
Years in current field (n=300)	
Less than 1 year	2 (1%)
1 to 5 years of service	42 (14%)
6 to 10 years of service	36 (12%)
11 to 15 years of service	59 (20%)
16+ years of service	161 (54%)
Time spent away from desk during the workday (n=369)	
All or almost all of the time (I am almost never working at my desk)	26 (7%)
More than half the time	94 (26%)
About half the time	86 (23%)
Less than half the time	108 (29%)
None or almost none of the time (I am almost always working at my desk)	55 (15%)
Likelihood of working as a legal professional in a role related to child welfare in 5 years (n=302)	
Very likely	197 (65%)
Somewhat likely	75 (25%)
Not likely	30 (10%)

3.2 General Information Habits and Preferences

Prior to asking survey respondents to reflect on how they access and share information specifically related to child welfare, respondents were asked about the ways in which they access information in their daily professional and personal lives in general (exhibit 32). Respondents reported most frequently searching for content on the internet (93 percent said they do this at least several times a week) and reading about news or current events (90 percent). Nearly half (48 percent) reported downloading or viewing informational products, publications, or resources at least several times a week. Most respondents reported performing all of the activities in the survey item at least occasionally, although at least a third said that they never listen to podcasts or audiobooks or play online games or apps.

Exhibit 32: How often do you do each of the following for personal or professional purposes? (n=340)

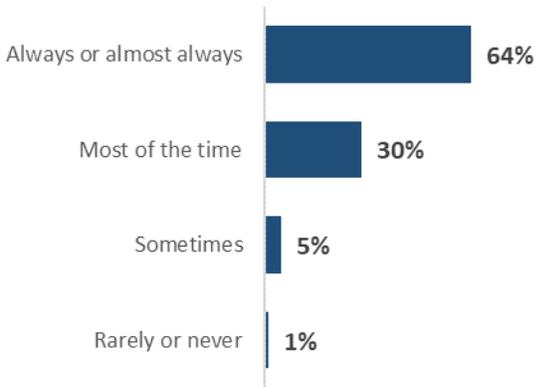


3.3 Access to Information About Child Welfare

Reliability of Internet Access During Workday

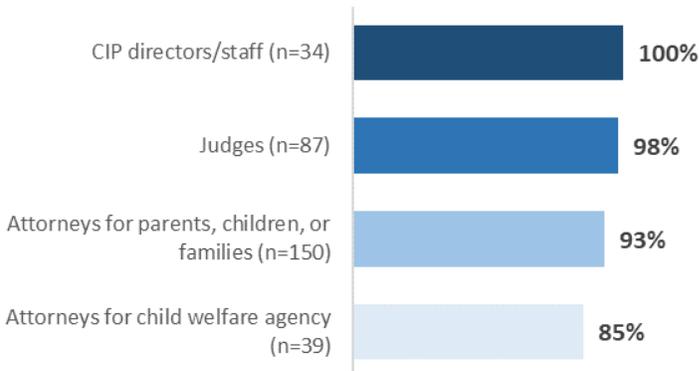
Two-thirds of all respondents (64 percent) indicated that they always or almost always have reliable access to the internet during their typical workday (exhibit 33). Thirty percent said that they have reliable access most of the time, and 5 percent said they have it sometimes. Only 1 percent said that they rarely or never have reliable access to the internet. Focus group data indicate that legal professionals will most often not have access to the internet while in court, either because the building has no Wi-Fi or because cellphone service is too weak.

Exhibit 33: During your typical workday, how much of the time do you have reliable access to the internet? (n=340)



All CIP directors and staff (100 percent) and almost all judges (98 percent) reported that they have reliable access to the internet at least most of the time (exhibit 34). Attorneys for parents, children, or families (93 percent) and attorneys for child welfare agencies (85 percent) had slightly less reliable access to the internet.

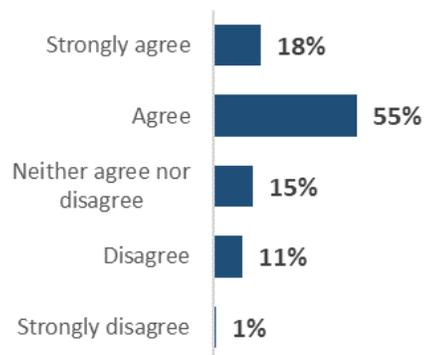
Exhibit 34: Percentage of Respondents Who Have Reliable Access to the Internet at Least Most of the Time (by Role)



Perceptions About Adequate Access to Child Welfare-Related Information

Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they have enough access to information about child welfare to do their work effectively. Fifteen percent reported that they neither agreed nor disagreed, and 12 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that they have enough access. Attorneys for child welfare agencies were slightly less likely than other respondents to strongly agree or agree that they had enough access to information (68 percent).

Exhibit 35: Do you agree or disagree that you have enough access to information about child welfare to do your work effectively? (n=332)



Of the 332 individuals who responded to the question about information access, 12 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that they have adequate access to information to do their work effectively. There were some differences by urbanicity: 81 percent of those working in urban contexts agreed or strongly agreed that they have enough access to information, compared to 71 percent of those working in suburban communities, and 59 percent of those working in rural areas.

Gaps in Information Access

When respondents were asked to identify specific types of information to which they would like more access, 150 respondents (41 percent) provided an answer. The most common response (from 60 respondents) was a desire for more access to research, including data and statistics and scholarly articles on child welfare and legal procedures and practice. Forty-seven respondents said they would like more information about case law, regulations, and policies at the Federal, State, and local level.

Other types of information mentioned by at least 10 respondents include information about local services available for clients and families (18 respondents), professional development opportunities such as continuing legal education courses (18 respondents), case-specific information (10 respondents), and information on the child welfare system (10 respondents). There were no clear trends by role regarding information to which respondents desire more access.

On a related note, some focus group participants believe that many child welfare websites need to be better indexed and organized, making it easier and faster for legal professionals to find the information they need. Several others suggested that it would be best if there was one place they could go for everything they needed, such as a website, an online information database, or a mobile phone application.

Barriers to Information Access

When respondents were asked about the factors that prevent them from having adequate access to information related to child welfare, 148 legal professionals (40 percent) identified specific barriers.

The most common issue that was identified (by 53 respondents) was that respondents have limited time to search for information. As one survey respondent noted, “The type of cited publications I would like more access to usually take more time to research than I have available. An easily searchable and accessible website with legitimate citations would be very helpful.”

Another barrier that was mentioned frequently was difficulty in searching for information (mentioned by 52 respondents). These respondents noted that they were unsure of where to search for specific information, or that the information they need does not exist in an easily accessible format. One survey respondent stated, “I have access to pretty much everything I need, it is just scattered around and hard to access, especially when I am in a hurry or need to look something up during a hearing.” Similarly, another respondent said, “We often receive information via email and then save it to an internal network so it can be located when needed. When not connected to the network, it can be more challenging to access this information easily.”

Twenty-seven respondents cited restricted access and a perceived unwillingness of agencies to share data, resources, or information, and others acknowledged budgetary limitations to fund access to existing resources or costly resources. One respondent described how a provided resource falls short. “We are provided with a (sometimes) yearly compilation booklet of statutes regarding child welfare. However, the laws change frequently, and they are often out of date. Additionally, we have no useful way to search case law efficiently and I have resorted to paying for a subscription to Westlaw out of my own pocket to be able to do my job effectively.”

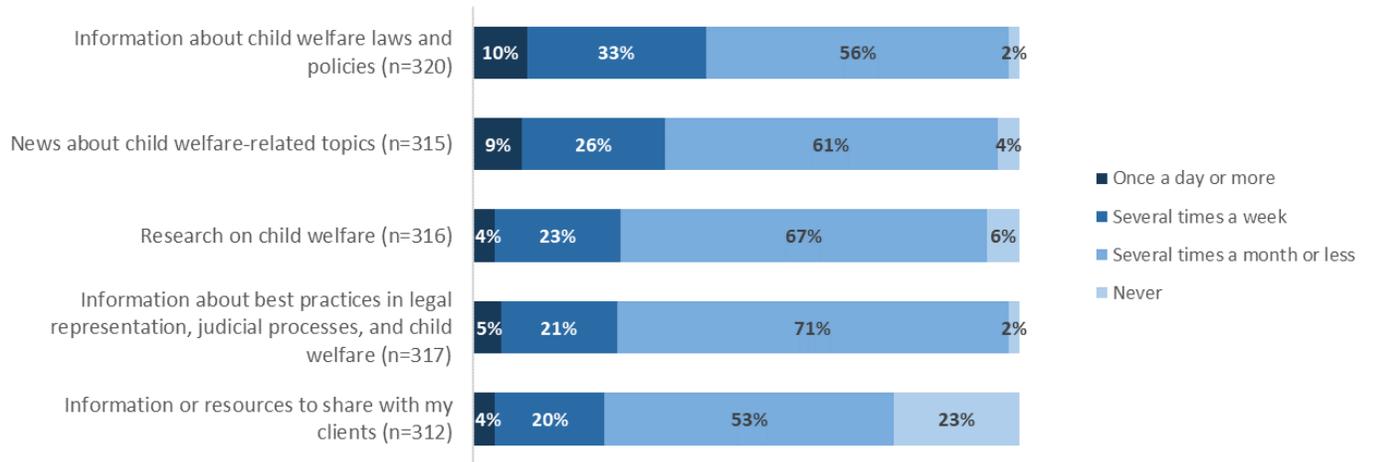
During focus groups, the most common barriers discussed included challenges in finding primary or original sources, and in learning about how other States are addressing or thinking about a particular child welfare-related legal issue.

3.4 Searching for Information About Child Welfare

Frequency of Searches for Information

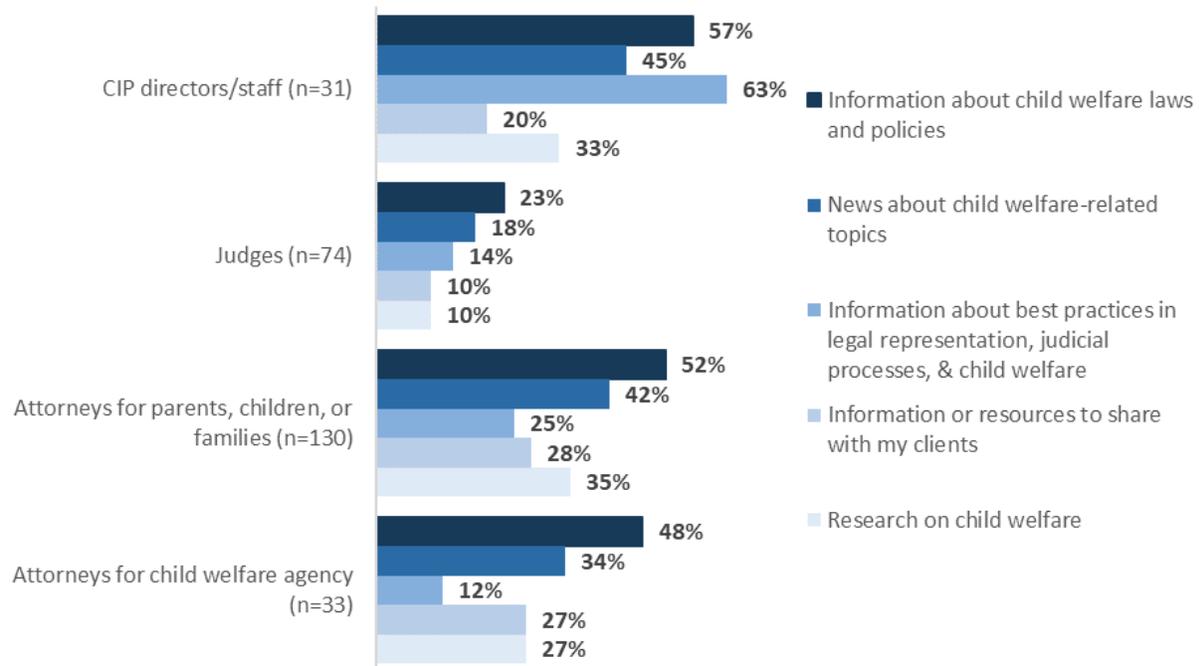
Respondents to the survey were most likely to search for information about child welfare laws and policies—43 percent said that they search for these resources several times a week or more, and only 2 percent said that they never do (exhibit 36). Over one-third of respondents indicated they search for news about child welfare-related topics several times a week, and over one-quarter reported searching for child welfare research with similar frequency. Additionally, 24 percent said that they search for information or resources to share with clients at least several times a week, and 23 percent indicated that they never search for that type of information.

Exhibit 36: How often do you search for each of the following?



As exhibit 37 shows, judges are less likely to search for most types of child welfare information, compared to respondents in other roles. While most groups of respondents search most frequently for information about child welfare laws and policies, CIP directors and staff most frequently search for best practices in legal representation, judicial processes, and child welfare.

Exhibit 37: Percentage of Respondents Who Search for Each Type of Information at Least Several Times a Week (by Role)



In their open-ended responses to questions, several CIP directors and staff noted that they are particularly interested in learning more about research-based practices that have been successfully implemented in other States. In focus groups, legal professionals mentioned most often searching for specific statute or case information, including rules and procedures from other States.

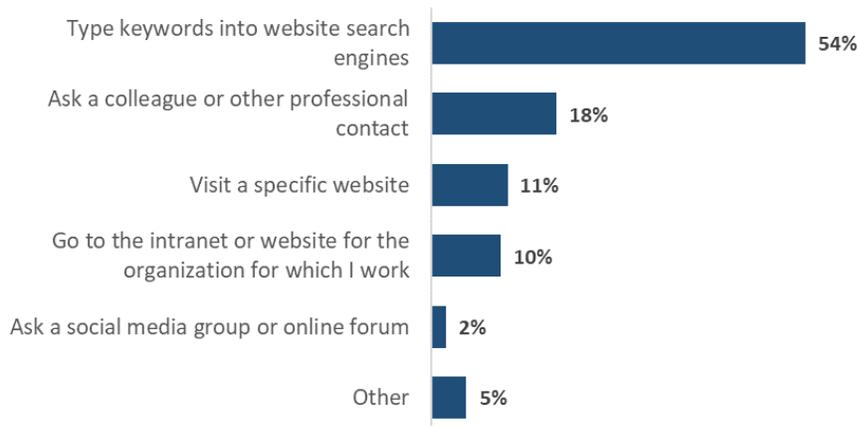
Strategies Used to Search for Information

When asked how they most often search for child welfare information, over half (54 percent) of respondents indicated that they use website search engines. Fewer respondents said that they ask a colleague or other professional contact (18 percent), visit a specific website (11 percent), go to their organization’s intranet or website (10 percent), or ask a social media group or online forum (2 percent). Specific websites mentioned by respondents included online libraries such as Westlaw and Fastcase, association websites such as the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC), and government websites. In addition to these websites, some focus group participants also mentioned going directly to their own agency’s website for information.

Five percent of respondents described other strategies that they use to search for child welfare information, including LexisNexis, Federal resources, university library resources, and consulting

professional communities (e.g., informal email groups, social media groups of like-minded attorneys). In addition to the search strategies already mentioned, a few focus group respondents also referenced using legal search engines that they have access to through their State bar to find the information that they need.

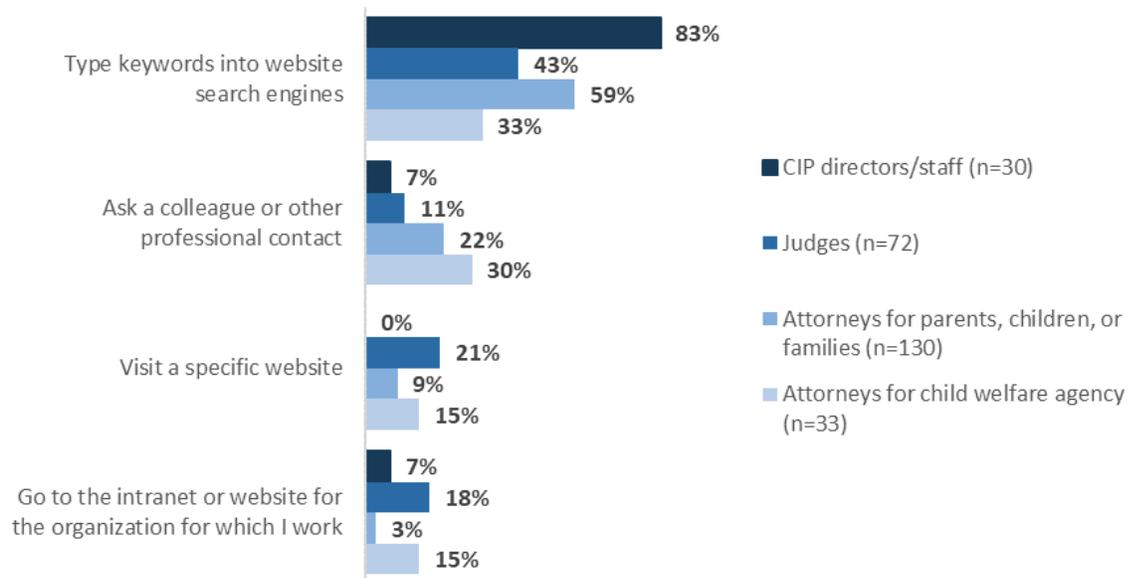
Exhibit 38: When you need to search for information about child welfare, what do you do most often? (n=317)²¹



As exhibit 39 shows, while respondents in all roles were most likely to use website search engines to search for information, CIP directors and staff were particularly likely to do so (83 percent). Conversely, CIP directors and staff were least likely to ask colleagues or other professional contacts for information (7 percent), compared to judges (11 percent); attorneys for parents, children, or families (22 percent); or attorneys for child welfare agencies (30 percent). Judges and attorneys who work for child welfare agencies were more likely than other respondents to use their organization’s intranet or website as a source of information.

²¹ Respondents who indicated in a previous question that they never search for any types of information about child welfare were not asked this question and are therefore not included in this exhibit.

Exhibit 39: When you need to search for information about child welfare, what do you do most often?²² (By role)



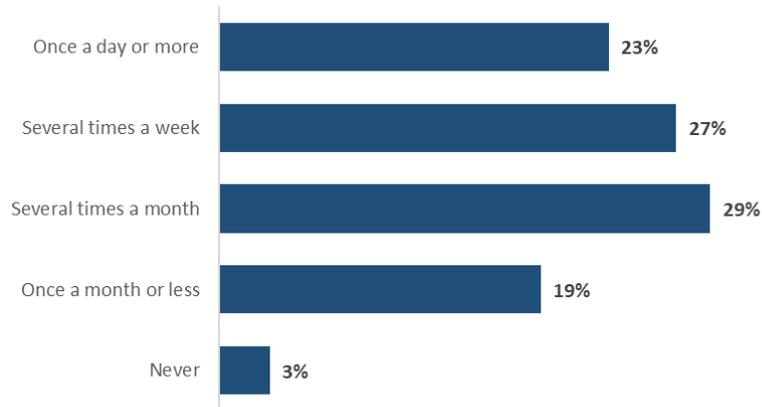
3.5 Receiving Information About Child Welfare

Frequency of Receiving Information

Over half of respondents reported that they receive information about child welfare that they did not search for either several times a week (27 percent) or several times a month (29 percent). Almost one-quarter (23 percent) reported they receive such information once a day, 19 percent said they receive this information once a month, and 3 percent reported they never receive information for which they did not specifically search.

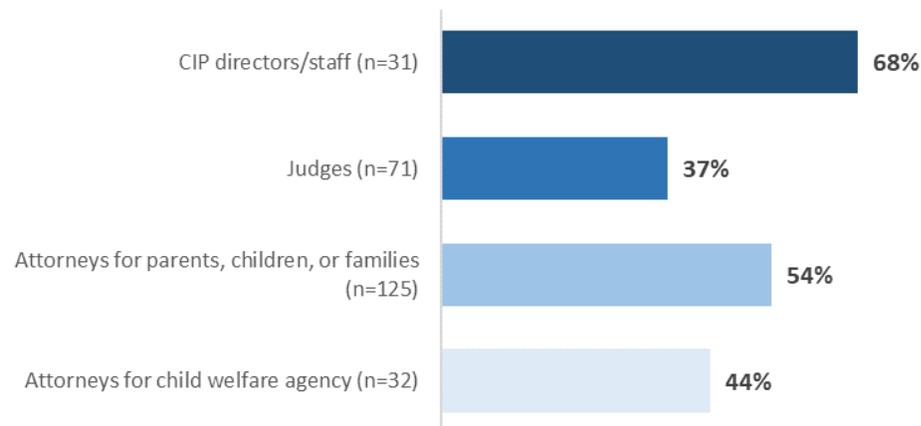
²² Respondents who indicated in a previous question that they never search for any types of information about child welfare were not asked this question and are therefore not included in this exhibit.

Exhibit 40: How often do you receive information about child welfare (electronically or in hardcopy) for which you have not specifically searched? (n=311)



CIP directors and staff were most likely to say that they receive information that they did not search for at least several times a week (68 percent). Attorneys for parents, children, or families (54 percent); attorneys for child welfare agencies (44 percent); and judges (37 percent) were less likely to receive child welfare information for which they did not search.

Exhibit 41: Percentage of Respondents Who Receive Information About Child Welfare at Least Several Times a Week (by Role)

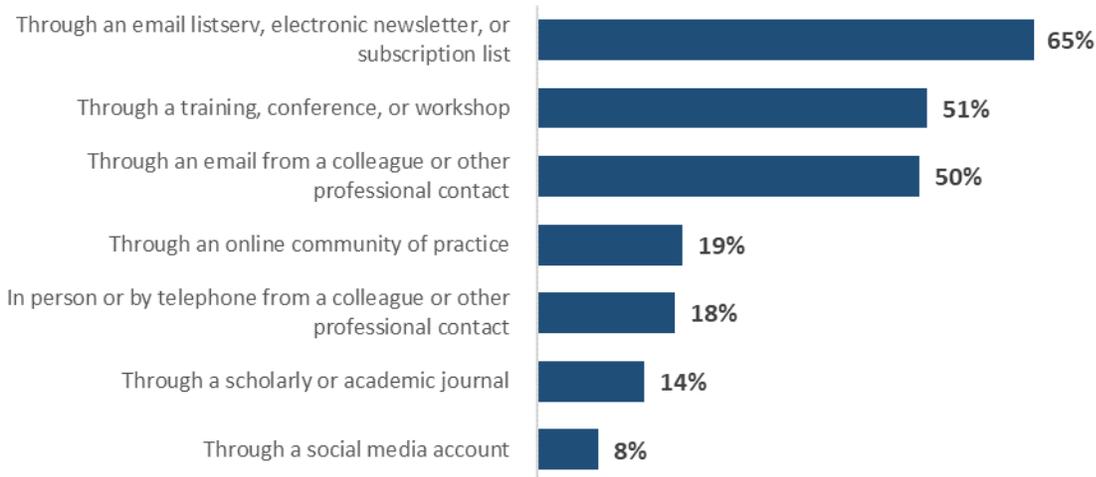


Perceived Importance of Channels for Receiving Child Welfare Information

When respondents were asked to identify the most important ways they receive information about child welfare for which they did not search, their three most frequent answers were through an email listserv, electronic newsletter, or subscription list (65 percent); through a training, conference, or workshop (51 percent); and through an email from a colleague or other professional contact (50 percent). Channels

that respondents selected less frequently included through an online community of practice (19 percent), in person or by telephone from a colleague or other professional contact (18 percent), through a scholarly or academic journal (14 percent), or through a social media account (8 percent).

Exhibit 42: What are the most important ways that you receive information about child welfare for which you have not specifically searched? (n = 303)²³



Electronic newsletters were also the most common medium for receiving information among focus group participants. However, it was rare for those participating to receive content from the same organizations. Discussions around this topic indicated that participants typically subscribed to newsletters from a variety of organizations.

When focus group participants were asked about the amount of information they receive, some mentioned that it was too much to take in. While one person said processing all of the information was particularly challenging for newcomers, another said she felt the information contained too much “fluff” and not enough case law or legislative updates.

In line with this thinking, several focus group participants mentioned only skimming the information they receive instead of reading it completely. While a few will read more in depth if a newsletter or other source contains a particular topic of interest, others will usually store the information in their email or not give the information more than a cursory glance. No focus group participants reported consistently reading in full the information they receive.

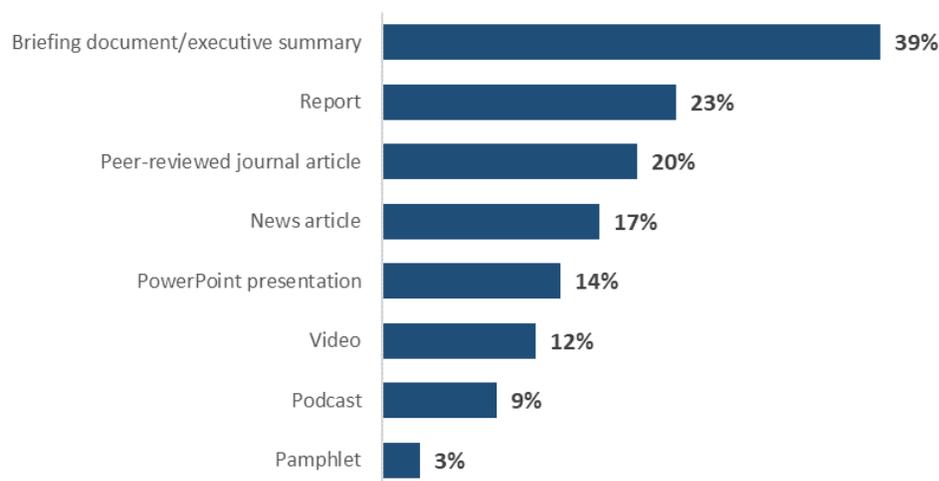
²³ Respondents were asked to select up to three responses for this question. Respondents who indicated in a previous question that they never receive information about child welfare were not asked this question and are therefore not included in this exhibit.

Finally, when asked how to determine if a source is trustworthy or not, one participant said it has to be from an organization they know, while a few others check the source's citations in order to determine the information's validity.

Preferred Formats for Receiving Information

When asked how they would prefer to receive information about a new, promising legal practice or approach, respondents were most likely to prefer a briefing document or executive summary (39 percent). This was the most preferred format across all roles. Respondents were least likely to indicate that they would want to receive the information as a podcast (9 percent) or pamphlet (3 percent) (exhibit 43).

Exhibit 43: If you were going to receive information about a new, promising child welfare practice, in what format would you prefer to receive it? (n=312)²⁴

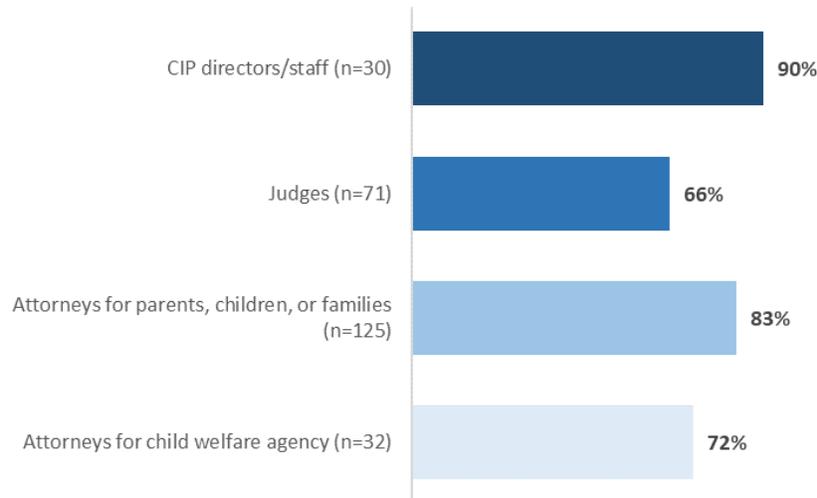


Use of Electronic Subscription Lists

Approximately three-quarters (73 percent) of all respondents indicated that they receive information and resources about child welfare through at least one email listserv, electronic newsletter, or other type of subscription list. CIP directors and staff were most likely to receive information through these channels (90 percent), compared to attorneys for parents, children, or families (83 percent); attorneys for child welfare agencies (72 percent); or judges (66 percent) (exhibit 44).

²⁴ Respondents were asked to select up to three responses for this question.

Exhibit 44: Do you subscribe to any email listservs, electronic newsletters, or other types of subscription lists through which you receive child welfare information and resources on a regular basis? (By role; n=258)



In the survey, respondents who do receive information through these electronic channels were asked to think of the listserv that they found most valuable for their work and describe why it was valuable. The most common responses, in order of frequency, were:

- Ease of navigation to information most relevant for specific job roles (e.g., legal topics, child welfare topics, ICWA topics)
- The extent to which information is up to date and reflects the latest news, policy changes, and data
- The balance between providing comprehensive information without being overwhelming for users
- The reliability of the source (sources specifically mentioned as trustworthy included the American Bar Association [ABA], Child Welfare Information Gateway, and NACC)

In their answers, several respondents cited specific features that make electronic newsletters more readable and useful—for example, “descriptive headings and sub-headings...allows me to quickly decide if I want to read further,” and “I’m able to learn the news/information within 2–3 sentences, access useful link [sic] if needed. I prefer summaries with the essential information and when there is additional info on how it relates to my job.” Similarly, one respondent noted that “the frequency (weekly) is just right and includes a headline followed by a few sentences with more description of each item being discussed and a link for further information. Links with PDF reports or presentations are helpful to be embedded in the email so I can print those immediately and read at a more convenient time.”

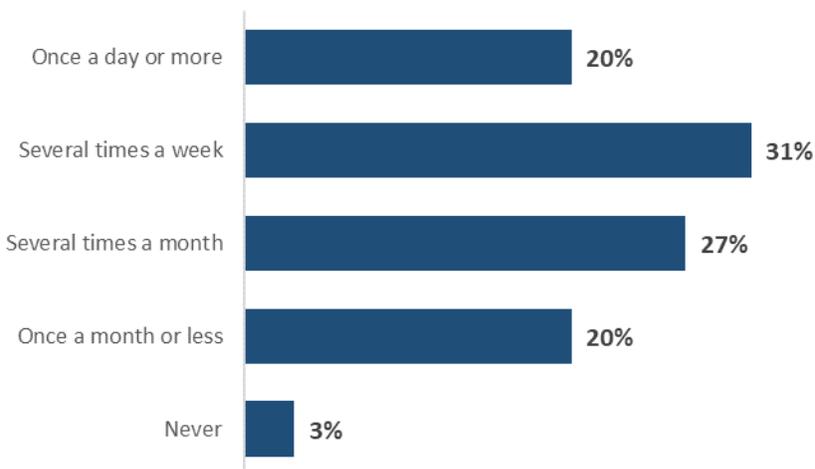
Focus group data included similar yet more specific preferences. For example, some participants suggested that newsletters should include short summaries—rather than the full text—of any news article or research reports. This gives the reader enough information to decide if they are interested in learning more. A few others suggested having each newsletter cover only one topic at a time, while still others said newsletters simply need to be short. One participant also suggested using predictable or consistent formatting to make it easy for the readers to know where to search for the information they need.

3.6 Sharing Information About Child Welfare

Frequency of Sharing Information About Child Welfare

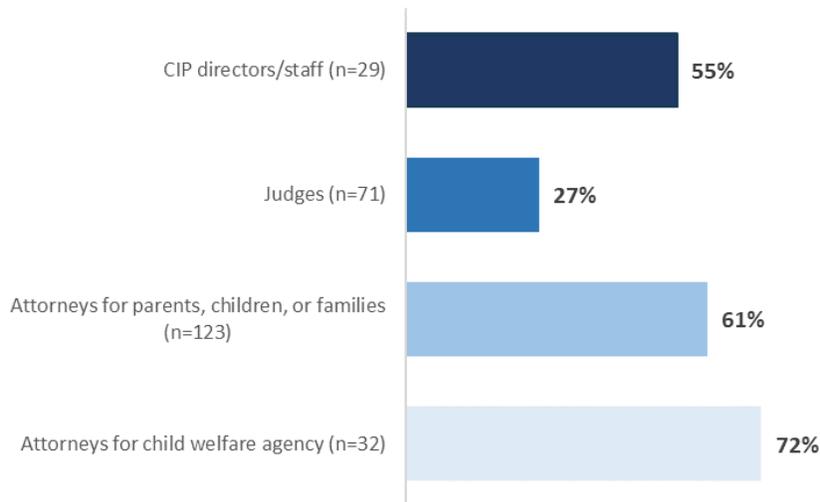
Respondents were most likely to say that they share information with professional contacts several times a week (31 percent) or several times a month (27 percent). Equal percentages of respondents said they share information once a day or more, or once a month or less (20 percent each). Three percent of respondents noted they never share information about child welfare. Focus group data suggests that most legal professionals share information most often with their colleagues rather than with clients, although one judge makes it a point to share information in her courtroom in a purposeful attempt to educate the families that she sees.

Exhibit 45: How often do you share information about child welfare with colleagues or other professional contacts? (n=307)



Nearly three-quarters (71 percent) of child welfare agency attorneys and 61 percent of attorneys for parents, children, or families reported that they share information about child welfare at least several times a week. Over half of CIP directors and staff (55 percent) reported the same. Judges (27 percent) were less likely to do so.

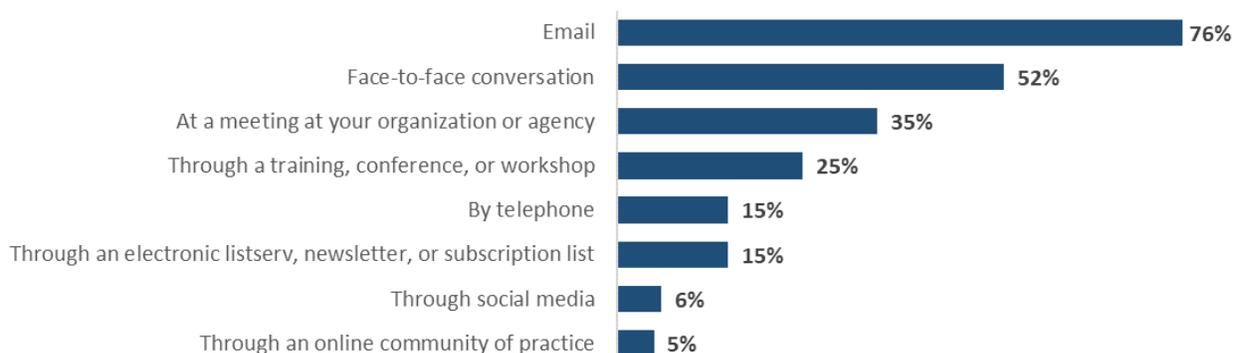
Exhibit 46: Respondents Who Share Information About Child Welfare at Least Several Times a Week (by Role)



Methods of Sharing Information

Email and face-to-face conversations (76 percent and 52 percent, respectively) were the ways in which respondents most frequently said they share information about child welfare. Respondents were least likely to report that they share child welfare information through social media (6 percent) and online communities of practice (5 percent). Focus group participants also most often mentioned email as an information-sharing channel. A few also noted sharing information in person directly with colleagues or with working groups.

Exhibit 47: When you share information about child welfare, how do you most often do so? (n=299)²⁵

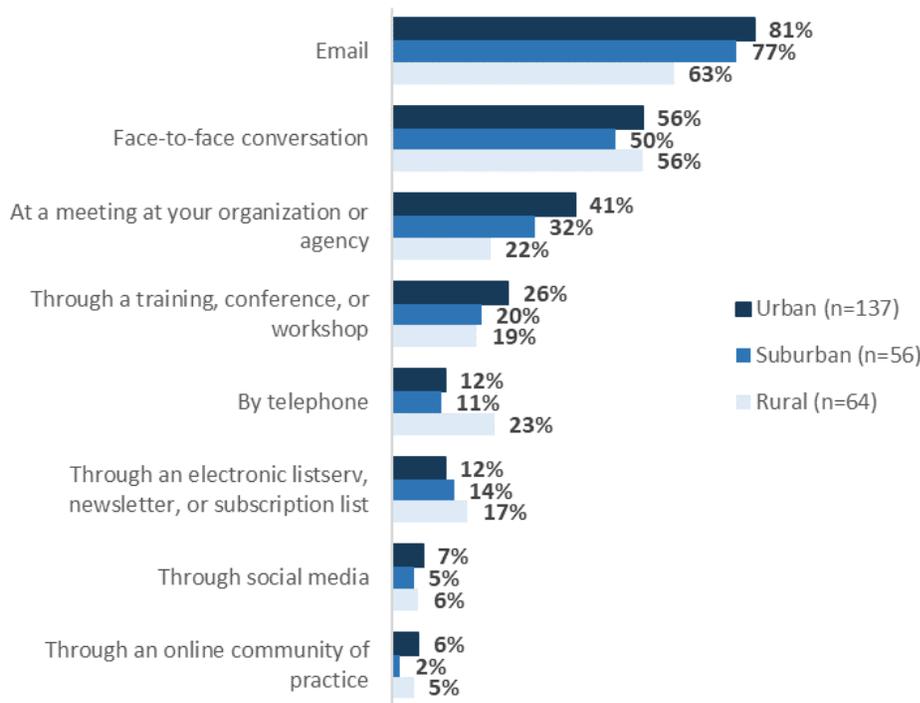


²⁵ Respondents were asked to select up to three responses for this question. Respondents who indicated in a previous question that they never share information about child welfare were not asked this question and are therefore not included in this exhibit.

Respondents' habits for sharing information about child welfare were examined by age groups. Across all age groups, respondents most often indicated that they share information about child welfare via email (90 percent of those age 40 or younger, 72 percent of those age 41 to 50, 78 percent of those age 51 to 60, and 73 percent of those age 61 or older). The least often selected option for those age 60 or younger was through an online community of practice (2 percent of those age 40 or younger, 6 percent of those age 41 to 50, and 4 percent of those age 51 to 60). The least often selected option for those age 61 and older was social media (2 percent).

As exhibit 48 shows, responses to this question varied somewhat based on whether the respondent worked with urban, suburban, or rural populations. For example, respondents who serve rural populations were less likely to share information through email or through meetings at their organization or agency and more likely to share information by telephone. Among all groups, however, email and face-to-face communication were the most frequent ways in which respondents share child welfare information.

Exhibit 48: When you share information about child welfare, how do you most often do so?²⁶ (By urbanicity)



²⁶ Respondents were asked to select up to three responses for this question. Respondents who indicated in a previous question that they never share information about child welfare were not asked this question and are therefore not included in this exhibit.

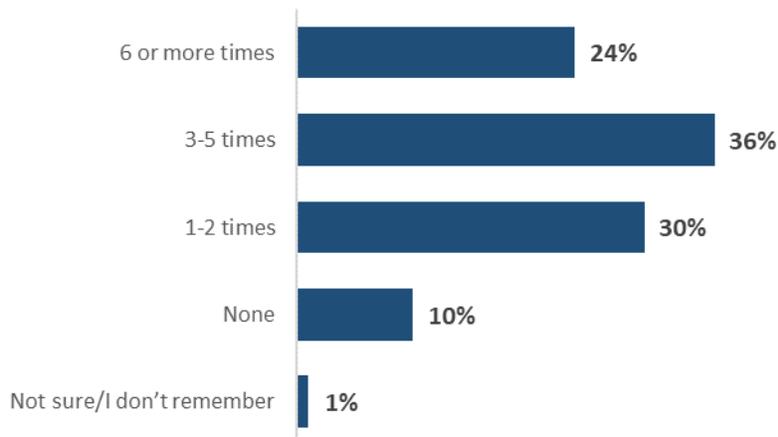
3.7 Training and Professional Development

Participation in Professional Development

Respondents were asked how often they attended virtual or in-person trainings, conference presentations, or workshops provided by someone other than their employer in the past year (exhibit 49). Nearly a third (30 percent) reported they attended one to two times, 36 percent reported they attended three to five times, and 24 percent reported six or more times. Ten percent of respondents indicated they did not attend any training in the past year, and about 1 percent were unsure or did not remember how many trainings they had attended.

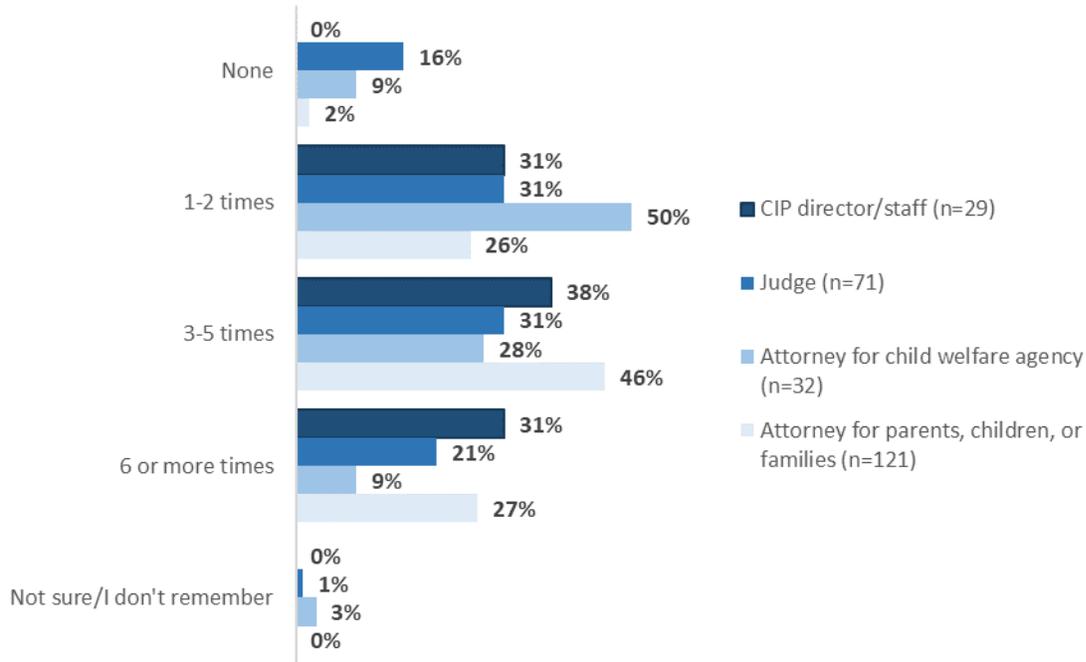
When asked how they might improve trainings moving forward, one focus group participant suggested using videos to teach professionals practical skills. She stated that videos are most effective when they are interactive.

Exhibit 49: In the past year, how many times have you attended virtual or in-person trainings, conference presentations, or workshops that were provided by someone other than your employer? (n=305)



Professional development participation by role was examined (exhibit 50). Across all role types, respondents most often reported attending training one to two times, or three to five times in the last year. Specifically, over one-third of CIP directors and staff (38 percent) reported that they attended trainings three to five times. Among judges, 31 percent reported that they attended trainings one to two times, and another 31 percent reported attending training three to five times. Half of child welfare agency attorneys reported that they attended trainings one to two times. Almost half of attorneys for parents, children, or families (46 percent) reported that they attend trainings three to five times.

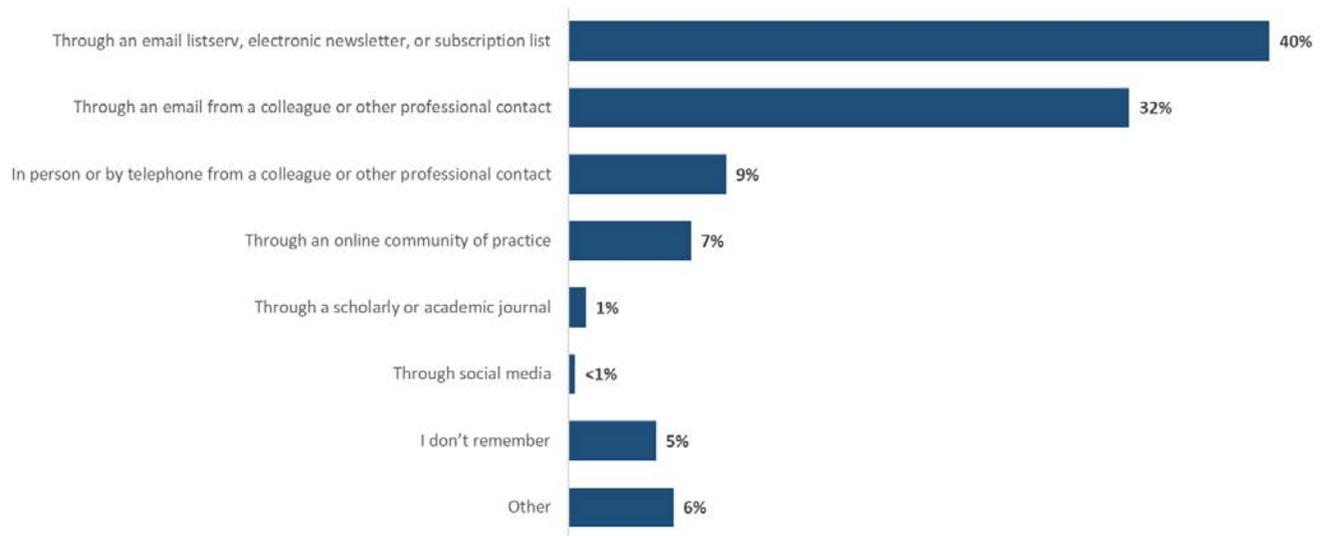
Exhibit 50: In the past year, how many times have you attended virtual or in-person trainings, conference presentations, or workshops that were provided by someone other than your employer? (By role)



Communications About Professional Development

When respondents were asked about how they found out about the most recent training, conference, or workshop they attended, the most common responses were through an email listserv, electronic newsletter, or subscription service (40 percent) or through an email from a colleague or other professional contact (32 percent).

Exhibit 51: Please think about the most recent training, conference, or workshop that you attended that was provided by someone other than your employer. How did you find out about this training, conference, or workshop? (n=259)²⁷

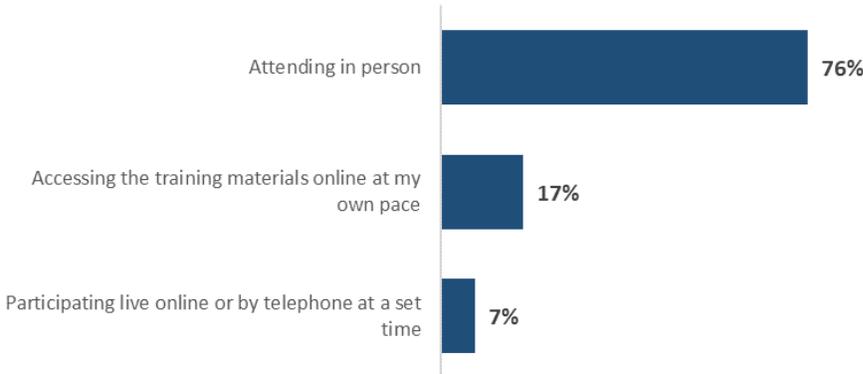


Preferred Formats for Professional Development

About three-quarters of participants (76 percent) said that they prefer in-person trainings to online trainings. Seventeen percent indicated that they prefer self-paced online trainings, and 7 percent preferred live trainings that take place online or by telephone, such as a webinar or virtual conference (exhibit 52).

²⁷ Respondents who indicated in a previous question that they have not participated in any trainings in the past year were not asked this question and are therefore not included in this exhibit.

Exhibit 52: In general, in which type of training do you prefer to participate? (n=305)



Across all roles, there was a preference for in-person training (exhibit 53). Judges and attorneys for child welfare agencies were particularly likely to prefer in-person training, while CIP directors and staff and attorneys for parents, children, or families were more likely than other groups to prefer self-paced online training (21 percent and 24 percent, respectively).

Exhibit 53: Percentage of Respondents Who Prefer Each Type of Training (by Role)

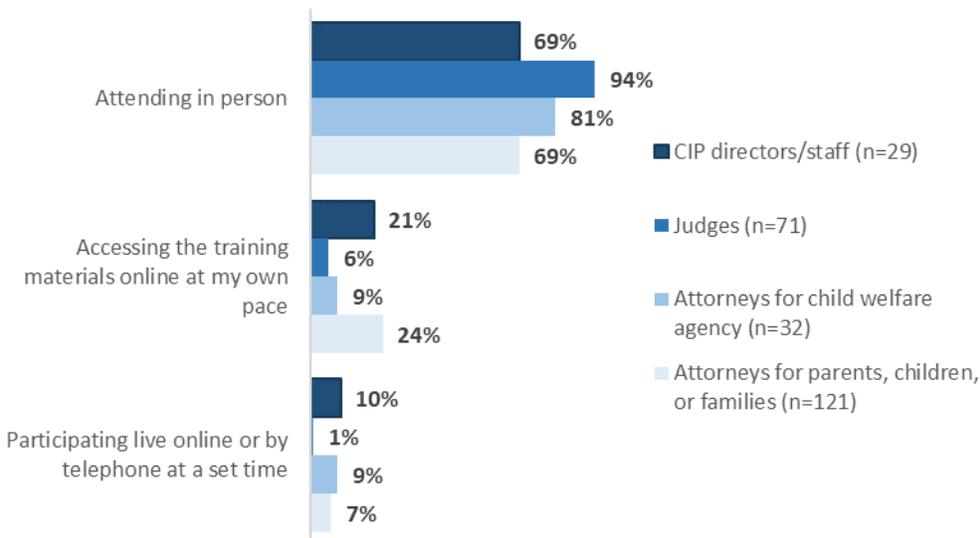
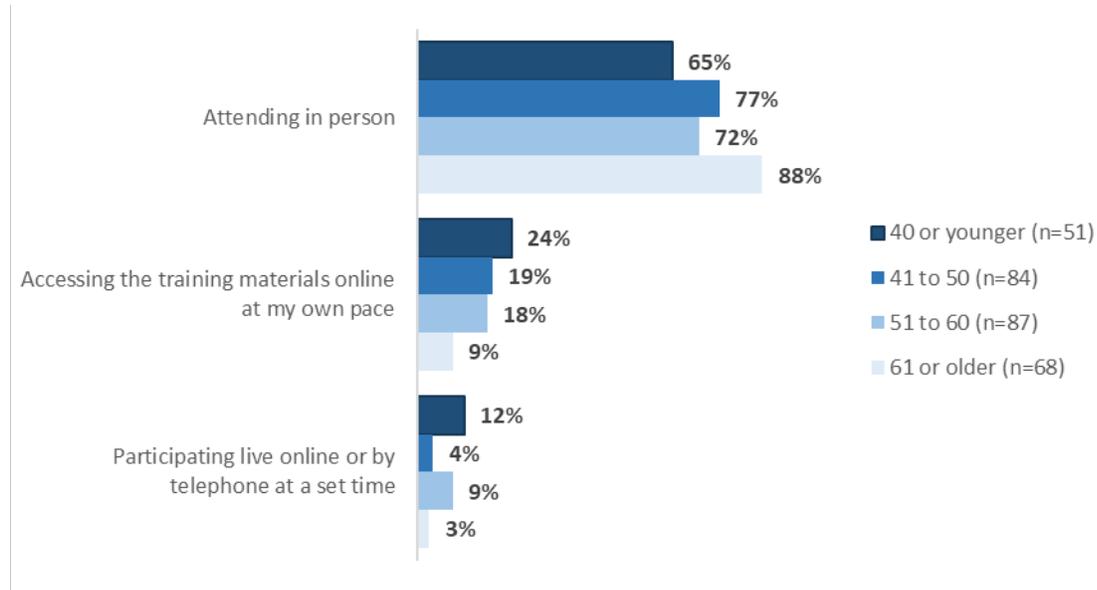


Exhibit 54 shows training preferences by age group. Respondents in all age groups had a strong preference for in-person training. However, older respondents tended to be more likely to prefer in-person training (88 percent of respondents 61 and older versus 65 percent of those 40 and younger), while younger respondents were more likely than other groups to prefer self-paced online training (24 percent of respondents 40 and younger versus 9 percent of those 61 and older).

Exhibit 54: Percentage of Respondents Who Prefer Each Type of Training (by Age)

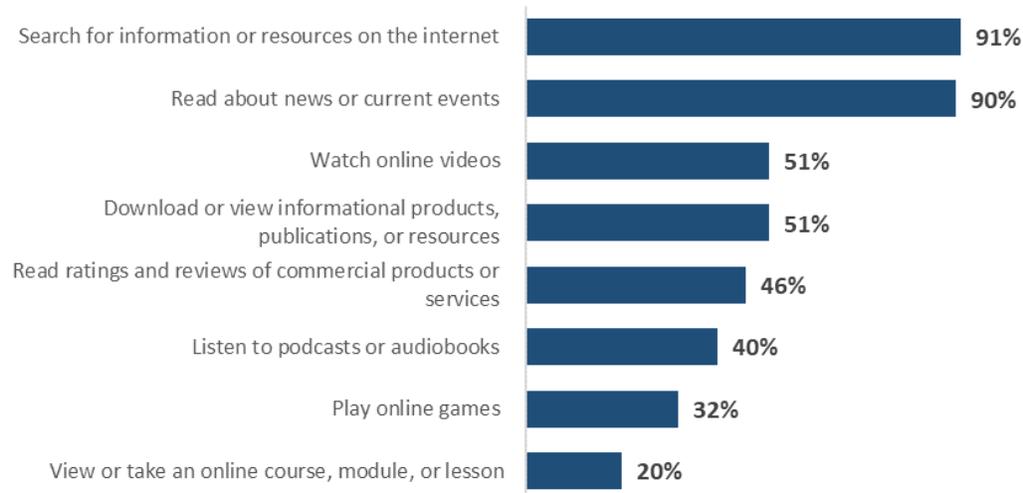


3.8 Use of Mobile Devices to Access Child Welfare Information

General Use of Mobile Devices

Almost all respondents to the survey of legal professionals (97 percent) indicated that they have a smartphone or tablet. When asked how they use these mobile devices in their personal and professional lives, survey respondents reported that they most often use their smartphones to search for information or resources on the internet (91 percent) and read about news or current events (90 percent). Fewer survey respondents reported using their mobile device to play online games (32 percent) or to view or take online courses (20 percent).

Exhibit 55: Which of the following activities do you typically engage in using your smartphone and/or tablet?
(n=340)²⁸



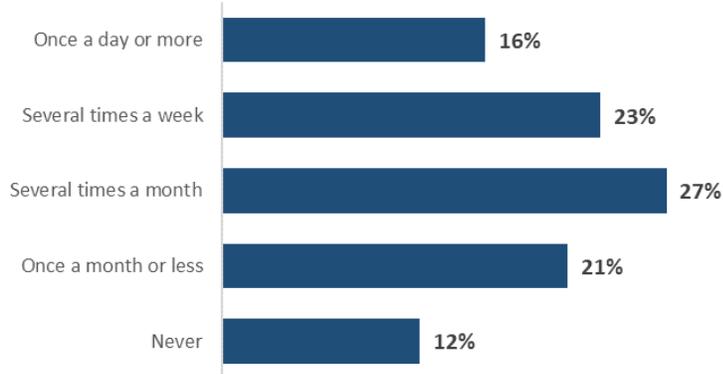
One focus group participant mentioned using her mobile phone to show children how to look up information or resources on their own smartphones. When asked why they prefer to use a mobile phone for these purposes, several focus group participants said that mobile devices were easier, faster, and less “clunky” than a laptop. Some participants noted that they find it difficult to search for information without a mobile application that has already consolidated relevant research. Focus group participants also pointed out that always using a mobile phone for information access can be challenging. Some courtrooms do not allow mobile phones, which makes reliance on these devices problematic.

Use of Mobile Devices for Professional Purposes

Over one-third of respondents (39 percent) reported that they have used their smartphone and/or tablet to search for, access, or share information about child welfare in the past 3 months at least several times a week. Attorneys for parents, children, or families and attorneys for child welfare agencies were most likely to say that they used mobile devices for these purposes at least several times a week (55 percent and 53 percent, respectively); CIP directors and staff (32 percent) and judges (17 percent) were less likely to do so.

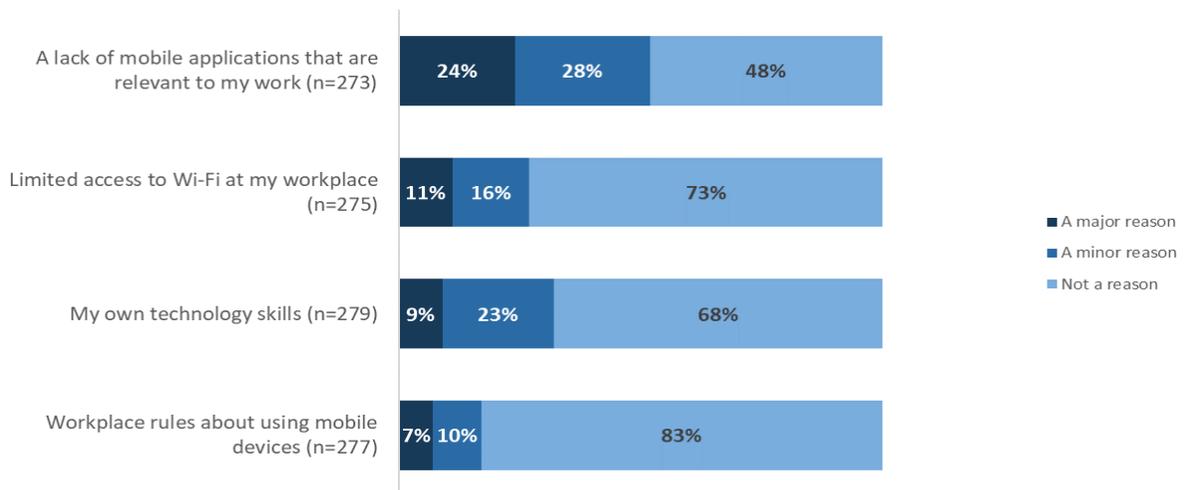
²⁸ Respondents were asked to select all responses that apply for this question.

Exhibit 56: Over the past 3 months, how often have you used your smartphone and/or tablet to search for, access, or share information about child welfare? (n=304)



Respondents were asked to identify any reasons that they do not use their mobile devices more frequently to search for, access, or share child welfare-related information (exhibit 57). The reason most often reported by respondents was a lack of mobile applications that are relevant to their work—52 percent said that this was either a major reason or a minor reason they do not use their mobile devices more frequently for this purpose. Workplace rules about using mobile devices, on the other hand, were considered a major or minor reason by only 17 percent of respondents.

Exhibit 57: Which of the following are reasons that you do not use your smartphone and/or tablet more often to search for, access, or share information about child welfare?



Respondents were also given the opportunity to identify other reasons in addition to the four shown in exhibit 57, and 119 respondents did so. The most common additional reason mentioned by respondents was that they preferred to use a desktop computer instead of a mobile device because it allows them to

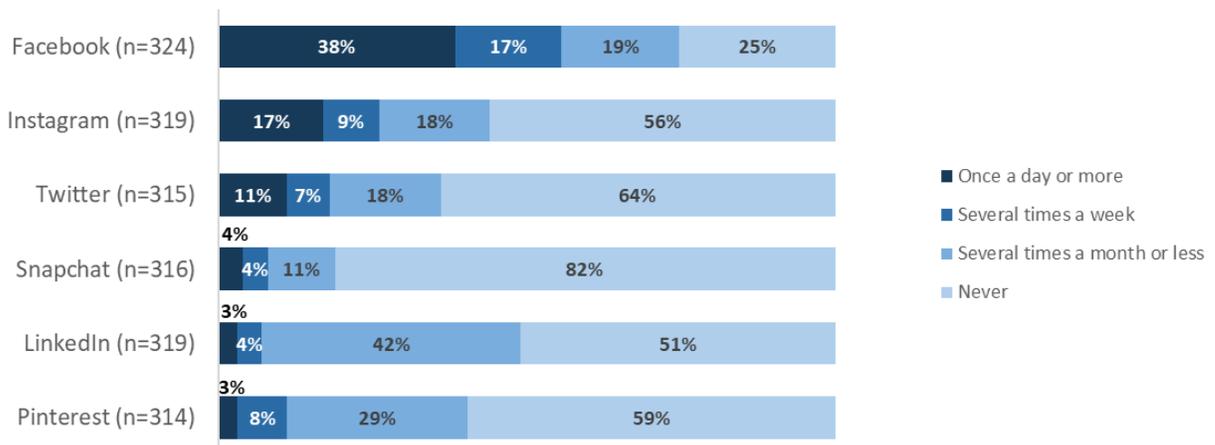
print materials, save files, and access the internet more consistently (59 respondents). Additionally, respondents also said that because they have more consistent access to a desktop or laptop computer, they did not need to use a mobile device for this purpose (27 respondents).

3.9 Use of Social Media

General Use of Social Media

When asked about how often they view or share information on different social media platforms for personal or professional reasons, 55 percent of respondents said they use Facebook, 26 percent reported using Instagram, 18 percent indicated they use Twitter, 8 percent reported using Snapchat, 7 percent reported using LinkedIn, and 11 percent reported using Pinterest at least several times a week. Facebook was the predominant platform used—only a quarter of respondents reported never using Facebook, compared to at least half or more of participants reporting never using any of the other platforms listed. While several focus group participants reported using Facebook most often, they also reported using Twitter nearly as much.

Exhibit 58: We would like to know how often you use social media, whether for personal or professional reasons. How often do you view or share information on the following sites?



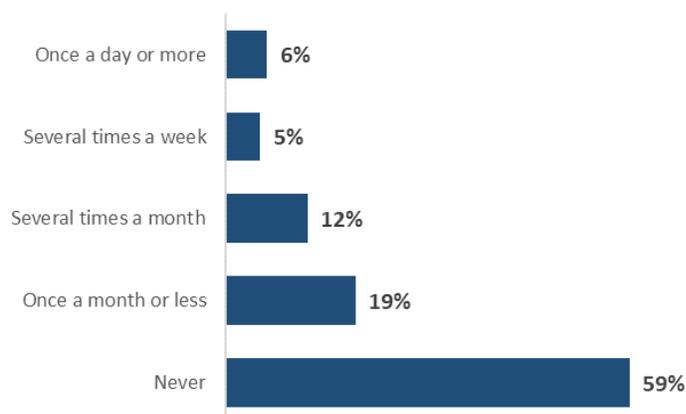
Social Media Use for Professional Purposes

Less than half (42 percent) of respondents reported that they search for, access, or share information about child welfare through social media. Only 11 percent said they do so at least several times a week. Attorneys for parents, children, or families were much more likely than other respondents to use social media for these purposes; 59 percent have done so, and 19 percent do so at least several times a week (compared to 5 percent of other respondents). Forty-one percent of attorneys for parents, children, or families never use social media for these purposes (compared to 70 percent of other respondents).

Survey data are consistent with focus group findings. When focus group participants were asked if they used social media, about half of those who responded said they use social media to access, receive, and/or share information about child welfare, while about half said they do not. Those who do not use social media offered two common explanations as to why. First, some judges suggested that social media has the potential to bias their decisions in the courtroom, and so they purposefully avoid it altogether. Second, a few legal professionals mentioned having issues with children and adults finding or harassing them online in the past. As a result, they no longer use social media platforms personally or professionally.

Of the participants that did report using social media for child welfare purposes, some use it to find or communicate with clients, while others use it to share child welfare information or follow relevant organizations such as the ABA or NACC.

Exhibit 59: How often do you search for, access, or share information about child welfare through social media? (n=310)²⁹

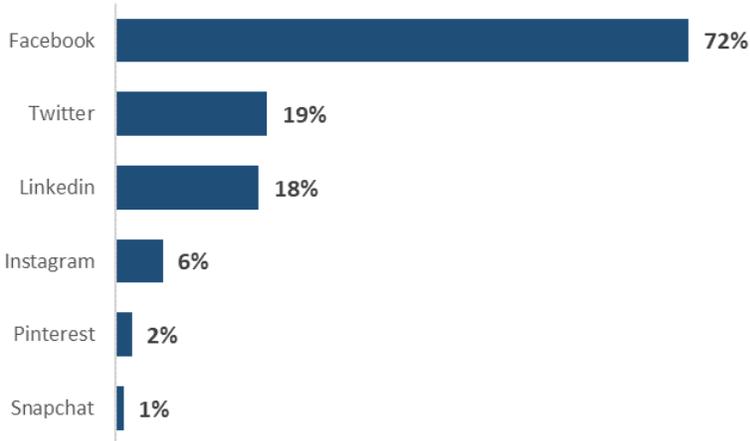


When looking at social media usage for child welfare information purposes by age, younger respondents were more likely to say that they use social media to search for, access, or share information about child welfare. This was also the case with child welfare professionals who work for State, county, or private agencies or with Tribes. Among legal professionals, 43 percent of respondents age 40 or younger said that they never search for, access, or share information about child welfare through social media, compared to 65 percent of respondents age 61 or older.

Among respondents who reported they use social media to search for, access, or share information about child welfare, a large majority (72 percent) use Facebook for this purpose. Smaller percentages of respondents also reported using Twitter (19 percent) and LinkedIn (18 percent) (exhibit 60).

²⁹ For the purposes of this analysis, respondents who indicated that they generally never use social media and those who never use social media for child welfare information purposes both were assigned a value of “never.”

Exhibit 60: Which of the following social media platforms do you use to search for, access, or share information about child welfare? (n=128)³⁰



³⁰ This exhibit does not include responses from individuals who indicated that they never use social media to search for, access, or share information about child welfare. Respondents could select all responses that applied for this item.

4. Information Habits and Preferences of B.S.W. and M.S.W. Students

Key Findings

- Over three-quarters of respondents to the student survey always or almost always have reliable access to the internet during their typical day, and 96 percent have reliable access at least most of the time. Less than 1 percent rarely or never have reliable access to the internet. (Section 4.3)
- Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of respondents agreed that they have enough access to information about child welfare for academic and professional purposes, compared to 17 percent who feel that they do not have enough access to information. (Section 4.3)
- Over 70 percent of respondents receive information about child welfare for which they have not specifically searched. Respondents most often receive this information through class lectures; trainings, conferences, or workshops; or through email listservs or electronic newsletters. (Section 4.5)
- Respondents prefer to receive child welfare information through peer-reviewed journal articles, videos, or PowerPoint presentations. (Section 4.5)
- Respondents most often share child welfare information with peers through face-to-face conversations, in-person or online class discussions, and social media. (Section 4.6)
- Three-quarters of participants said that they prefer in-person educational activities over virtual activities. (Section 4.6)
- Almost all respondents (98 percent) have a smartphone or tablet, and over one-quarter use this device to search for, access, or share child welfare information at least several times a week. Activities for which respondents most often use their mobile devices include checking emails and calendars, conducting research for class assignments, and accessing professional development or educational opportunities. (Section 4.7)
- Over 45 percent of respondents cited a lack of mobile applications as a reason for not using their mobile devices more frequently for child welfare-related purposes. (Section 4.7)
- Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) have used social media to search for, access, or share child welfare information. Respondents use Facebook much more frequently than other platforms for this purpose. (Section 4.8)

4.1 Description of Respondents

A total of 450 students pursuing a degree in social work participated in the National Child Welfare Information Study survey. Two-thirds of survey respondents (64 percent) are currently enrolled in an M.S.W. program; the remaining third (36 percent) is currently enrolled in a B.S.W. program. Most respondents (80 percent) indicated they do not receive a child welfare stipend (i.e., title IV-E) from their educational institution, while 20 percent do receive a stipend.

Respondents were from 43 States, representing over 140 different institutions. Some respondents (41 percent) said they currently work for a child welfare organization in addition to their academic studies.

Most respondents did not work for a child welfare organization before beginning their social work educational program (65 percent).

Exhibit 61: Characteristics of Respondents to the Survey of B.S.W. and M.S.W. Students

Type of social work program (n=450)	
Bachelor's	161 (36%)
Master's	289 (64%)
Stipend from educational institution (n=445)	
Yes	89 (20%)
No	356 (80%)
Currently working for a child welfare organization or agency (n=449)	
Yes, for a State child welfare agency	22 (5%)
Yes, for a county child welfare agency	25 (6%)
Yes, for a private agency providing services under contract with a State or county	46 (10%)
Yes, for a different type of organization	91 (20%)
Not currently working for a child welfare organization	265 (59%)
Previously worked for a child welfare organization or agency that provides support to children and families who are involved with the child welfare system (n=356)	
Yes, for a State child welfare agency	18 (5%)
Yes, for a county child welfare agency	21 (6%)
Yes, for a private agency providing services under contract with a State or county	52 (15%)

Yes, for a different type of organization	33 (9%)
No	232 (65%)
Age (n=356)	
20 or younger	18 (5%)
21 to 30	201 (57%)
31 to 40	57 (16%)
41 to 50	50 (14%)
51 to 60	21 (6%)
61 or older	5 (1%)
Prefer not to answer	4 (1%)

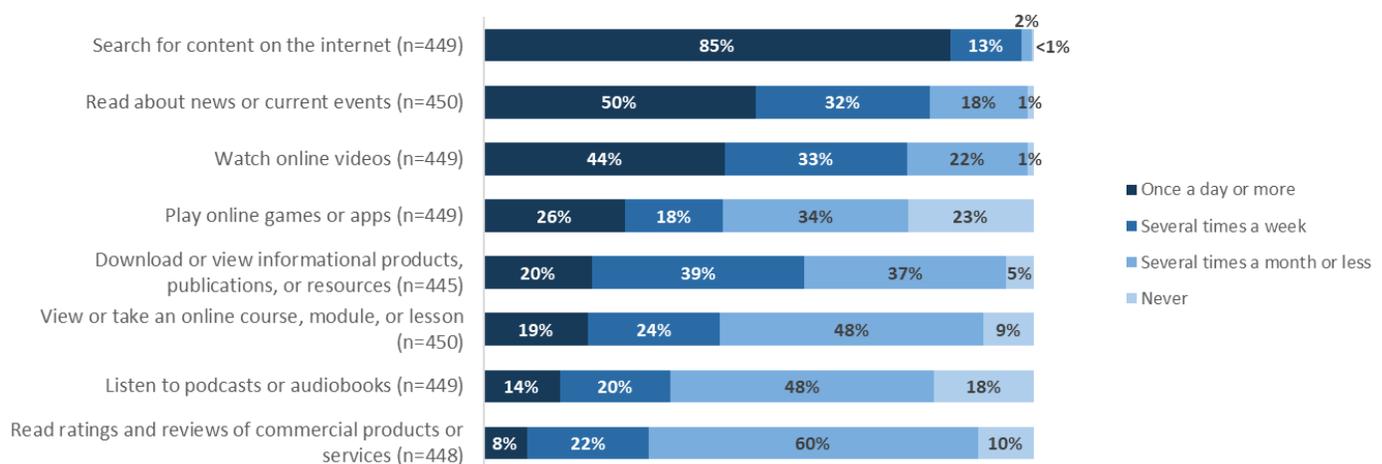
Gender (n=354)	
Male	25 (7%)
Female	316 (89%)
Neither male nor female	7 (2%)
Prefer not to answer	6 (2%)
Ethnicity (n=356)	
Hispanic	57 (16%)
Non-Hispanic	286 (80%)
Prefer not to answer	13 (4%)
Race (n=356)³¹	
American Indian/Alaska Native	9 (3%)
Asian	11 (3%)
Black or African American	48 (14%)
Pacific Islander	2 (<1%)
White	252 (71%)
Other	18 (5%)
Prefer not to answer	26 (7%)
Urbanicity (n=183)	
Urban	97 (53%)
Suburban	45 (25%)
Rural/frontier	29 (16%)
Don't know or not applicable	12 (7%)

³¹ Respondents could select all options that applied.

4.2 General Information Habits and Preferences

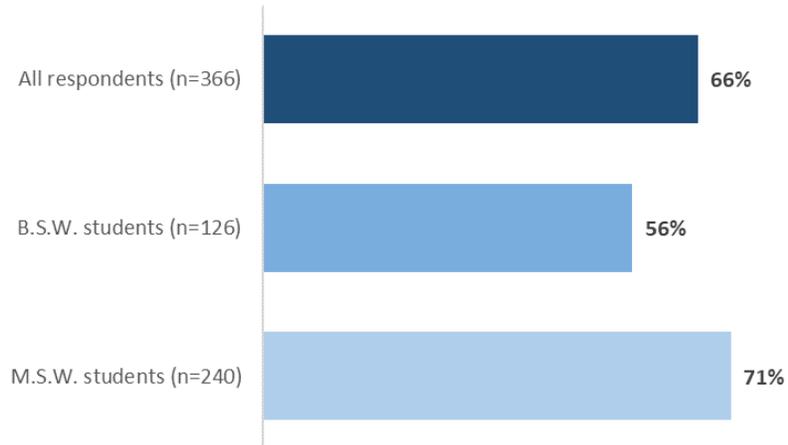
Survey respondents were asked about the strategies they use to access information in their daily professional and personal lives (exhibit 62). Nearly 100 percent of respondents indicated they search for content on the internet at least several times a week. Over 80 percent indicated they read about news or current events at least several times a week, and 77 percent of respondents watch online videos with that frequency. Fewer respondents said that they listen to podcast or audiobooks (34 percent) or read ratings and reviews of commercial products or services (30 percent) at least several times a week.

Exhibit 62: How often do you do each of the following for personal or professional purposes?



Two-thirds of respondents (66 percent) indicated they currently take courses that require them to conduct activities online (exhibit 63). This percentage was higher among respondents in M.S.W. programs (71 percent) than among those in B.S.W. programs (56 percent).

Exhibit 63: Do any of your courses require you to conduct activities online? (Percent responding 'yes' by respondent type)

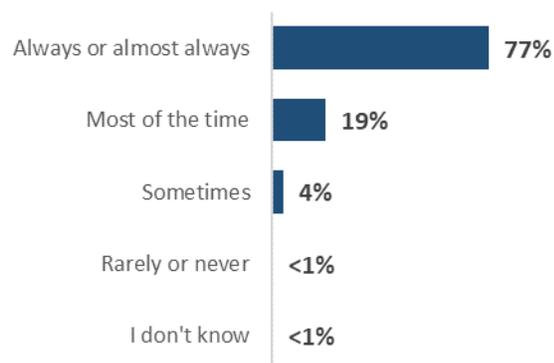


4.3 Access to Information About Child Welfare

Reliability of Internet Access

Most respondents (77 percent) indicated that they always or almost always have reliable access to the internet during their typical day (exhibit 64). Other respondents said that they have reliable access most of the time (19 percent), and 4 percent said they have it sometimes. Less than 1 percent said that they rarely or never have reliable access to the internet. The percentage of students who said they always or almost always had reliable access to the internet was higher than that of child welfare professionals (52 percent) or legal professionals (64 percent). Focus group data suggests similar results, with those who report not having internet access all of the time explaining that they most often have trouble in rural areas or in specific buildings with a weak signal.

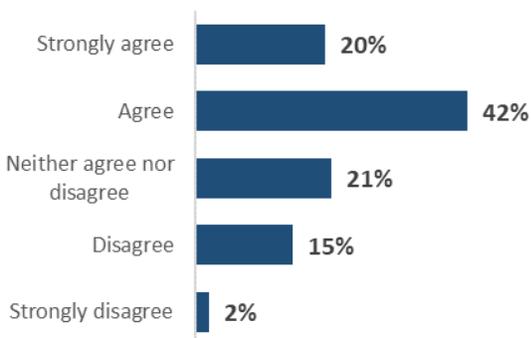
Exhibit 64: During your typical workday, how much of the time do you have reliable access to the internet? (n=501)



Perceptions About Adequate Access to Child Welfare-Related Information

Most respondents (62 percent) strongly agreed or agreed that they have enough access to information about child welfare for their academic and professional needs. Twenty-one percent neither agreed nor disagreed that they have enough access to child welfare information, while 17 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. The percentage of students that strongly agreed or agreed that they had enough information access (62 percent) was slightly lower than that of child welfare professionals (67 percent) or legal professionals (73 percent).

Exhibit 65: Do you agree or disagree that you have enough access to information about child welfare to do your work effectively? (n=417)



Gaps in Information Access

Respondents were asked what types of information, if any, they would like more access to, and 195 individuals provided responses to this question. Over 25 respondents commented they would like more access to State laws and other policy information.

Approximately 20 respondents indicated they would like more access to up-to-date statistics. For example, one respondent asked for “rates of certain child welfare-based statistics (i.e., fatalities, crimes, deviant acts),” while another cited a need for “statistics about children who are in care, or particular types of care (comprehensive foster care).”

Five respondents said they would like more information about professional development opportunities, such as webinars and trainings, and some respondents also shared that they would like more access to client-related resources (e.g., services for clients without insurance, guidance on how to interact and advocate for clients).

During focus groups, a few participants suggested consolidating child welfare information—such as the information listed above—so that it is available in one place. While three individuals suggested providing access to needed information through an application, another suggested using a web platform that could be accessed from anywhere. In general, focus group participants cited a lack of up-to-date information and a lack of evidence-based resources as major gaps.

Barriers to Information Access

Respondents were also asked for feedback on what, if anything, prevents them from having enough access to information about child welfare; 183 respondents provided a response to this question.

The most frequent response, provided by more than 30 respondents, was that they lack the time to search for the information they need about child welfare. In the words of one respondent, “I have the network and educational resources available to access the information; I just haven't had the time to invest in learning more. After completing my degree, I hope to become more involved.”

More than 15 respondents said that they are unsure of where to look for the materials they need related to child welfare. For example, one survey respondent said they don't know “where to look to access information or the proper search terms to insert to find what I need.” Some focus group respondents reported similar challenges—specifically, with respect to finding State-level information such as laws, policies, and regulations.

Ten survey respondents and two focus group respondents cited access issues, such as insufficient open-access journals, specific resources being unavailable to students, or loss of access to journals after graduation. One survey respondent said there are “not enough easily accessible resources; with the resources I do have, there are a lot of hoops to jump through to access them.”

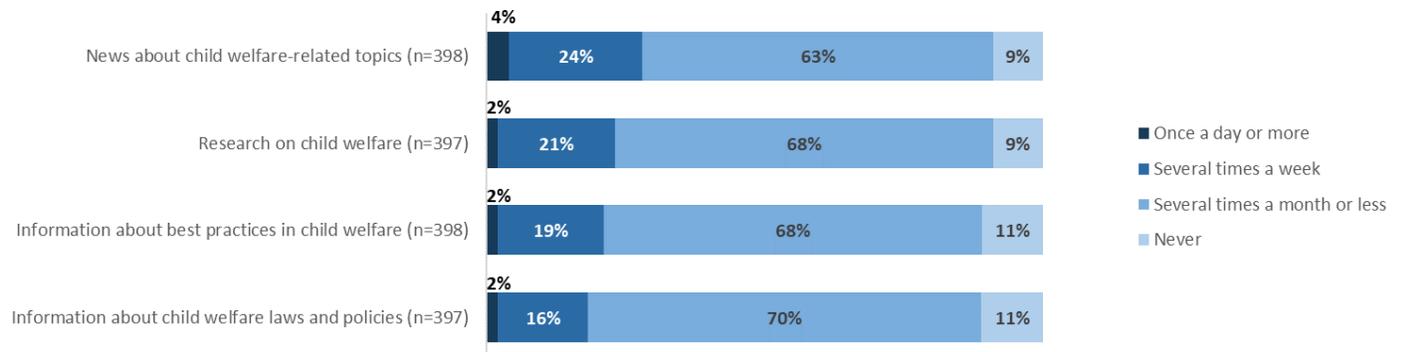
Finally, 10 respondents mentioned that cost sometimes prevents them from accessing materials like academic journals and research articles, and 5 respondents commented that it can be challenging to find materials that they know are reliable and credible.

4.4 Searching for Information About Child Welfare

Frequency of Searches for Information

When asked what types of information they search for most frequently (exhibit 66), respondents were most likely to indicate that they search for news about child welfare-related topics; 28 percent said they search for these resources several times a week or more. Fewer respondents said that they search several times a week or more for research on child welfare (23 percent), information about best practices (21 percent), or information about laws and policies (18 percent).

Exhibit 66: How often do you search for each of the following?

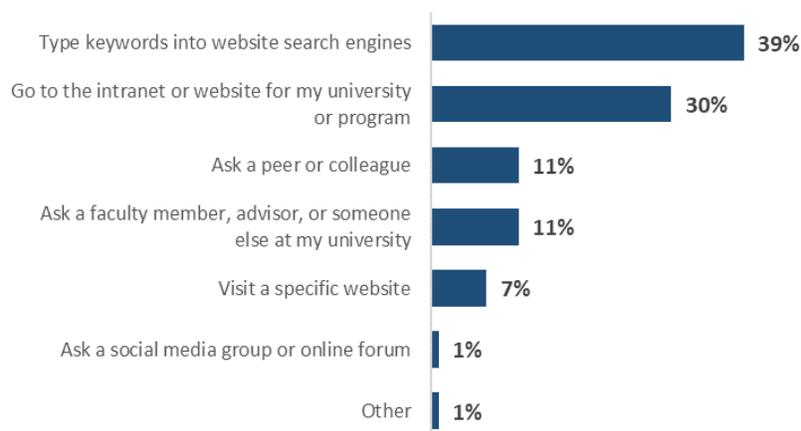


A few focus group respondents elaborated on this point, saying that they are most often searching for information related to their full- or part-time work or information that is relevant for a school assignment.

Strategies Used to Search for Information

When asked what they most often do when they need to search for information about child welfare, most respondents said they type keywords into website search engines (39 percent) or go to the intranet or website for their university or program (30 percent). Fewer respondents said they ask a peer or colleague (11 percent), ask a faculty member or someone else at their university (11 percent), or visit a specific website (7 percent). Only 1 percent of respondents noted that they ask a social media group or online forum when they need to search for child welfare information.

Exhibit 67: When you need to search for information about child welfare, what do you do most often? (n=372)³²



³² Respondents who indicated in a previous question that they never search for any types of information about child welfare were not asked this question and are therefore not included in this exhibit.

In focus groups, students reported using Google Scholar, either in place of or in addition to Google, on a regular basis to search for child welfare information—a search strategy that was not mentioned by child welfare professionals working with Tribes and non-Tribal populations or legal professionals working in child welfare. Students participating in focus groups perceived that they could find more trustworthy or indepth information on Google Scholar than through a regular Google search.

About one-third of focus group participants said their academic experience has helped with learning to use better keywords with Google and Google Scholar to conduct searches more effectively. Similarly, one participant said that being a student has helped with learning to find sources through citations, while a second participant said their academic work has led to a greater awareness of the importance of getting information from reliable sources.

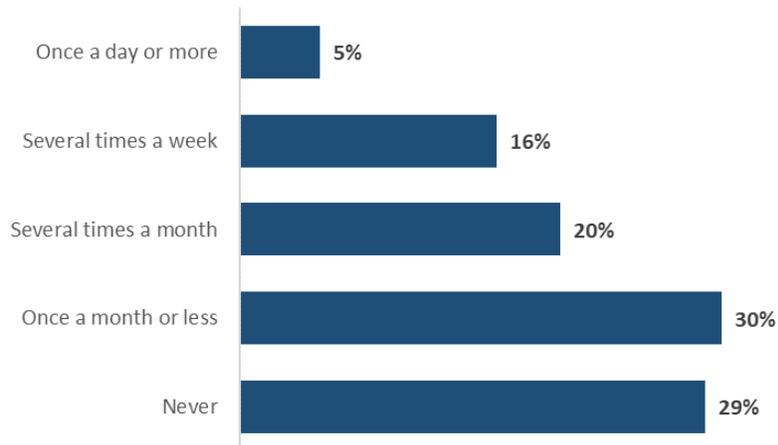
When focus group participants were asked how they decided if a source was trustworthy, three common responses emerged. About one-third of participants said a source was trustworthy if it came from a nonpartisan, research-oriented organization. Another third of respondents said they reviewed the citations to make this same determination. Finally, some participants determine if a source is trustworthy based on their knowledge or research of the author.

Among survey respondents who provided a specific website they use to search for information about child welfare (n=25), most listed Child Welfare Information Gateway. Fewer than five respondents mentioned each of the following: the National Association of Social Workers website, university library websites, and individual States' websites. The websites mentioned by focus group participants also included those listed above in addition to more specific sites such as ZERO TO THREE and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.

4.5 Receiving Information About Child Welfare

Twenty-one percent of students said that they received information about child welfare that they had not specifically searched for at least several times a week, compared to 51 percent of legal professionals and 37 percent of child welfare professionals. Almost a third (29 percent) of student respondents indicated that they never receive information about child welfare that they have not specifically searched for, compared to 9 percent of child welfare professionals and only 3 percent of legal professionals.

Exhibit 68: How often do you receive information about child welfare (electronically or in hardcopy) for which you have not specifically searched? (n=377)



When asked what they thought about the amount of information they received, about half of focus group participants believe they receive enough information. Although these participants had positive feelings about receiving a greater quantity of information in the future, a few expressed reservations about having adequate time to peruse all information received.

Two respondents said that because they have the ability to unsubscribe from newsletters or listservs that are overwhelming or not helpful, the information they receive is just the right amount because they have curated what reaches them.

When asked how carefully they read the information they currently receive, about half of all focus group respondents said they generally skim information received and only read more in depth if the topic is of interest.

Perceived Importance of Channels for Receiving Child Welfare Information

When respondents were asked to report the most important ways they receive information about child welfare that they have not specifically searched for (exhibit 69), the most common responses were through class lectures (55 percent); through trainings, conferences, and workshops (42 percent); and through email listservs, electronic newsletters, or subscription lists (32 percent). Less common responses included through social media (24 percent); in person or by telephone from a peer, professor, or advisor (21 percent); and through an online community of practice (10 percent).

Exhibit 69: What are the most important ways that you receive information about child welfare for which you have not specifically searched? (n=267)³³



Among survey respondents who currently work for a child welfare organization or agency in addition to their academic work, the most common way of receiving information about child welfare was through trainings, conferences, or workshops (53 percent).

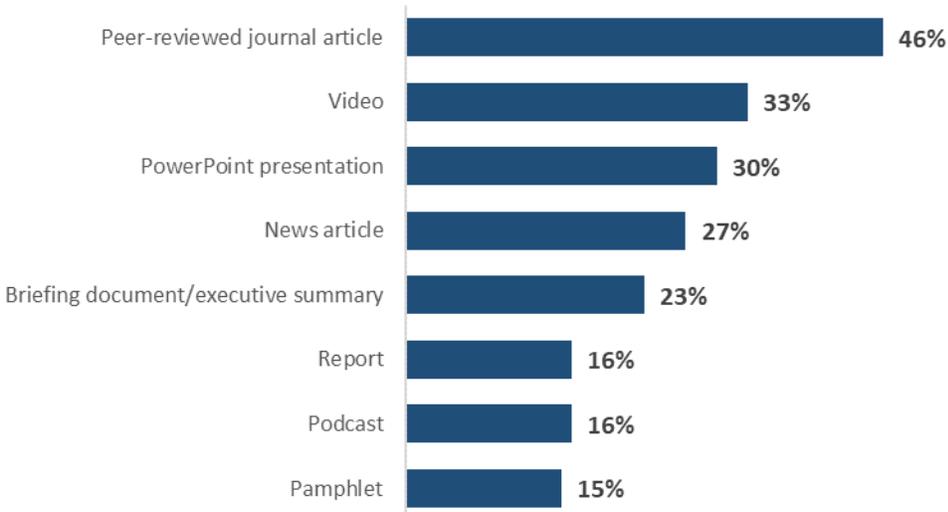
In addition to the channels listed above, a few focus group participants also reported receiving information at conferences or other professional events. One participant also mentioned setting up a Google Alert so that she receives an email any time there is an article published with a specific phrase relevant to her job.

Preferred Formats for Receiving Information

Respondents were asked to consider what format they would prefer to receive information about a new, promising child welfare practice (exhibit 70). Nearly half of respondents (46 percent) said they would like to receive this information through a peer-reviewed journal article, and one-third (33 percent) said they would prefer to receive this information through video. The least commonly preferred formats were as a report (16 percent), a podcast (16 percent), or a pamphlet (15 percent).

³³ Respondents were asked to select up to three responses for this question. Respondents who indicated in a previous question that they never receive information about child welfare were not asked this question and are therefore not included in this exhibit.

Exhibit 70: If you were going to receive information about a new, promising child welfare practice, in what format would you prefer to receive it? (n=379)³⁴



Use of Electronic Subscription Lists

One-quarter (25 percent) of all respondents indicated that they receive child welfare information and resources through at least one email listserv, electronic newsletter, or other type of subscription list. This was a slightly smaller percentage than among child welfare professionals (31 percent), and much smaller than among legal professionals (73 percent).

Respondents were asked to consider the listserv or subscription list they find most valuable to their work and reflect on why it is a useful resource. Sixty-five individuals offered a response to this question. Some respondents mentioned that the materials they find most helpful are those that are concise, relevant, and informative. One respondent shared, “I am part of some local listservs that often share topics or articles that are pertinent to my community and the populations I directly serve, as well as larger [State/national] items that are equally helpful for understanding the context in which we practice.”

A few others mentioned that the most valuable materials are fact checked and are from trusted sources. For example, one respondent said the listserv of which they are a member is a “trusted and respected subscription.” Lastly, a few respondents commented that they find information most valuable if it is current. For example, one respondent said, “[My favorite listserv] gives me the most up-to-date information about child welfare.”

Focus group participants made similar suggestions, with one person defining a “short” newsletter as one that is no longer than three to four pages, while a few others said newsletters and listservs are most

³⁴ Respondents were asked to select up to three responses for this question.

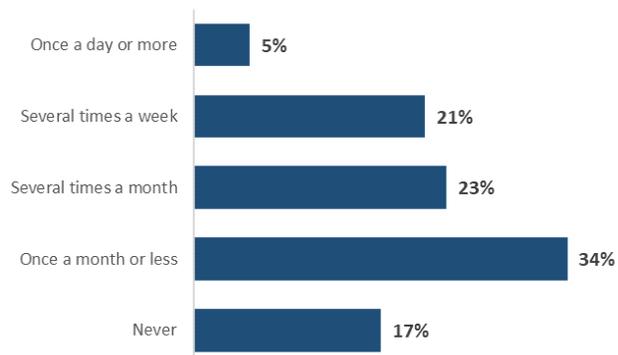
valuable when they include up-to-date information. As an example, one participant stated their perception that decriminalization and/or legalization of marijuana across the country is not adequately covered by existing publications. Finally, three individuals noted a preference for information in the form of videos because they prefer to process information visually or because they like to pass the information on to clients—some of whom cannot read—when applicable.

4.6 Sharing Information About Child Welfare

Frequency of Sharing Child Welfare Information

About a quarter (26 percent) of respondents indicated that they share information about child welfare with peers, other students, or professional contacts several times a week or more. Nearly a quarter of respondents (23 percent) share child welfare information several times a month, while 34 percent do so once a month or less. Seventeen percent of respondents said they never share child welfare information with peers, other students, or professional contacts. Other audiences share information about child welfare with peers more frequently than students; 20 percent of legal professionals and 18 percent of child welfare professionals share child welfare information once a day or more, compared to only 5 percent of students.

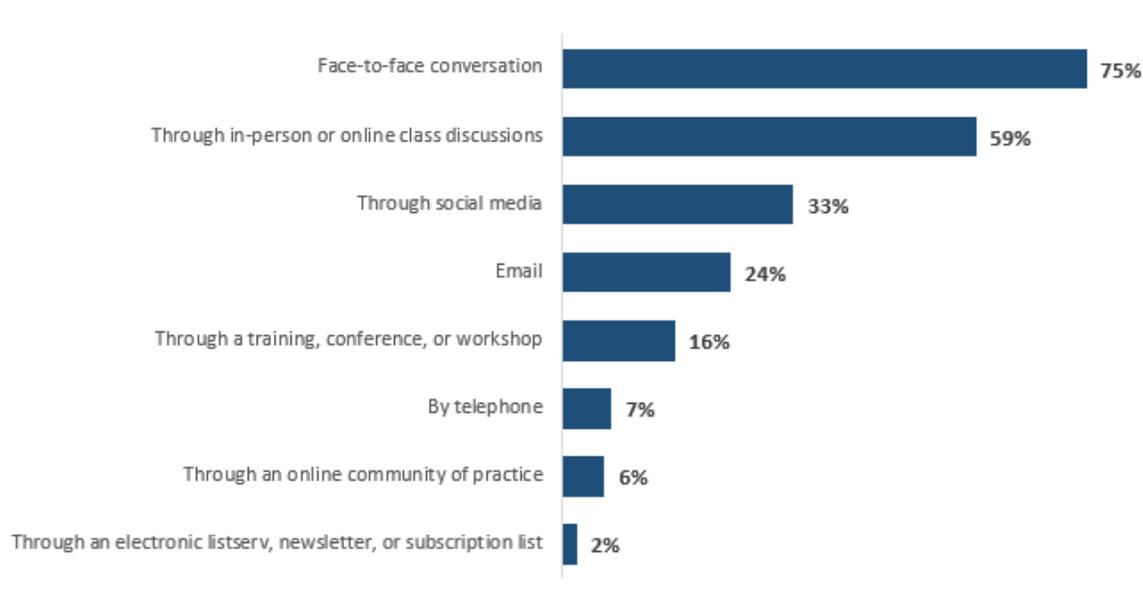
Exhibit 71: How often do you share information about child welfare with colleagues or other professional contacts? (n=368)



Methods of Sharing Information

Respondents were asked to identify up to three ways they most commonly share information about child welfare. The most frequent answer was that respondents share this information through face-to-face conversations (75 percent). In-person and online class discussions (59 percent), social media (33 percent), and email (24 percent) were also common ways of sharing information. The least common methods of sharing information were by telephone (7 percent), through an online community of practice (6 percent), and through a listserv, newsletter, or subscription list (2 percent).

Exhibit 72: When you share information about child welfare, how do you most often do so? (n=306)^{35,36}



Responses differed slightly during focus group discussions. For example, roughly half of the participants reported using email to share information, followed by some reporting using in-class discussions, print resources, and social media for sharing information about child welfare. About one-third of focus group participants reported sharing information most commonly with colleagues and peers.

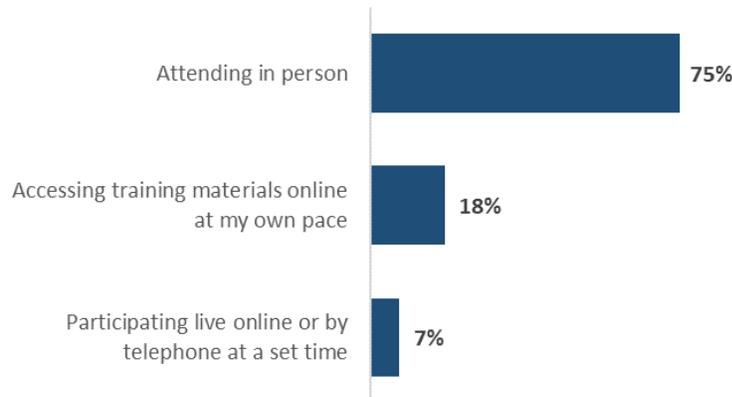
Preferred Formats for Educational Activities

Respondents to the survey of students were asked about their preferred format for educational activities (exhibit 73). Most prefer to attend in person (75 percent), while 18 percent prefer accessing materials online and completing activities at their own pace. Only 7 percent of participants prefer to participate in educational activities online or by telephone at a set time.

³⁵ Respondents were asked to select up to three responses for this question.

³⁶ Respondents who indicated in a previous question that they never share information about child welfare were not asked this question and are therefore not included in this exhibit.

Exhibit 73: In general, in what type of educational activity do you prefer to participate? (n=369)



4.7 Use of Mobile Devices to Access Child Welfare Information

General Use of Mobile Devices

Nearly all respondents (98 percent) have a smartphone and/or tablet for personal or professional use. When asked how they use these mobile devices in their general personal and professional lives, respondents most frequently indicated they use these devices to search for information or resources on the internet (92 percent), read about news or current events (83 percent), and watch online videos (79 percent). About half of respondents indicated they use smartphones and/or tablets to listen to podcasts or audiobooks (57 percent); download or view informational products, publications, or resources (53 percent); or read ratings and reviews of commercial products or services (53 percent). Less common activities included playing online games (44 percent) or viewing or taking an online course, module, or lesson (42 percent).

Exhibit 74: Which of the following activities do you typically engage in using your smartphone and/or tablet? (n=448)

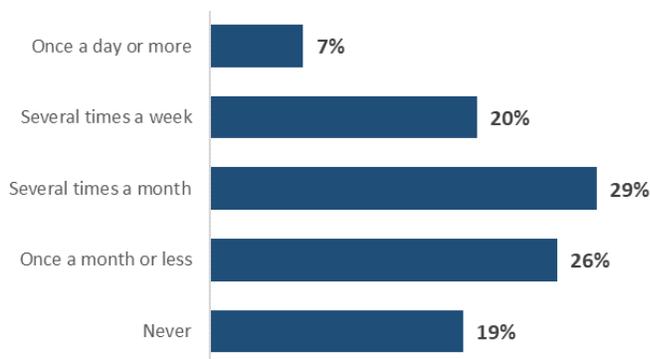


Use of Mobile Devices for Professional and Academic Purposes

Respondents were asked to consider how often they have used their smartphones and/or tablets to search for, access, or share information about child welfare. Only 7 percent indicated they use these devices to search for or share information about child welfare once a day or more, while another 20 percent indicated they use these devices for these purposes several times a week. The most common response was several times a month (29 percent). Approximately one-quarter of respondents (26 percent) said they use their devices for child welfare information once a month or less, and 19 percent indicated they never use their devices for this purpose.

Students use mobile devices less frequently than other audiences to search for, access, or share child welfare information; 27 percent of students said they do so at least several times a week, compared to 39 percent of legal professionals and 36 percent of child welfare professionals.

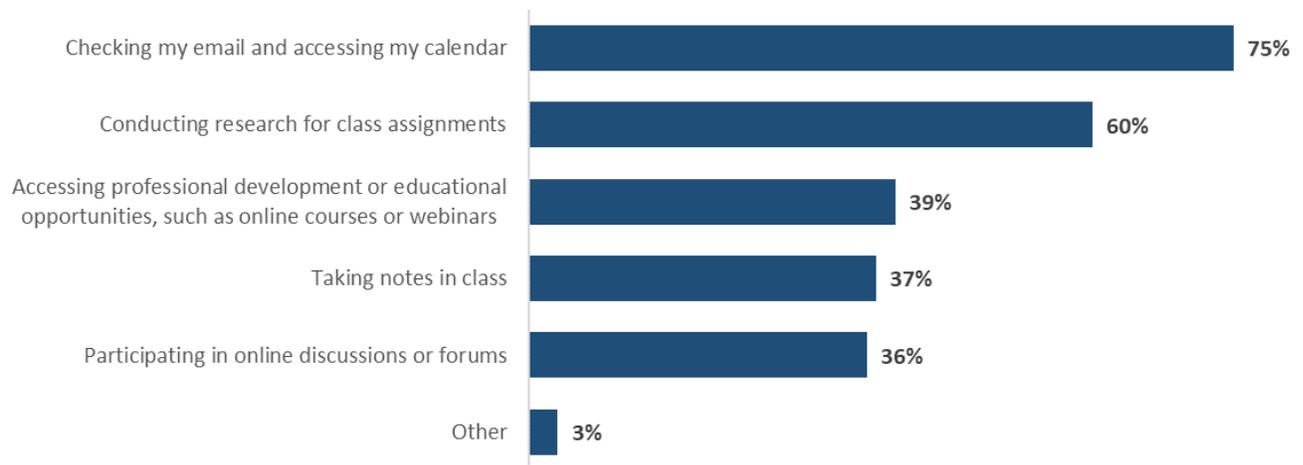
Exhibit 75: Over the past 3 months, how often have you used your smartphone and/or tablet to search for, access, or share information about child welfare? (n=360)



Focus group discussion around this topic did not lead to the identification of any specific trends, substantiating the idea that students don't necessarily use their phones consistently for professional purposes.

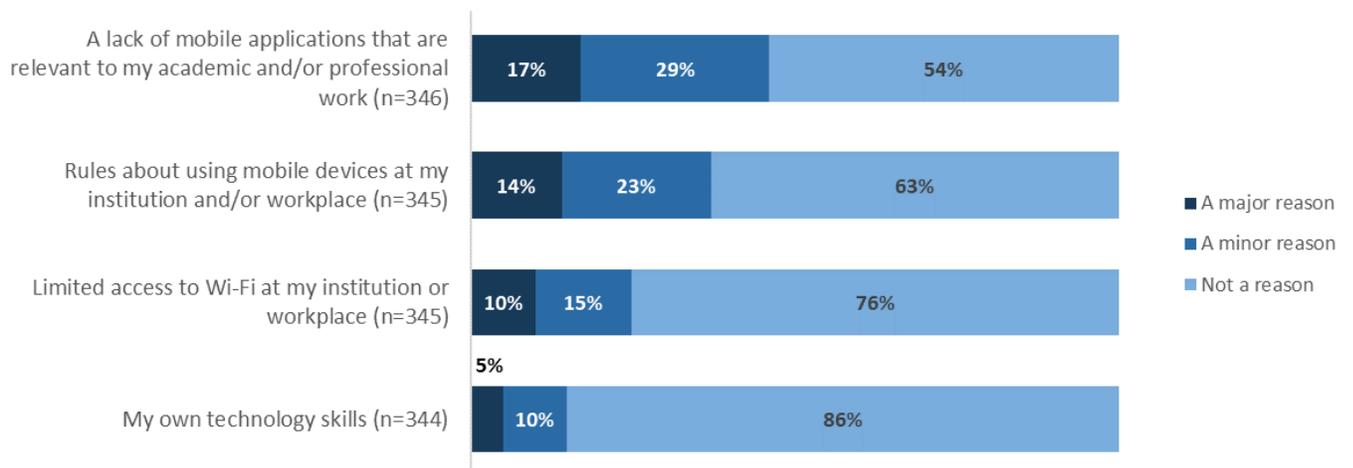
When asked for what professional or academic purposes they had used their mobile device in the past 3 months, most respondents indicated they checked their email and accessed their calendar (75 percent) and conducted research for class assignments (60 percent). Respondents were less likely to use their smartphone and/or tablet to access professional development or educational opportunities (39 percent), take notes in class (37 percent), or participate in online discussions or forums (36 percent). Three percent of respondents listed other purposes for which they used their smartphone and/or tablet, including checking assignments, completing quizzes, searching for online resources, and writing reports.

Exhibit 76: In your academic work related to child welfare, for what professional purpose(s) have you used your smartphone and/or tablet in the past 3 months? (n=303)³⁷



Respondents were asked to identify any reasons that they do not use their smartphone and/or tablet more frequently to search for, access, or share information about child welfare (exhibit 77). The barrier cited most frequently was a lack of relevant mobile applications; 46 percent of respondents said this was a major or minor reason they did not use their mobile device more often for this purpose. Technology skills, in comparison, were cited as a major or minor reason by only 15 percent of respondents—a lower percentage than child welfare professionals (20 percent) or legal professionals (31 percent).

Exhibit 77: Which of the following are reasons that you do not use your smartphone and/or tablet more often to search for, access, or share information about child welfare?



³⁷ For the purposes of this analysis, respondents who indicated that they never use their mobile device for child welfare purposes, as well as those who do not have mobile phones, are included in the denominators used to determine these percentages.

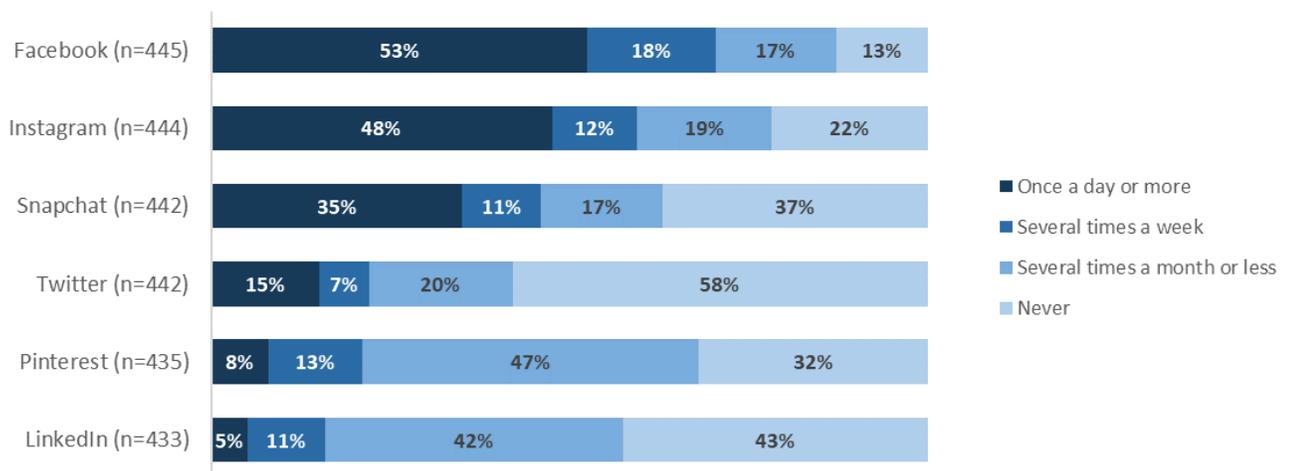
Additionally, 120 respondents provided other reasons they do not use their smartphone and/or tablet more often to search for, access, or share information about child welfare. Most of these respondents shared that they prefer to access information about child welfare on laptops or desktop computers rather than smartphones and/or tablets, saying that it is easier to read child welfare-related content on a larger screen.

4.8 Use of Social Media

General Use of Social Media

When asked about how often they view or share information on social media for personal or professional reasons, 53 percent of respondents reported they use Facebook at least once a day. Instagram (48 percent) and Snapchat (35 percent) were also used at least once a day by at least a third of respondents, while fewer used Twitter (15 percent), Pinterest (8 percent), or LinkedIn (5 percent) that often. Sixty percent reported using Instagram at least several times a week, compared to 46 percent using Snapchat, 22 percent using Twitter, 21 percent using Pinterest, and 16 percent using LinkedIn with similar frequency. Nearly 60 percent of respondents indicated they never use Twitter and 43 percent never use LinkedIn. Facebook and Instagram are also the top two platforms for the other audiences (child welfare professionals and legal professionals); however, students are more likely to use Snapchat over Twitter, which is not the case with other audiences.

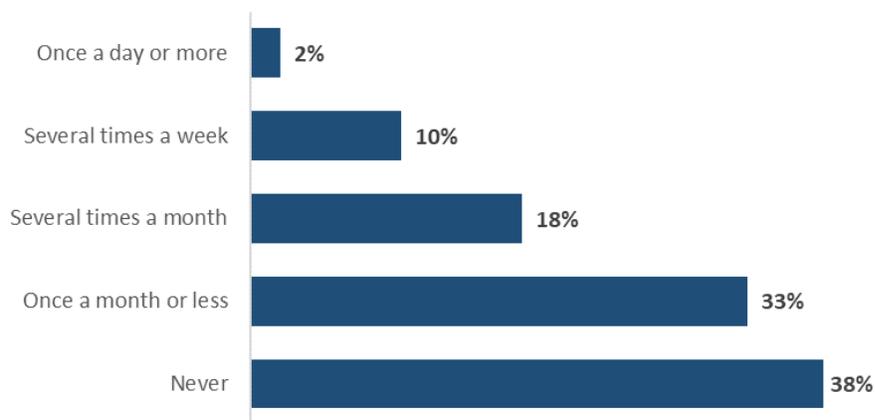
Exhibit 78: We would like to know how often you use social media, whether for personal, professional, or academic reasons. How often do you view or share information on the following sites?



Social Media Use for Professional and Academic Purposes

Respondents were asked how often they search for, access, or share information specifically about child welfare through social media. Only 2 percent indicated they do so once a day or more, and 10 percent said they do so several times a week. Over a third of respondents (38 percent) never search for, access, or share information about child welfare through social media.

Exhibit 79: How often do you search for, access, or share information about child welfare through social media? (n=359)³⁸



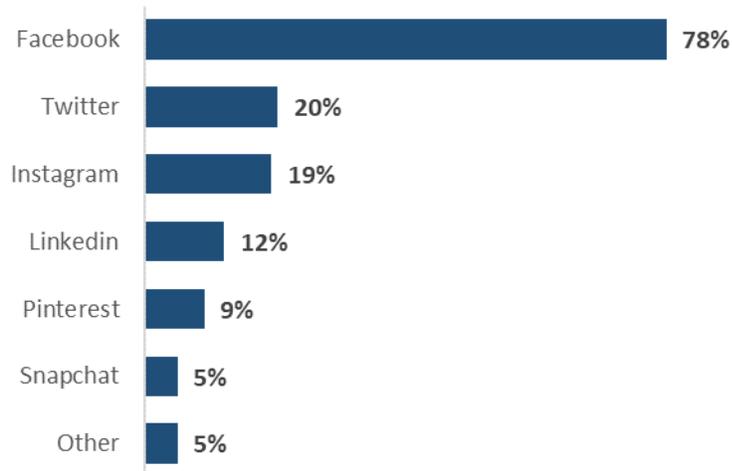
Similar rates (about one-third) of focus group respondents reported either not using social media at all or not using social media for professional purposes. For one individual, the decision not to use social media came after experiencing issues with former clients on social media. For the others, the decision was based on personal preference.

Those focus group participants who use social media for professional purposes most commonly reported using it to share information, follow organizations, and join relevant online groups related to social work and child welfare.

Among respondents who do use social media to search for, access, or share child welfare information through social media, over three-quarters (78 percent) do so using Facebook (exhibit 80). Other platforms used by over 10 percent of respondents included Twitter (20 percent), Instagram (19 percent), and LinkedIn (12 percent). Additional platforms mentioned by respondents included GroupMe, Reddit, and Tumblr.

³⁸ For the purposes of this analysis, respondents who indicated that they never use social media and those who never use social media for child welfare information purposes both were assigned a value of “never.”

Exhibit 80: Which of the following social media platforms do you use to search for, access, or share information about child welfare? (n=222)³⁹



³⁹ Respondents who indicated in a previous question that they never use social media for child welfare purposes were not asked this question and are therefore not included in this exhibit. Respondents could select all options that applied for this item.

5. Discussion

Chapters 2 through 4 of this report provide detailed summaries of findings for the three main audiences of interest: child welfare professionals, legal professionals, and students. This section provides a discussion of how information habits and preferences compare between different subsets of these respondents. The focus is on four specific comparisons:

1. Child welfare professionals in different roles
2. Child welfare professionals and legal professionals
3. Child welfare professionals who primarily serve Tribes and their peers who serve other audiences
4. Current child welfare professionals and those who will be entering the workforce in the future

5.1 Comparison of Child Welfare Professionals by Role

Key Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As might be expected, directors and administrators were generally older and more experienced than respondents in other roles and were more likely to have a postgraduate degree. Frontline staff were younger, least experienced, and least likely to have postgraduate degree, while managers and supervisors fell between the other two groups in all three of those measures. • Child welfare directors and administrators are more likely to search for resources related to research, news, laws, or best practices, while frontline workers are more likely to search for information to share with clients. • When searching for, receiving, or sharing information, frontline staff rely more frequently than more senior-level staff on interpersonal channels such as face-to-face conversations or telephone calls with colleagues. Directors and administrators, on the other hand, are more likely to rely on internet-based search strategies or electronic distribution lists. • Frontline professionals are more likely to use mobile devices for tasks directly related to their clients, such as communicating with clients, documenting contact notes, or researching information to share with clients. Administrators and directors, on the other hand, use mobile devices to access professional development, learn about promising practices, or look up policies and procedures.

One of the lenses through which the study team analyzed response data from the child welfare professionals survey was to assess differences in answers based on respondents' roles. These analyses focused on comparing three different groups of professionals: (a) respondents who identified themselves as frontline workers (which would include caseworkers and direct service providers), (b) respondents who identified themselves as managers or supervisors, and (c) respondents who identified themselves as administrators or directors. While some of the results of these analyses are described in chapter 2 of this report, in this section, we provide a more holistic view of the key differences between the information habits and preferences of these groups.

For the purposes of this analysis, we considered these groups as three "levels" of professionals in terms of the responsibility and authority that they typically have within child welfare organizations. While

there were some idiosyncratic differences between different pairs of groups, in this section, we focus primarily on areas in which there was a consistent pattern across the three levels—in other words, where response percentages either increased or decreased across the spectrum of frontline professionals, managers and supervisors, and directors and administrators.

This section focuses on responses from child welfare professionals (including those who work with Tribes); responses from legal professionals and students are not included.

Demographic Differences

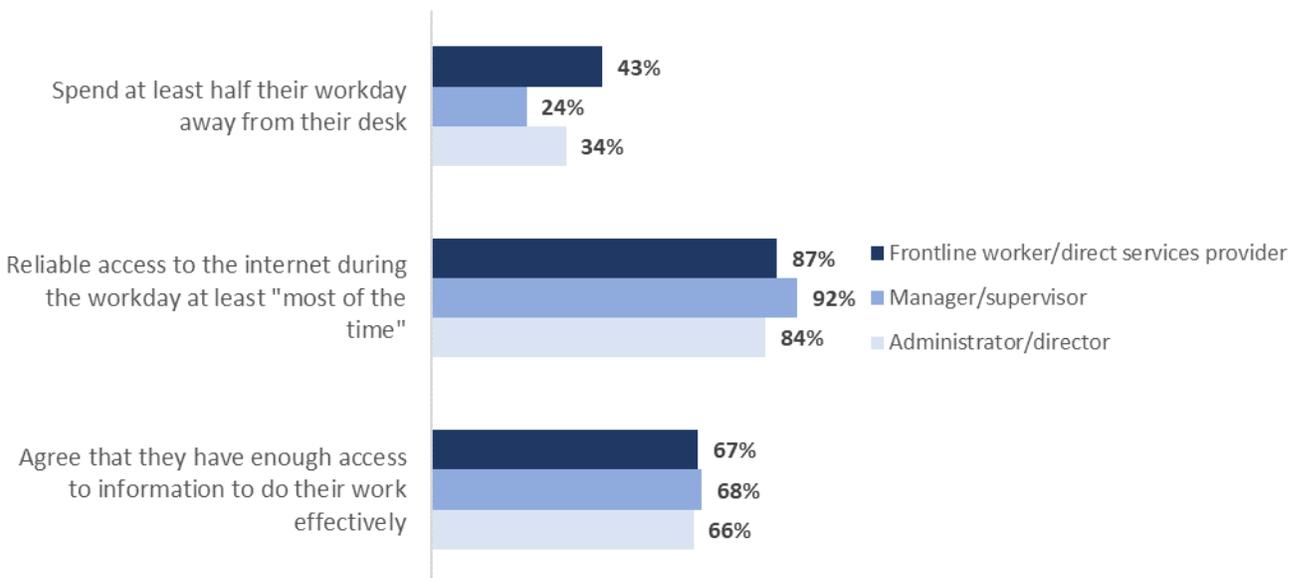
As one might expect, respondents' age was related to their role; for example, 44 percent of administrators and directors were age 51 or older, compared to 27 percent of managers and supervisors and 17 percent of frontline staff. Administrators and directors also had more experience in the child welfare field; 66 percent reported having 16 or more years of experience, compared to 58 percent of managers and supervisors and only 18 percent of frontline staff.

Two thirds (65 percent) of administrators and directors had a postgraduate degree, compared to 50 percent of managers and administrators and 29 percent of frontline staff.

Work Context and Access to Information

Managers and supervisors report both spending the most time at their desk during the workday and having the most access to the internet, compared to the other two groups (exhibit 81). However, all three groups were essentially the same in terms of their satisfaction with their access to information (in the range of 66–68 percent).

Exhibit 81: Work Context and Information Access (by Role)⁴⁰

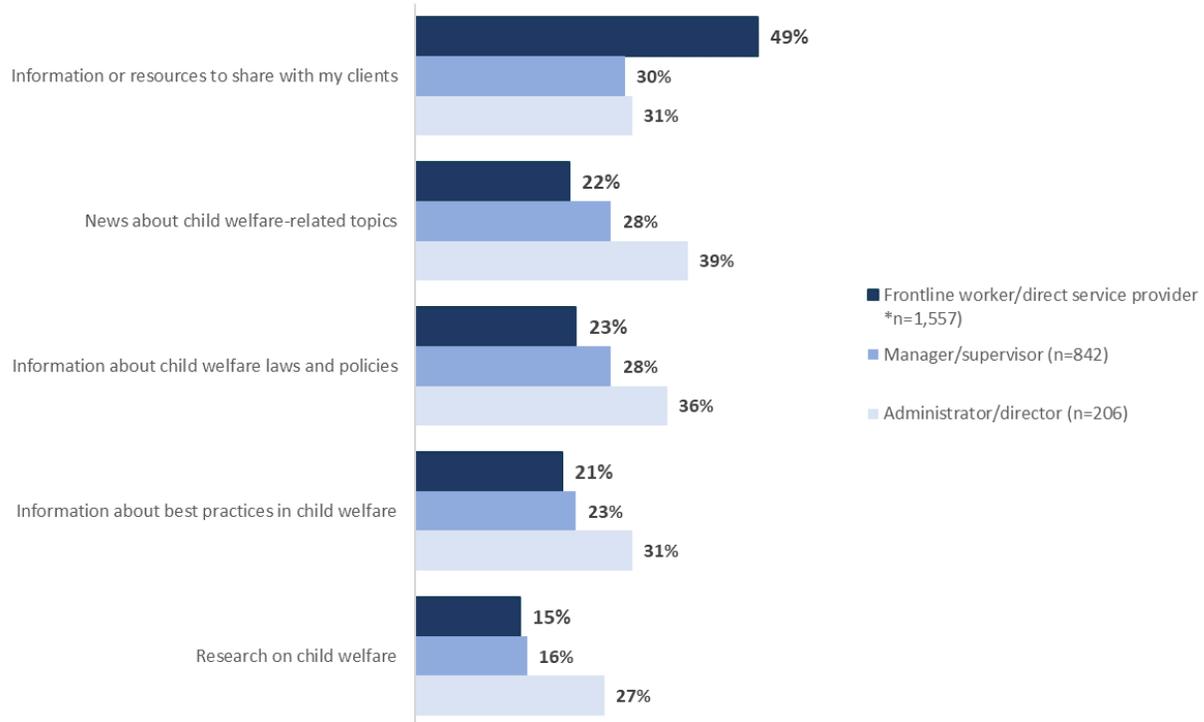


Searching for Child Welfare Information

Professionals in different roles also reported searching for different types of information with varying frequency (exhibit 82). Administrators and directors were more likely than other respondents to search for most types of information—for example, 27 percent said they search for research on child welfare at least several times a week, compared to 15 percent of frontline workers and 16 percent of managers and supervisors. However, frontline workers were much more likely than other groups to search for information or resources to share with their clients; almost half (49 percent) reported doing so at least several times a week (compared to 30–31 percent for those in other roles).

⁴⁰ Response sizes vary by respondent category and item.

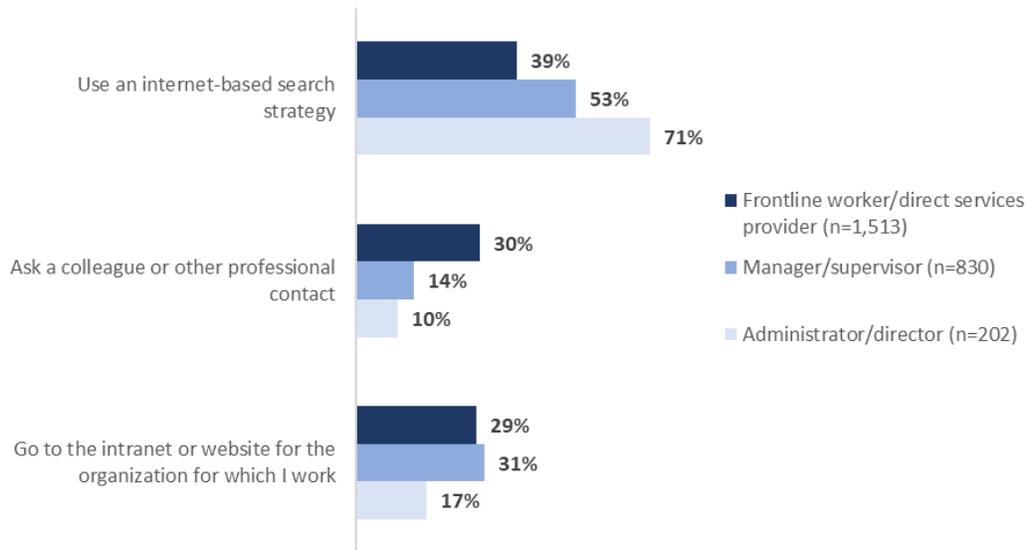
Exhibit 82: Percentage of Respondents Who Search for Each Type of Information at Least Several Times a Week (by Role)



When asked how they most frequently search for information, all three groups were most likely to report using internet-based search strategies.⁴¹ However, frontline workers are much more likely to search for information by asking a colleague or other professional contact; 30 percent say this is the approach they use most often, compared to 14 percent of managers and supervisors and 10 percent of directors and administrators. Administrators and directors, on the other hand, are most likely to use internet-based search strategies (71 percent), compared to frontline workers (39 percent) or managers and supervisors (53 percent). Administrators and directors are also less likely than other respondents to search for information within their own agency’s intranet or website, perhaps because the types of information they are often searching for are less likely to be found there.

⁴¹ “Internet-based search strategies” encompasses both typing keywords into search engines and going to a specific website to search for more information.

Exhibit 83: Information Search Strategies Used (by Role)⁴²

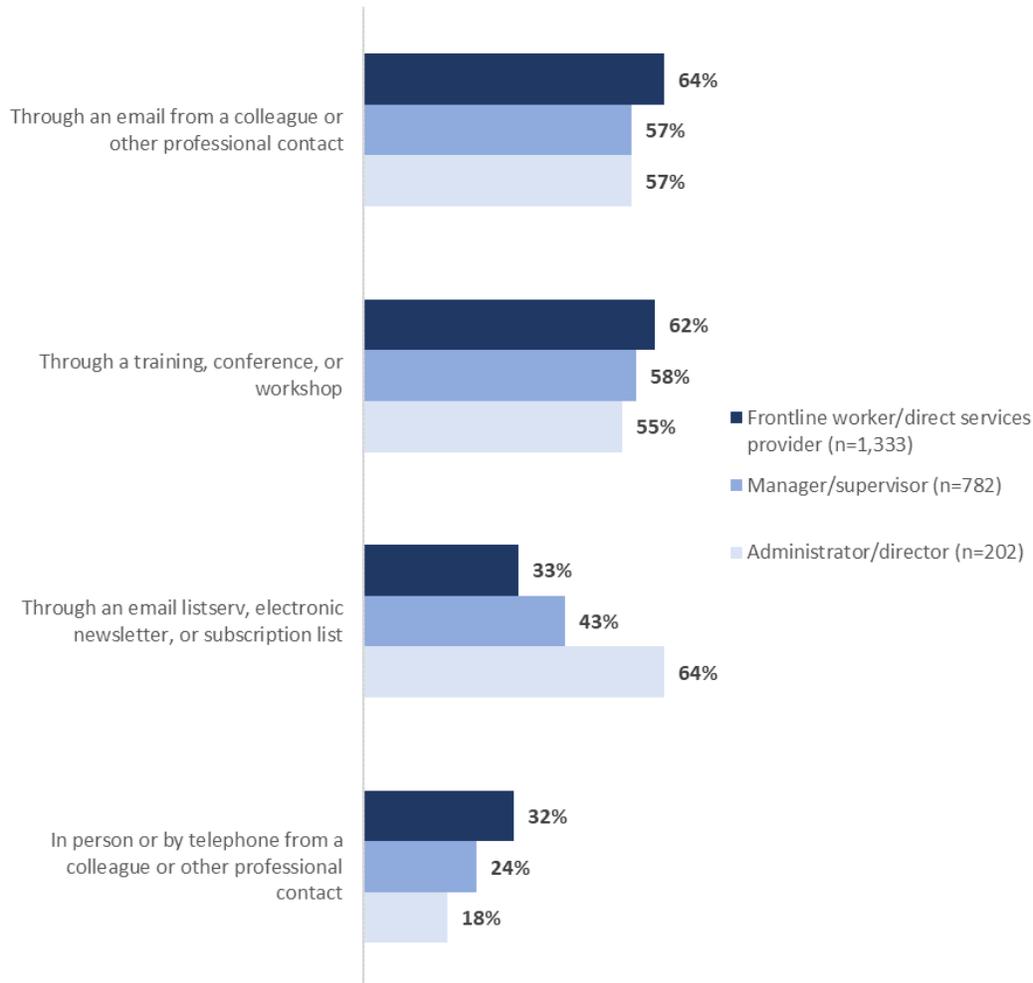


Receiving Child Welfare Information

Just as frontline professionals are more likely to search for information by asking a colleague, they are also more likely to receive important information from a colleague. When asked to identify the most important ways in which they receive child welfare information that they have not searched for, frontline workers were more likely than other respondents to cite interpersonal channels, such as through an email, telephone call, or in-person discussion with a colleague or other professional contact. More senior professionals, conversely, were more likely than frontline workers to cite email listservs.

⁴² “Use an internet-based search strategy” combines respondents who indicated that they enter a search term into a web search engine with those that indicated they go to a specific website.

Exhibit 84: Most Important Ways Respondents Receive Information for Which They Have Not Specifically Searched (by Role)⁴³



A similar pattern emerges when respondents are asked specifically how they learned about their most recent training or professional development opportunity. In all cases, about half of all respondents heard about the training through an email from a colleague. However, frontline workers were more likely to have received training information from a colleague in person or by telephone, while directors and administrators were more likely to have received this information through listservs or electronic subscription lists.

Sharing Child Welfare Information

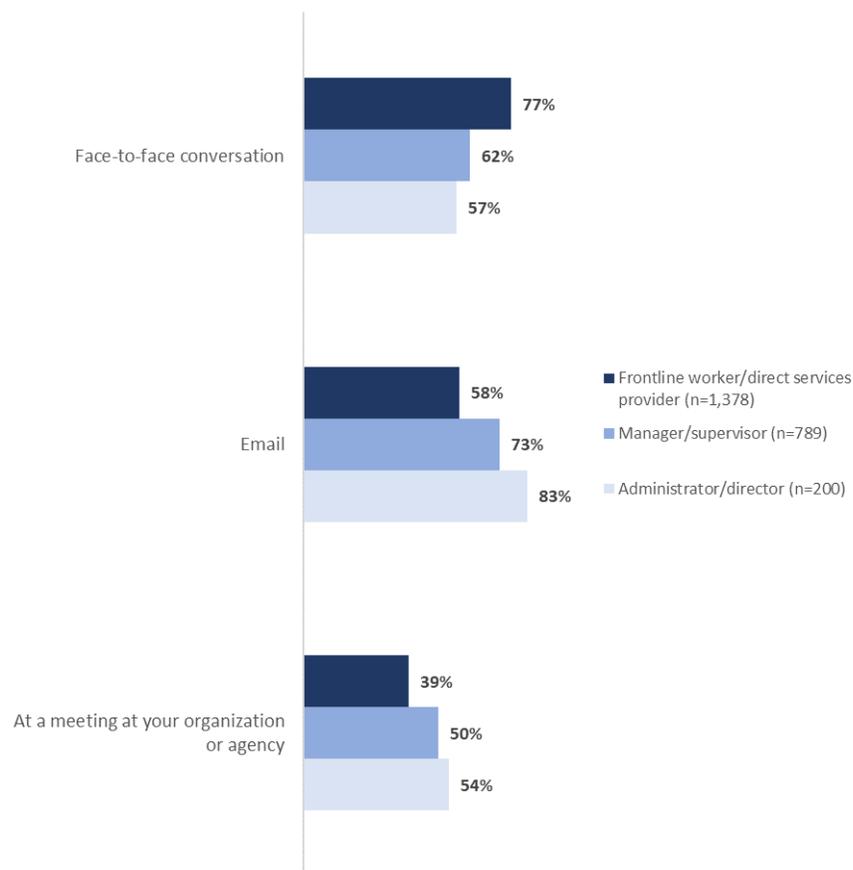
There is no consistent pattern by role in how frequently respondents share child welfare information. Administrators and directors report doing so most frequently (49 percent say they share child welfare

⁴³ Respondents could select up to three answers for this item.

information at least several times a week), followed by frontline workers (45 percent) and managers and supervisors (39 percent).

When asked how they share information, frontline workers again seem to rely more on interpersonal relationships; they are more likely than respondents in other roles to say that they share information face-to-face and by telephone, while respondents in more senior roles are more likely to share by email or through meetings.

Exhibit 85: Methods Used to Share Child Welfare Information (by Role)⁴⁴



Use of Mobile Devices for Child Welfare Purposes

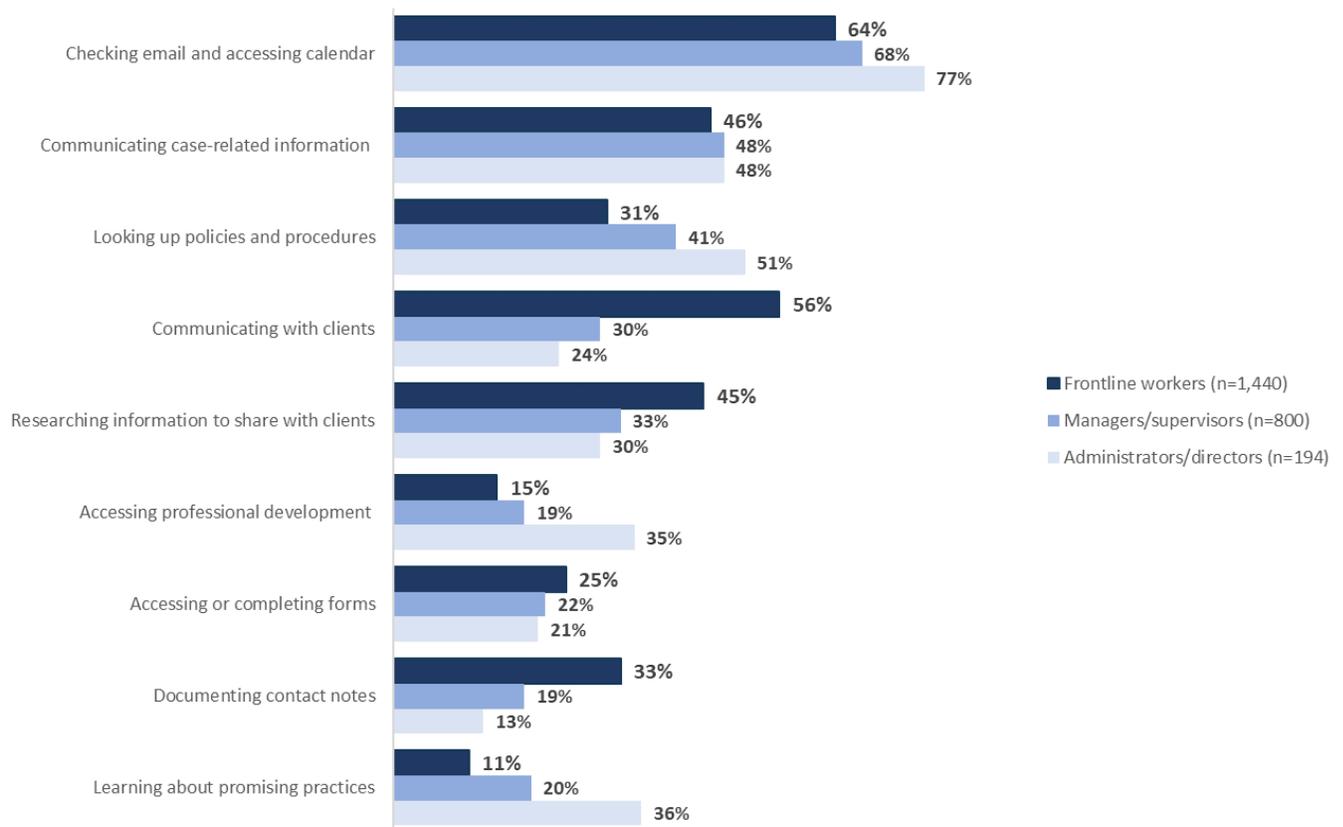
Administrators and directors (92 percent) were more likely than managers and supervisors (85 percent) or frontline staff (82 percent) to have ever used their mobile devices to search for, access, or share child welfare information. However, the percentage who do so at least several times a week was very similar between the three groups.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Respondents could select up to three answers to this question.

⁴⁵ Thirty-nine percent of administrators and directors reported using mobile devices at least several times a week for child welfare purposes, compared to 37 percent of managers and supervisors and frontline workers.

While their frequency of use was similar, respondents in different roles use their mobile devices for different purposes (exhibit 86). Frontline staff are more likely to use their mobile devices to support client-related tasks, such as communicating with clients, researching information to share with clients, and documenting contact notes. Staff in more senior roles, on the other hand, are more likely to use their mobile devices for tasks that are less directly related to clients, such as looking up policies and procedures, accessing professional development, and learning about promising practices.

Exhibit 86: For what professional purposes have you used your smartphone and/or tablet in the past 3 months?⁴⁶



⁴⁶ Respondents could select all answers that applied for this item. Note that those who do not use mobile devices for professional purposes, as well as those who do not have mobile phones, are included in the totals on which percentages are based.

5.2 Comparison of Legal and Child Welfare Professionals

Key Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compared to respondents to the child welfare professionals survey, respondents to the legal professionals survey were on average older, served more urban populations, and spent more of their workday at their desk. • Legal professionals have more reliable access to the internet than child welfare professionals and are slightly more likely to agree that they have sufficient access to information about child welfare. • When searching for, receiving, or sharing information, legal professionals are more likely to use internet-based methods and less likely to use face-to-face discussions or telephone calls. In this way, legal professionals behave similarly to more senior-level child welfare professionals, like directors and administrators. • Legal professionals are less likely than child welfare professionals to cite limited access to Wi-Fi or workplace rules as barriers to using mobile devices to get child welfare information.

As noted in chapter 1, the study team conducted separate surveys with child welfare professionals and legal professionals working in child welfare. While data from these two surveys were primarily analyzed separately (as described in chapters 2 and 3), the study team felt that it might also be illuminating to compare the habits and preferences of these two audiences to see what they have in common and in what important ways they differ. In the following section, we summarize the results of this comparative analysis.

Comparison of Audience Characteristics

Based on survey results, legal professionals who responded to the survey are more likely to work in urban contexts than child welfare professionals who responded (44 versus 36 percent) and less likely to work in rural contexts (23 versus 30 percent). Respondents to the legal professionals survey were on average older than respondents to the child welfare professionals survey—only 2 percent of legal professionals were age 30 or younger, and 52 percent were older than 50 (compared to 15 percent and 24 percent of child welfare professionals, respectively).

Legal professionals were also more likely than child welfare professionals to report spending more than half of their workday at their desk (44 versus 29 percent).

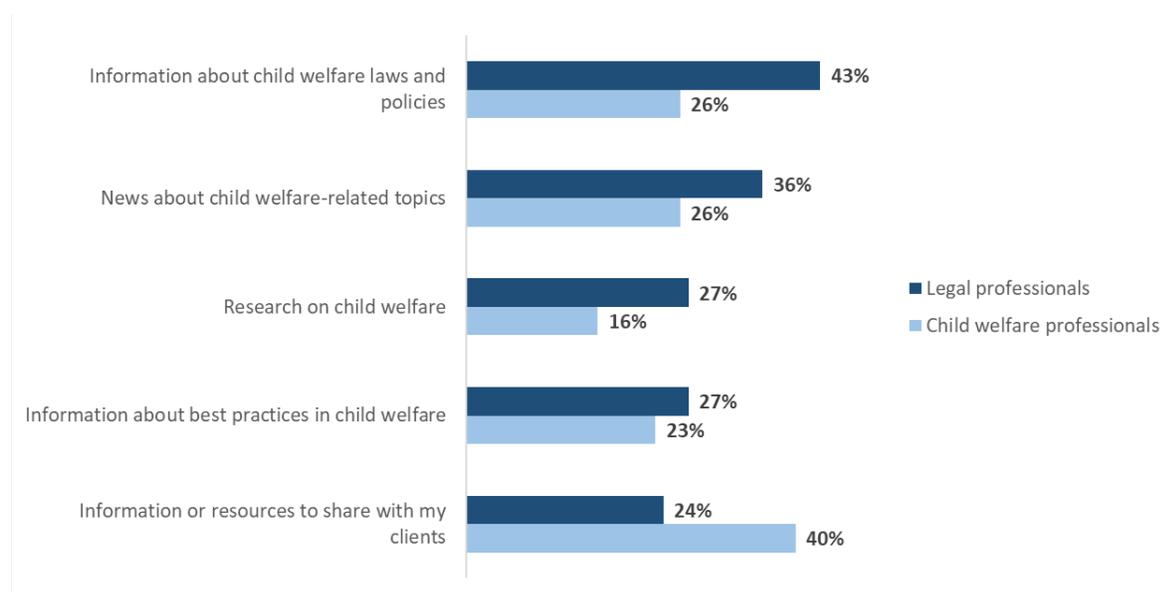
Access to Child Welfare Information

Perhaps because they spend more time at their desks, legal professionals reported more reliable access to the internet than child welfare professionals; 64 percent said that they always or almost always have reliable access, compared to 52 percent of their child welfare peers. Legal professionals were also slightly more likely to agree that they have enough access to child welfare information to do their jobs effectively (73 percent versus 67 percent of child welfare professionals).

Searching for Child Welfare Information

Unsurprisingly, given the contexts in which they work, legal professionals and child welfare professionals search for different types of child welfare information. Legal professionals are most likely to search for information about child welfare laws and policies and research on child welfare, while child welfare professionals search more frequently for information to share with clients (exhibit 87).

Exhibit 87: Percentage of Respondents Who Search for Each Type of Information at Least Several Times a Week⁴⁷



Legal professionals are more likely than child welfare professionals to use internet-based strategies when searching for information (65 versus 48 percent) and less likely to search for information by asking colleagues (18 versus 22 percent) or using their organization’s intranet or website (10 versus 28 percent).

These results show that in terms of both the content that they search for and the methods they use, legal professionals as a whole are more similar to senior-level child welfare professionals (e.g., directors and administrators) than they are to frontline child welfare staff.

Receiving Child Welfare Information

While briefing documents and executive summaries were relatively popular among both groups, legal professionals (39 percent) were more likely than child welfare professionals (23 percent) to report this format as one of their most preferred for receiving information about child welfare. In general, legal professionals were more likely to prefer receiving information in more formal and traditional formats, such as reports (23 versus 17 percent) and peer-reviewed journal articles (20 versus 15 percent), while

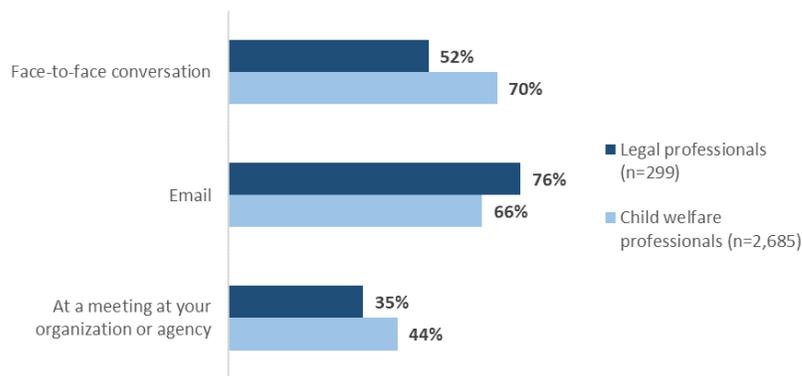
⁴⁷ Response sizes vary by respondent category and item.

child welfare professionals were more likely to prefer visual formats like PowerPoint slides (33 versus 14 percent) and videos (28 versus 12 percent).

Sharing Child Welfare Information

Legal and child welfare professionals share information about child welfare with similar frequency; 51 percent of legal professionals do so at least several times a week, compared to 47 percent of child welfare professionals. However, they share information in different ways. Legal professionals are more likely than child welfare professionals to share information through email and less likely to do so through face-to-face conversations or at meetings. In this sense, legal professionals are again similar to senior-level child welfare professionals; both groups are more likely than frontline workers to share information by email and less likely to do so face-to-face.

Exhibit 88: Methods for Sharing Information About Child Welfare⁴⁸



Use of Mobile Devices for Child Welfare Purposes

Similar percentages of legal (36 percent) and child welfare professionals (39 percent) reported using a mobile device to search for, access, or share information about child welfare in the past 3 months, and both groups indicated that the biggest reason for not using mobile devices more frequently is a lack of applications that are relevant to their work. When asked about other possible reasons that they do not use their mobile phones more frequently for child welfare purposes, legal professionals were less likely than child welfare professionals to cite limited access to Wi-Fi (27 versus 40 percent) or workplace rules (17 versus 43 percent), and more likely to cite their own technology skills (32 versus 20 percent). Again, this pattern of responses was similar to that of senior-level child welfare professionals such as directors and administrators.

Use of Social Media for Child Welfare Purposes

A smaller percentage of legal professionals (41 percent) search for, access, or share child welfare information through social media compared to child welfare professionals (48 percent). However, legal

⁴⁸ Respondents were asked to pick up to three answers; not all response options are shown in this exhibit.

professionals that do use social media may do so more frequently than child welfare professionals. While Facebook is by far the most frequent platform used by both groups for child welfare purposes, Twitter (19 versus 8 percent) and LinkedIn (18 versus 9 percent) are used more often by legal professionals, while Instagram (12 versus 6 percent) and Pinterest (7 versus 2 percent) are used more often by child welfare professionals.

5.3 Information Habits and Preferences of Child Welfare Professionals Working With Tribes

Key Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals that work with Tribes serve more rural areas, are older, and have less experience than peers who work with other populations. • Professionals that work with Tribes search for, receive, and share child welfare information more frequently than other child welfare professionals. • Professionals that work with Tribes are slightly less likely to use mobile devices for child welfare purposes and are more likely to cite their own technology skills as a barrier to doing so. They are slightly more likely than other professionals to use social media to search for, access, or share child welfare information, although most do so infrequently.

As described in chapter 1, the study team conducted separate surveys of child welfare professionals working for State, county, and private agencies and child welfare professionals working with Tribes. The datasets from these two surveys were combined for the main analysis described in chapter 2. In this section, we focus on responses from the 122 professionals who work with Tribes and compare their habits and preferences with those of their peers who work with other populations.⁴⁹ While response patterns were generally similar between the two groups, the focus here is on those items where responses were meaningfully different. For a full breakdown of how respondents working with Tribes responded to each survey item, see appendix C1.

Demographic Differences

Child welfare professionals who work with Tribes are much more likely than their peers to serve rural populations (65 versus 29 percent), and much less likely to serve urban populations (12 versus 36 percent). In general, respondents who work with Tribes reported less child welfare experience; 39 percent have worked in the field for 5 years or less, compared to 26 percent of their peers who work with other populations. At the same time, however, respondents who work with Tribes are older—for example, 17 percent were over 60 years of age, compared to 6 percent of other respondents.

⁴⁹ The analysis described in this section is among child welfare professionals only; legal professionals and students are not included.

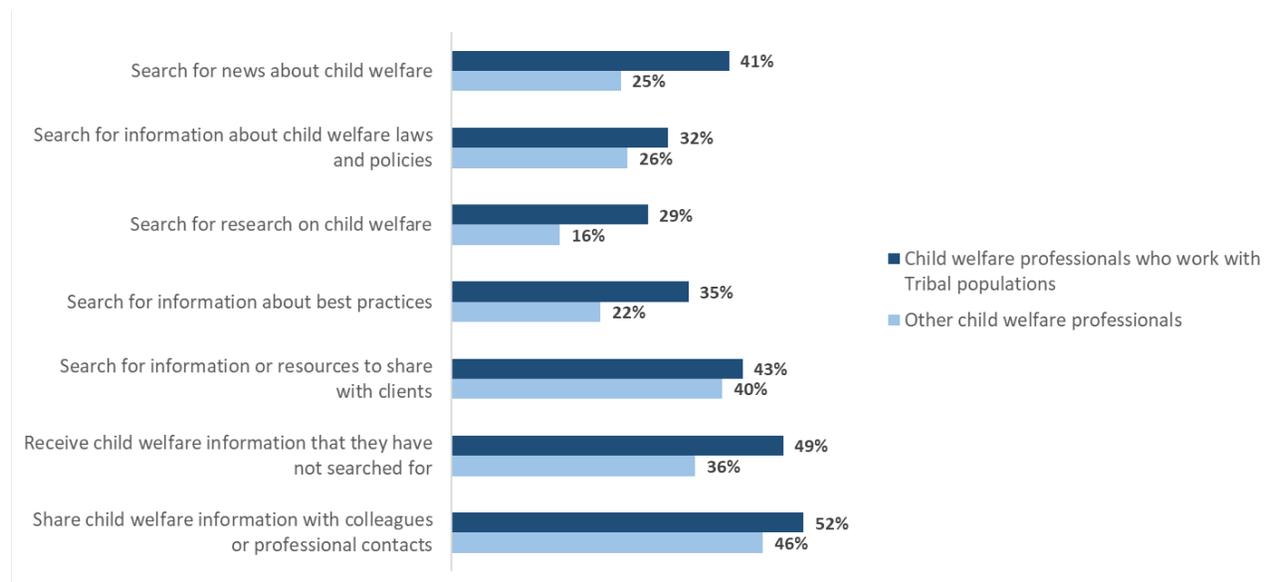
Access to Child Welfare Information

Respondents who work with Tribes reported more access to the internet than their peers. For example, 94 percent reported having access at least most of the time (compared to 89 percent of other child welfare professionals), and only 27 percent cited lack of Wi-Fi as a reason they do not use their mobile devices more frequently for child welfare purposes (versus 41 percent of other respondents). At the same time, professionals working with Tribes were slightly less likely to agree that they have sufficient access to child welfare information to do their job effectively (61 versus 68 percent).

Level of Information-Related Activity

Child welfare professionals who work with Tribes report generally higher levels of activity related to child welfare information. In fact, survey data show that they search for, receive, and share information more frequently than their counterparts who work with other populations (exhibit 89). In particular, child welfare professionals working with Tribes were more likely to search for news about child welfare (41 versus 25 percent), research on child welfare (29 versus 16 percent), and information about best practices (35 versus 22 percent). Those working with Tribes were also more likely than other child welfare professionals to receive child welfare information for which they had not specifically searched.

Exhibit 89: Percentage of Respondents Who Do Each of the Following at Least Several Times a Week⁵⁰



Use of Mobile Devices and Social Media for Child Welfare Purposes

Professionals who work with Tribes are slightly less likely than their counterparts to have mobile devices, although the vast majority do (94 versus 98 percent). Similarly, professionals working with Tribes are slightly less likely than their peers to use mobile devices to search for, access, or share child welfare information—33 percent do so at least several times a week, compared to 36 percent of other

⁵⁰ Sample sizes vary by question.

professionals. Professionals who work with Tribes are more likely to cite their own technology skills as a reason they do not use their mobile devices more frequently for child welfare purposes (31 versus 20 percent). This could be related to the fact that these respondents are older on average, since the study found that respondents' answers to this question varied by age.

Respondents who work with Tribes are slightly more likely to use social media to search for, access, or share child welfare information; 57 percent said they do so at least occasionally, compared to 48 percent of their peers. As with other groups of respondents, however, professionals working with Tribes use social media only infrequently for this purpose; only 16 percent of respondents do so several times a week or more.

5.4 Comparison of Current and Future Child Welfare Professionals

Key Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future child welfare professionals (i.e., current B.S.W. and M.S.W. students that are likely to enter the child welfare workforce in the next few years) currently use online videos and podcasts more frequently than current frontline professionals as a way to get information in general. • Future professionals use mobile devices more frequently than current professionals for a wide range of activities. • Future professionals use social media more frequently than current frontline professionals to search for, access, and share child welfare information.

In addition to directly comparing survey results between the different audiences for the survey, the study team also attempted to draw conclusions about how the information habits and preferences within the child welfare field are likely to change as current B.S.W. and M.S.W. students enter the workforce.⁵¹ While a direct comparison of responses to the child welfare professional and student surveys would be a blunt way of addressing this question, the fact that 35 percent of student respondents had already worked for child welfare organizations when they entered their programs makes it difficult to consider these respondents “future professionals.” Therefore, for the purposes of this analysis, “future child welfare professionals” are defined as current B.S.W. or M.S.W. students who, before entering their program, had not worked previously for more than a year for a child welfare organization or agency. A total of 263 respondents to the student survey met these criteria.

Because the respondents in this category are generally young and lack years of experience in the field, an assumption was made that if they joined the child welfare workforce in the near future, they would likely do so as frontline workers. Therefore, in this analysis, future professionals are compared to the 1,761 respondents to the child welfare professionals survey who identified themselves as frontline

⁵¹ Respondents to the student survey were not specifically asked whether they intended to enter the child welfare workforce when they completed their program. However, university contacts that disseminated information about the survey were asked to only distribute the survey to groups of students that they felt were likely to enter child welfare.

workers. This group of respondents is referred to in this section as “current professionals” and is compared to the “future professionals” described above.⁵²

Other than experience in the field, the greatest difference between the two groups was their age—68 percent of the future professionals were age 30 or younger, compared to only 25 percent of the current professionals. Future child welfare professionals also reported having more consistent access to the internet; 79 percent said that they had reliable access to the internet always or almost always, compared to only 44 percent of current professionals. This difference is likely due to the context in which they work—i.e., within a university setting as opposed to in the field.

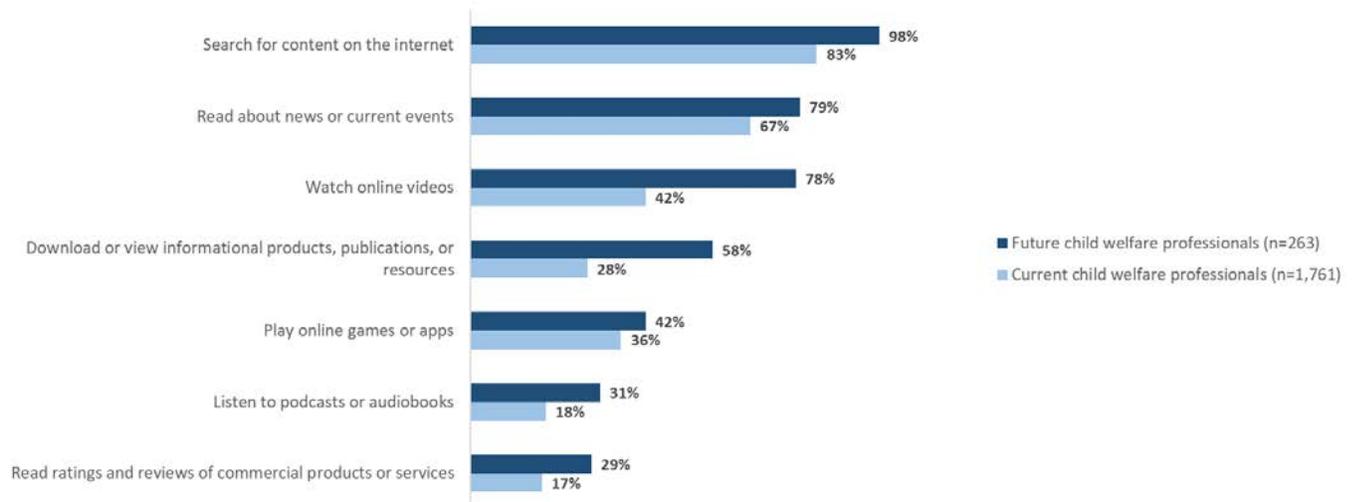
When interpreting comparisons between current and future professionals, it is important to keep in mind that future professionals are currently students and, therefore, the nature of their work is different than people currently in the workforce. For that reason, a direct comparison of the two groups on certain factors—such as the ways in which they receive child welfare information—may not be very enlightening. This section focuses on specific habits and preferences that the study team believes could be relevant to future professionals’ behavior when they eventually enter the workforce.

General Information-Related Habits

One striking difference between the future and current professionals is that future professionals reported being consistently more active in terms of accessing information in their general lives. The survey asked respondents how often they performed seven different information-related activities, and future professionals reported doing all seven tasks more frequently (exhibit 90). This difference was particularly notable in some areas—for example, 78 percent of future professionals reported watching online videos at least several times a week, compared to only 42 percent of current professionals.

⁵² Respondents to the student survey were also asked whether they currently worked part time or full time for an organization or agency associated with child welfare in addition to their academic work—about a third (37 percent) of those in the future professionals group indicated that they did. However, because the survey did not collect any information about how long they had worked for these agencies or the extent of their involvement, the study team did not factor this into their determination of who qualified as a “future professional.”

Exhibit 90: Percentage of Respondents Who Do Each of the Following for Personal or Professional Purposes at Least Several Times a Week



In addition to their general level of information-related activity, future and current professionals also differ in the communication channels that they use. When asked to identify their most important source of information about news and current events, future professionals were less likely to cite television (10 versus 23 percent) and more likely to identify news websites (33 versus 28 percent) and social media (37 versus 31 percent).

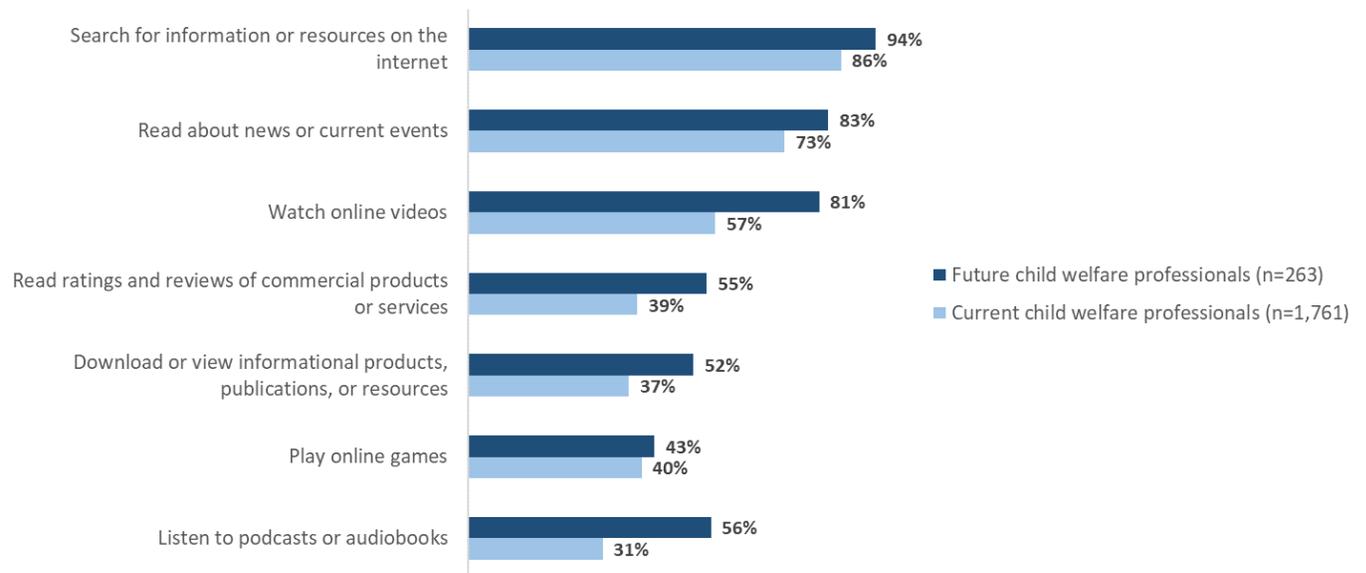
The surveys also provide some evidence that these differences in general information habits and preferences may translate to a child welfare context. For example, when asked how they would like to receive information about a new, promising child welfare practice, future professionals were more likely than current professionals to say that they would like to receive this information as a video (35 versus 28 percent) or as a podcast (16 versus 8 percent).

While future professionals' behavior and preferences will undoubtedly change as they enter the workforce and their informational needs change, these findings imply that channels such as videos and podcasts could become more important ways of disseminating child welfare information.

Use of Mobile Devices

Just as they are more active in terms of their general information-related activities, future professionals are also more active in using their mobile devices to access or search for information (exhibit 91). Again, one of the greatest differences was in their use of online videos—81 percent of future professionals said they use their smartphone or tablet to watch online videos, compared to only 57 percent of current professionals. Additionally, over half of future professionals reported listening to podcasts or audiobooks, compared to less than one-third of current professionals.

Exhibit 91: Percentage of Respondents Who Use Their Smartphone and/or Tablet to Perform the Following Activities



Future professionals currently use mobile devices less frequently to search for, access, or share information specifically about child welfare; 24 percent do so at least several times a week, compared to 37 percent of current frontline professionals. However, this seems to be an issue of frequency of use rather than willingness to do so, because the percentage of respondents who report *ever* having using mobile devices in a child welfare information context is similar between the two groups (80 percent of future professionals versus 79 percent of current frontline workers).

In any case, technology skills are likely to become less of a barrier to mobile device use in a child welfare context as future professionals enter the workforce. Only 13 percent of future professionals say that their own technology skills are a reason that they do not use their mobile device more for child welfare purposes, compared to 18 percent of current professionals. While younger professionals who enter the workforce in coming years are likely to be more comfortable using mobile devices, however, it is difficult to predict whether their information habits will shift to align with the needs of their new work—or whether the field will have to shift to meet the needs of these new workers.

Use of Social Media

One consistent trend through the survey results is that future professionals use social media more frequently than current professionals. Among future professionals, 60 percent said that they had searched for, accessed, or shared information about child welfare through social media, compared to only 47 percent of current frontline workers.

Future professionals report sharing information about child welfare less frequently than current frontline workers. This is probably because of the nature of their current work—since they are students, they are more typically *recipients* of learning rather than active disseminators. However, when future

professionals *do* share child welfare information, they are likely to do so through social media. Nearly a third (31 percent) reporting doing so, compared to only 10 percent of current frontline professionals.⁵³

As with mobile phones, it is clear that current social media behavior differs between current and future professionals, but the implications for the field are less clear. It may be that this difference is largely based on the different context of students and agency staff, and that as new professionals enter the field they will be naturally less inclined to use social media for child welfare purposes. However, it is also possible that these new professionals will arrive with different expectations about the role of social media in information gathering and sharing, which may put pressure on the field to utilize these channels more extensively.

⁵³ Conversely, they are less likely to share information through email (23 percent versus 58 percent of current professionals) or by telephone (9 versus 22 percent).

Appendices

Appendix A: List of Study Stakeholders

To ensure the study design and instruments were informed by child welfare researchers, technical experts, communication specialists, and stakeholders in the field, the study team formed two stakeholder groups: (1) a **Technical Workgroup (TWG)** composed of experts in child welfare systems, issues, policies, technology, communications, and/or research methodologies; and (2) four **Organizational Stakeholder Groups (OSGs)** representing each of the target respondent audiences, including child welfare professionals working in State agencies, child welfare professionals working in Tribal agencies or governments, legal professionals, and students of social work. In addition to the technical experts and key stakeholders, representatives from the Children’s Bureau, Child Welfare Information Gateway, and the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative also served on the TWG and OSGs throughout the course of the study. Additional information about the TWG and OSG membership is provided below.

1.1 Technical Workgroup

The TWG was engaged periodically to specifically support and directly inform the development of research constructs, study design, recruitment approaches, instrument development, data collection, and the sharing of findings with the field. Members of the TWG are listed in the exhibit below.

Exhibit A-1: National Child Welfare Information Study: Technical Workgroup	
Name	Organization / affiliation
Colleen Caron	Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families
Courtney Harrison	CLH Strategies and Solutions
Larry Luskin	ICF
Melissa Otero	AdoptUSKids
Kary James	Child Welfare Information Gateway

1.2 Organizational Stakeholder Groups

The four OSGs provided a review mechanism for obtaining and using input from key child welfare stakeholders. The OSGs were convened to provide specific input on instrument development, participant recruitment, data collection, sharing of findings, and potential product recommendations. OSG members also directly supported cognitive testing of study instruments and were key partners for participant recruitment. Membership in each OSG is listed in the exhibit on the following page.

Exhibit A-2: National Child Welfare Information Study: Organizational Stakeholder Groups

Name	Organization / affiliation
State and local child welfare professionals	
Maggie Bishop	Capacity Building Center for States
Malia Kim	Capacity Building Center for States
Carl Ayers	Division of Family Services, Virginia Department of Social Services
Lindsay Crisostomo	Child Welfare Information Gateway
Michelle Graef	Quality Improvement Center on Workforce Development (QIC-WD)
Tom Oates	Child Welfare Information Gateway
Brian Deakins	Children's Bureau
Child welfare professionals that work with Tribes	
Julia Hintze	Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
Emily Iron Cloud-Koenen	Lakota Oyate Wakanyeja Owicakiyapi
Sarah Kastelic	National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA)
Art Martinez	Capacity Building Center for Tribes
Nancy Lucero	Capacity Building Center for Tribes
Roshanda Shoulders	Children's Bureau
Legal and judicial professionals	
Melissa Carter	Emory University School of Law
Ted Martinez	Children's Court Division, Second Judicial District Court
Alicia Summers	Capacity Building Center for Courts
Daniel Trujillo	National Association of Counsel for Children
David Kelly	Children's Bureau
University faculty	
Gary Anderson	Michigan State University School of Social Work
Anita Barbee	University of Louisville School of Social Work
Raffaele Vitelli	National Association of Social Workers
Rebecca Huffman	Children's Bureau

1.3 Additional Reviewers

Experts in specialized areas were asked to provide more targeted support for discrete activities or tasks during the implementation of the study. These additional reviewers are listed in the exhibit below.

Exhibit A-3: National Child Welfare Information Study: Additional Reviewers	
Name	Organization / affiliation
Alicia Davis	National Center for State Courts
Liliana Hernandez	Children's Bureau
Aleta Meyer	Office of Planning Research and Evaluation (OPRE), Administration for Children and Families
Laura Radel	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Helena Wallin-Miller	Child Welfare Information Gateway
Maria Woolverton	Office of Planning Research and Evaluation (OPRE), Administration for Children and Families

Appendix B: Survey Instrument

Exhibit B-1: Notes on Survey Administration

- Four different versions of the National Child Welfare Information Study survey were administered to different audiences: (a) child welfare professionals who work for State, county, or private agencies (“child welfare professional respondents”); (b) child welfare professionals who work primarily with Tribes (“Tribal child welfare respondents”); (c) legal professionals (“legal respondents”); and (d) B.S.W. and M.S.W. students (“student respondents”). This version of the document includes all items that were asked of any of the four audiences and notes if a particular item was asked of some audiences but not others.
- Question numbers shown in this instrument do not match the question numbers in the instruments that were shown to respondents.
- Eight additional questions were included in the surveys that were used by Child Welfare Information Gateway for internal purposes; these questions do not appear in this version of the instrument.

Welcome to the National Child Welfare Information Study survey, conducted by the Children’s Bureau and Child Welfare Information Gateway!

The Children’s Bureau invests millions of dollars in the development of resources for agency and legal professionals every year. Unfortunately, many of these resources do not reach everyone that could use them, and the needs and preferences of this workforce are constantly changing.

The overall purpose of this study is to understand how people who work and study in the field of child welfare use and access job-related information. By better understanding where you go for information and the technologies you use, the Children’s Bureau and other technical assistance providers can design more useful materials and make sure that you (and others like you) hear about these resources and can more easily find them.

This survey covers questions about your work, how you access and use information, and your preferences for professional training. This survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Your participation in this study is important, and it’s also completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time. If you choose to participate, your responses will be anonymous, stored securely by the study team, and combined with many others so that patterns in behavior and preferences can be understood for larger groups. Any personal identifiers will be removed from data files that are archived for future use. The group that designed this survey included stakeholders in roles like your own, and the study team does not believe that answering these questions shares sensitive information or poses any risks to participants.

By clicking “next” below, you indicate that you understand the purpose of this study and agree to participate in this survey. Your time and responses do help and make a difference. Thank you!

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to be 20 minutes per response to complete this questionnaire. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to

respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The control number for this project is 0970-0518. The control number expires on 9/30/2021.

Please select the option below that best describes your professional role (required):

- A. Child welfare professional working in a State, county, or private agency → ***Respondent is categorized as a child welfare professional respondent for purposes of survey***
- B. Legal professional working in a Federal, State, or local context (e.g., attorney, judge, CIP staff or directors, administrator) → ***Respondent is categorized as a legal respondent for purposes of survey***
- C. Legal professional working primarily with Tribes (e.g., attorney, judge, TCIP staff or directors, administrator) → ***Respondent is categorized as a Tribal child welfare respondent for purposes of survey***
- D. Child welfare or other professional working primarily with Tribes → ***Respondent is categorized as a Tribal child welfare respondent for purposes of survey***
- E. Undergraduate or graduate student → ***Respondent is categorized as a student respondent for purposes of survey***
- F. None of the above → ***Respondent does not qualify; end survey***

A. Your Current Role

Before we ask questions about how you search for and use information, we'd like to learn a little about the context in which you work.

CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONAL RESPONDENTS ONLY:

Do you work for an organization or agency that provides support to children and families who are involved with the child welfare system?

- A. No (go to end of survey)
- B. Yes, for a State-administered child welfare agency
- C. Yes, for a county-administered child welfare agency
- D. Yes, for a private agency providing services under contract with a State or county
- E. Yes, for a different type of organization (Please specify)

Please select the option below that best describes your role at your organization or agency.

- A. Frontline worker (e.g., caseworker, direct service worker)
- B. Supervisor
- C. Manager
- D. Director/administrator
- E. None of the above – I am support staff (e.g., administrative assistant, finance, building maintenance) → ***Respondent does not qualify; end survey***
- F. Other (Please specify)

Please select one option below that aligns with the majority of your work responsibilities.

- A. Administration (e.g., commissioner, director, deputy director, regional director, CFSR/CFSP/PIP)
- B. Workforce development/training

- C. Continuous quality improvement/evaluation
- D. Information technology/SACWIS/data systems
- E. Indian Child Welfare Act
- F. Primary or secondary prevention (home visitation, parent education, domestic violence, housing)
- G. Child protective services
- H. In-home services (e.g., PSSF worker, family-based safety services specialist, CPS in-home services worker, family preservation worker)
- I. Foster care
- J. Adoption/guardianship
- K. Youth in transition/Chafee/Independent Living Programs
- L. Other (Please specify)

In which State or territory do you primarily work? (*Drop-down selection that includes all States; Washington, DC; Puerto Rico; Guam; American Samoa; Northern Mariana Islands*)

- In what county do you primarily work? [*Drop-down selection of counties and option to select "multiple counties"*]⁵⁴

TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE RESPONDENTS AND LEGAL RESPONDENTS ONLY:

This survey is intended for people whose work relates to child welfare. Would you say that at least 10 percent of your professional work is directly related to children and families who are involved with the child welfare system?

- A. Yes
- B. No → ***Respondent does not qualify; end survey***
- C. I don't know → ***Respondent does not qualify; end survey***

CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONAL AND TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE RESPONDENTS ONLY:

Are you currently enrolled in an education/degree program?

- A. Yes, I am enrolled in a bachelor of social work program.
- B. Yes, I am enrolled in a master of social work program.
- C. Yes, I am enrolled in an education/degree program other than a B.S.W. or M.S.W. program.
- D. No

TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE RESPONDENTS ONLY:

For what type of organization do you work?

- A. A child welfare agency
- B. A Tribal court system
- C. A Tribal government agency (Please specify)
- D. Other organization (Please specify)

⁵⁴Respondents were only asked to provide a county if they worked for a targeted State in which child welfare activities are administered at the county level.

- *[If previous question=A]* Please select the options below that best describe your role. Check all that apply.
 - A. I provide direct service to Tribal children and families (e.g., I am a caseworker).
 - B. I supervise or manage individuals who provide direct service in the Tribal child welfare sector.
 - C. I oversee a Tribal child welfare program.
 - D. Other (Please specify)

- *[If previous question=B]* Please select the options below that best describe your role. Check all that apply.
 - A. Judge
 - B. Attorney
 - C. Tribal Court Improvement Program (TCIP) director/coordinator
 - D. Tribal Court Improvement Program (TCIP) staff
 - E. Other (Please specify)

- *[If previous question=C or D]* Please describe your role. *(Open-ended)*

In which BIA region do you primarily work? *(Drop-down selection)*

- A. Alaska region
- B. Northwest region
- C. Pacific region
- D. Western region
- E. Navajo region
- F. Southwest region
- G. Rocky Mountain region
- H. Great Plains region
- I. Southern Plains region
- J. Eastern Oklahoma region
- K. Midwest region
- L. Eastern region
- M. Other (Please specify)

LEGAL RESPONDENTS ONLY:

Please select the option below that best describes your role in the legal system.

- A. Court Improvement Program (CIP) director/coordinator
- B. Tribal Court Improvement Program (TCIP) director/coordinator
- C. Court Improvement Program (CIP) staff
- D. Tribal Court Improvement Program (TCIP) staff
- E. Judge
- F. Attorney for child welfare agency
- G. Attorney for parents, children, or families (including guardian ad litem)
- H. Other (Please specify)

- *[If answer to previous question is NOT B or D] In which State or territory do you primarily work? (Drop-down selection that includes all States; Washington, DC; Puerto Rico; Guam; American Samoa; and Northern Mariana Islands)*

- *[If answer to previous question is B or D] In which BIA region do you primarily work? (Drop-down selection)*
 - A. Alaska region
 - B. Northwest region
 - C. Pacific region
 - D. Western region
 - E. Navajo region
 - F. Southwest region
 - G. Rocky Mountain region
 - H. Great Plains region
 - I. Southern Plains region
 - J. Eastern Oklahoma region
 - K. Midwest region
 - L. Eastern region
 - M. Other (Please specify)

STUDENT RESPONDENTS ONLY:

Are you currently enrolled in a bachelor or master program in social work?

- A. Yes, I am enrolled in a bachelor of social work program.
- B. Yes, I am enrolled in a master of social work program.
- C. No (End survey)

Do you currently receive a child welfare stipend from your educational institution?

- A. No
- B. Yes

In what State do you attend school? *(Drop-down selection that includes all States; Washington, DC; Puerto Rico; Guam; American Samoa; Northern Mariana Islands)*

What is the name of the institution you attend?

In addition to your studies, do you currently work (part time or full time) for an organization or agency that provides support to children and families who are involved with the child welfare system?

- C. Yes, for a State child welfare agency
- D. Yes, for a county child welfare agency
- E. Yes, for a private agency providing services under contract with a State or county
- F. Yes, for a different type of organization (Please specify)
- G. No

ASKED OF ALL RESPONDENTS:

Would you consider the community that you serve to be primarily urban, suburban, or rural?⁵⁵

- A. Urban
- B. Suburban
- C. Rural/frontier
- D. Don't know or not applicable

During your typical workday, how much of your time do you spend away from your desk (e.g., attending meetings, interacting with children and families, driving to meetings)? **[NOT ASKED OF STUDENT RESPONDENTS]**

- A. All or almost all of the time (I am almost never working at my desk)
- B. More than half the time
- C. About half the time
- D. Less than half the time
- E. None or almost none of the time (I am almost always working at my desk)

During your typical workday, how much of the time do you have reliable access to the internet?

- A. Always or almost always
- B. Most of the time
- C. Sometimes
- D. Rarely or never
- E. I don't know

⁵⁵ This item was not asked of student respondents who indicated in the previous question that they did not currently work for an organization or agency that provides support to children and families who are involved with the child welfare system.

B. Your Information Habits and Preferences

For the following set of questions, please answer based on your daily life—both personal and professional. Knowing how you access and use information overall will help us interpret later questions that focus on your use of information specifically for work purposes.

How often do you do each of the following?

	Once a day or more	Several times a week	Several times a month	Once a month or less	Never
Read about news or current events					
Watch online videos					
Listen to podcasts or audiobooks					
Search for content on the internet					
Download or view informational products, publications, or resources					
Play online games or apps					
Read ratings and reviews of commercial products or services					
View or take an online course, module, or lesson					

Do you have a smartphone and/or tablet (e.g., Samsung Galaxy, iPhone, iPad, Microsoft Surface Pro) for personal or professional use?

- A. Yes
- B. No (skip to Q25)

Which of the following activities do you usually engage in using your smartphone and/or tablet? (*Select all that apply.*)

- A. Read about news or current events
- B. Watch online videos
- C. Listen to podcasts or audiobooks
- D. Search for information or resources on the internet
- E. Download or view informational products, publications, or resources
- F. Play online games
- G. Read ratings and reviews of commercial products or services
- H. View or take an online course, module, or lesson

How often do you use your smartphone and/or tablet to search for, access, or share information for personal or professional reasons?

- A. Once an hour or more
- B. Several times a day
- C. Once a day
- D. Several times a week
- E. Several times a month
- F. Once a month or less
- G. Never

Below are several ways that people stay up to date with news and current events. You may use one, some, or all of these sources. Which of the following is your most important source of information about news and current events?

- A. TV
- B. Online videos or clips (e.g., YouTube)
- C. Radio
- D. Podcasts
- E. News websites
- F. Social media
- G. Print newspapers or magazines
- H. Other (specify)

We would like to know how often you use social media, whether for personal or professional reasons. How often do you view or share information on the following sites?

	Once a day or more	Several times a week	Several times a month	Once a month or less	Never
Any social media platform					
Facebook					
Instagram					
LinkedIn					
Pinterest					
Snapchat					
Twitter					
Other (please specify)					

C. Accessing Information About Child Welfare

Now we would like to ask you about accessing **information about child welfare**. “Information about child welfare” could include **any tools or sources of information (e.g., technical assistance resources, journal articles, laws and regulations, mobile apps, podcasts)** that you might access and use as a part of your job.

Do you agree or disagree that you have enough access to information about child welfare to do your work effectively?

- A. Strongly agree
- B. Agree
- C. Neither agree nor disagree
- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly disagree

To what types of information, if any, would you like more access?

What, if anything, prevents you from having enough access to information about child welfare?

D. Searching for Information About Child Welfare

When answering the following, please think about situations in which you search for information about child welfare that you need for your work.

How often do you search for each of the following?

	Once a day or more	Several times a week	Several times a month	Once a month or less	Never
News about child welfare-related topics					
Information about best practices in child welfare [NOT ASKED OF LEGAL RESPONDENTS]					
Information about best practices in legal representation, judicial processes, and child welfare [LEGAL RESPONDENTS ONLY]					
Information about child welfare laws and policies					
Research on child welfare (e.g., journal articles, studies from research organizations)					
Information or resources to share with my clients [NOT ASKED OF STUDENT RESPONDENTS]					

[For respondents who answered at least "once a month or less" to at least one of the rows in the previous question] When you need to search for information about child welfare, what do you do most often?

- Type keywords into website search engines (e.g., Google, Yahoo)
- Visit a specific website (Please name) _____
- Go to the intranet or website for the organization or agency for which I work **[NOT ASKED OF STUDENT RESPONDENTS]**
- Go to the intranet or website for my university or program **[STUDENT RESPONDENTS ONLY]**

- E. Ask a social media group or online forum
- F. Ask a colleague or other professional contact **[NOT ASKED OF STUDENT RESPONDENTS]**
- G. Ask a peer or colleague **[STUDENT RESPONDENTS ONLY]**
- H. Ask a faculty member, advisor, or someone else at my university **[STUDENT RESPONDENTS ONLY]**
- I. Other (Please specify)

E. Receiving Information About Child Welfare

When answering the following set of questions, please think about situations in which you receive information about child welfare that you have not specifically searched for yourself. This could include information that you receive from people you work with, through listservs or distribution lists, or on social media.

How often do you receive information about child welfare (electronically or in hardcopy) for which you have not specifically searched?

- A. Once a day or more
- B. Several times a week
- C. Several times a month
- D. Once a month or less
- E. Never

[If answer to previous question is NOT "Never"] What are the most important ways that you receive information about child welfare for which you have not specifically searched? Please choose up to three responses.

- A. Through a social media account (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn)
- B. Through an email from a colleague or other professional contact **[NOT ASKED OF STUDENT RESPONDENTS]**
- C. In person or by telephone from a colleague or other professional contact **[NOT ASKED OF STUDENT RESPONDENTS]**
- D. Through an email from a peer, professor, or advisor **[STUDENT RESPONDENTS ONLY]**
- E. In person or by telephone from a peer, professor, or advisor **[STUDENT RESPONDENTS ONLY]**
- F. Through an email listserv, electronic newsletter, or subscription list
- G. Through a scholarly or academic journal
- H. Through a training, conference, or workshop (online or in person)
- I. Through an online community of practice
- J. Through class lectures or discussions (online or in person) **[STUDENT RESPONDENTS ONLY]**
- K. Other (Please specify)

If you were going to receive information about a new, promising child welfare practice, in what format would you prefer to receive it? Choose up to three responses.

- A. Pamphlet
- B. Briefing document/executive summary
- C. Report

- D. News article
- E. Peer-reviewed journal article
- F. Video
- G. PowerPoint presentation
- H. Podcast
- I. Other (Please specify)

Do you subscribe to any email listservs, electronic newsletters, or other types of subscription lists through which you receive child welfare information and resources on a regular basis?

- A. Yes
- B. No [*If "No," skip to end of section*]

Think about the listserv or subscription list that you find most valuable to your work. What is it about this listserv or subscription list that makes it most valuable to you? (Open-ended responses)

F. Sharing Information About Child Welfare

When responding to the following, please think about situations in which you share information about child welfare with colleagues or other professional contacts. This could include information you share with a specific person or information you share more broadly. Again, "information about child welfare" could include any tools or sources of information (e.g., technical assistance resources, journal articles, laws and regulations, mobile apps, podcasts) that you might access and use as a part of your job.

How often do you share information about child welfare with colleagues or other professional contacts?

- A. Once a day or more
- B. Several times a week
- C. Several times a month
- D. Once a month or less
- E. Never

[If answer to previous question is NOT "Never"] When you share information about child welfare, how do you most often do so? Please choose up to three responses.

- A. Email
- B. Through social media
- C. Face-to-face conversation
- D. By telephone
- E. Through an electronic listserv, newsletter, or subscription list
- F. At a meeting at your organization or agency **[NOT ASKED OF STUDENT RESPONDENTS]**
- G. Through in-person or online class discussions **[STUDENT RESPONDENTS ONLY]**
- H. Through an online community of practice
- I. Through a training, conference, or workshop (online or in person)
- J. Other (Please specify)

Do any of your current courses require that you conduct activities online? **[STUDENT RESPONDENTS ONLY]**

- A. Yes, one or more of my courses require that I conduct activities online, such as participating in online discussions or attending virtual lectures.
- B. No, my courses consist solely of in-person sessions.

In general, in what type of educational activity do you prefer to participate? **[STUDENT RESPONDENTS ONLY]**

- A. Attending in person
- B. Participating online or by telephone at a set time (e.g., webinar, virtual conference)
- C. Accessing the materials online and completing activities at my own pace (e.g., online course)

G. Training and Professional Development **[NOT ASKED OF STUDENT RESPONDENTS]**

Next we would like to ask you a few questions about structured professional development activities that you have participated in, such as trainings, conferences, or workshops.

In the past year, how many times have you attended virtual or in-person trainings, conference presentations, or workshops that were provided by someone other than your employer?

- A. None
 - B. 1–2 times
 - C. 3–5 times
 - D. 6 or more times
 - E. Not sure/I don't remember
- *[If NOT "None" for previous question]* Please think about the **most recent** training, conference presentation, or workshop that you attended that was provided by someone other than your employer. How did you find out about this training, conference, or workshop?
 - A. Through social media (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn)
 - B. Through an email from a colleague or other professional contact
 - C. In person or by telephone from a colleague or other professional contact
 - D. Through an email listserv, electronic newsletter, or subscription list
 - E. Through a scholarly or academic journal
 - F. Through an online community of practice
 - G. I don't remember
 - H. Other (Please specify)
 - *[If NOT "None" for previous question]* What is the most important reason that you chose to attend this training, conference, or workshop?
 - A. Topic/content covered was important for my professional knowledge or job role
 - B. To earn continuing education credits or meet continuing education requirements
 - C. Recommended by colleague or other professional contact
 - D. Easily accessible (e.g., close physical location, online or phone participation)
 - E. The reputation of the person or organization running the event

F. Other (please specify): _____

In general, in which type of training do you prefer to participate?

- A. Attending in person
- B. Participating live online or by telephone at a set time (e.g., webinar, virtual conference)
- C. Accessing the training materials online and completing activities at my own pace (e.g., online course)

H. Your Use of Mobile Devices and Social Media

If respondent does not have a smartphone or tablet (answered in earlier question) skip next several questions.

[If respondent has a smartphone or tablet] Over the past 3 months, how often have you used your smartphone and/or tablet to search for, access, or share information about child welfare?

- A. Once a day or more
 - B. Several times a week
 - C. Several times a month
 - D. Once a month or less
 - E. Never
- *[If previous question is NOT "Never"] For what professional purpose(s) have you used your smartphone and/or tablet in the past 3 months? (Check all that apply.) **[CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONAL AND TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE RESPONDENTS ONLY]***
 - A. Documenting contact notes
 - B. Communicating case-related information with coworkers/colleagues
 - C. Researching information to share with clients
 - D. Communicating with clients
 - E. Accessing professional development opportunities
 - F. Learning about promising practices in the child welfare field
 - G. Looking up policies or procedures
 - H. Accessing or completing forms
 - I. Checking my email and accessing my calendar
 - J. Other (Please specify)
 - *[If previous question is NOT "Never"] In your academic work related to child welfare, for what professional purpose(s) have you used your smartphone and/or tablet in the past 3 months? (Check all that apply.) **[STUDENT RESPONDENTS ONLY]***
 - A. Taking notes in class
 - B. Conducting research for class assignments
 - C. Participating in online discussions or forums
 - D. Accessing professional development or educational opportunities, such as online courses or webinars
 - E. Checking my email and accessing my calendar

F. Other (Please specify)

[If respondent has a smartphone or tablet] Which of the following are reasons that you do not use your smartphone and/or tablet more often to search for, access, or share information about child welfare?

	Not a reason	A minor reason	A major reason
Workplace rules about using mobile devices [NOT ASKED OF STUDENT RESPONDENTS]			
A lack of mobile applications that are relevant to my work [NOT ASKED OF STUDENT RESPONDENTS]			
Limited access to Wi-Fi at my workplace [NOT ASKED OF STUDENT RESPONDENTS]			
Rules about using mobile devices at my institution and/or workplace [STUDENT RESPONDENTS ONLY]			
A lack of mobile applications that are relevant to my academic and/or professional work [STUDENT RESPONDENTS ONLY]			
Limited access to Wi-Fi at my institution or workplace [STUDENT RESPONDENTS ONLY]			
My own technology skills			

[If respondent has a smartphone or tablet] Are there any other reasons that you do not use your smartphone and/or tablet more often to search for, access, or share information about child welfare? If so, please describe them. *(Open-ended)*

If respondent does not use any type of social media (answered in earlier question) skip next two questions.

How often do you search for, access, or share information about child welfare through social media?

- A. Once a day or more
- B. Several times a week
- C. Several times a month
- D. Once a month or less
- E. Never

- *[If answer to previous question is not "Never"]* Which of the following social media platforms do you use to search for, access, or share information about child welfare? *(Check all that apply.)*

- A. Facebook
- B. Instagram
- C. LinkedIn
- D. Pinterest
- E. Snapchat

- F. Twitter
- G. Other (Please specify)

[On a new page] Is there anything you would like to add about how you prefer to access information related to your work? (*Open-ended*)

I. Final Questions

What is your age?

- A. 20 or younger
- B. 21 to 30
- C. 31 to 40
- D. 41 to 50
- E. 51 to 60
- F. 61 or older
- G. Prefer not to answer

Which of the following best describes how you self-identify?

- A. Male
- B. Female
- C. Neither male nor female
- D. Prefer not to answer

Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Prefer not to answer

What is your race? Select all that apply.

- A. American Indian or Alaska Native
- B. Asian
- C. Black or African American
- D. Pacific Islander
- E. White
- F. Other (Please specify)
- G. Prefer not to answer

Before entering your current educational program, did you previously work for an organization or agency that provides support to children and families who are involved with the child welfare system? **[STUDENT RESPONDENTS ONLY]**

- A. Yes, for a State child welfare agency
- B. Yes, for a county child welfare agency
- C. Yes, for a private agency providing services under contract with a State or county
- D. Yes, for a different type of organization (Please specify)

E. No

- *[If previous question=Yes]* For how many years did you work for an organization or agency that provides support to children and families who are involved with the child welfare system before entering your current program? **[STUDENT RESPONDENTS ONLY]**
 - A. Less than 1 year
 - B. 1 to 5 years
 - C. 6 to 10 years
 - D. 11 to 15
 - E. 16 +

What is the highest grade or amount of school you completed? **[NOT ASKED OF STUDENT RESPONDENTS]**

- A. Some high school or less
- B. High school graduate
- C. Some college
- D. College graduate
- E. Some graduate school (postcollege)
- F. Master's degree
- G. Law degree (J.D.)
- H. Doctoral degree
- I. Prefer not to answer

How many years have you worked in your current field? (Drop-down) **[NOT ASKED OF STUDENT RESPONDENTS]**

- A. Less than 1 year
- B. 1 to 5 years of service
- C. 6 to 10 years of service
- D. 11 to 15 years of service
- E. 16 + years of service

How likely is it that in 5 years you will still be working for an organization or agency that works with children and families who are involved with the child welfare system? **[CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONAL AND TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE RESPONDENTS ONLY]**

- A. Very likely
- B. Somewhat likely
- C. Not likely

How likely is it that in 5 years you will still be working as a legal professional in a role related to child welfare? **[LEGAL RESPONDENTS ONLY]**

- D. Very likely
- E. Somewhat likely
- F. Not likely

J. Interest in Future Focus Groups

Thank you for your participation in this survey. We are planning to also conduct telephone focus groups on these same topics in the near future. Would you be interested in participating in one of these discussions? The focus groups will last for 60 minutes.

- A. Yes
- B. No (end survey)

[If previous question = Yes] Please provide your contact information below so we can reach out to you when focus groups are being scheduled. Your information will not be used for any purpose other than contacting you about these focus groups.

If you would like to participate in a focus group but would prefer not to provide your information below, please contact childwelfareinformationstudy@icf.com.

Name: _____
Organization/affiliation: _____
Email address: _____
Phone number: _____

Appendix C1: Profile of Child Welfare Professionals Who Work Primarily with Tribes

The following pages provide a summary of responses from the 122 survey respondents who self-identified as professionals who work primarily with Tribes.

The Child Welfare Information Gateway, funded by the Children’s Bureau, conducted a study to better understand how people who work and study in the field of child welfare use and access job-related information. The survey included questions about how child welfare professionals access and use information personally and professionally as well as their preferences for receiving information and training.

Create a profile by selecting from the filters below

Organization Filters	Profession <input type="checkbox"/> BSW/MSW Students <input type="checkbox"/> Child Welfare Professionals (non-tribal) <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Professionals <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal Child Welfare Professionals	Organization Type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County-administered child welfare agency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other type of organization <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private child welfare agency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State-administered child welfare agency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal child welfare or other government ..	Urbanicity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural/Frontier <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban
	Roles and Responsibilities	Responsibilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adoption/guardianship <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Child protective services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuous quality improvement/evaluation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foster care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In-home services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indian Child Welfare Act <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information technology/SACWIS/data systems	Workplace Role <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administrator/director <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attorney for child welfare agency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attorney for parents, children, or families <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BSW/MSW Student <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Court Improvement Program director/staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Frontline worker/direct services provider <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judge <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager/supervisor
Individual Demographics	Years of Service <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 years (current student) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 to 5 years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 to 10 years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11 to 15 years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 16 + years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year	Age <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20 or under <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 21 to 30 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 31 to 40 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 41 to 50 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 51 to 60 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 61 or above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer	Current Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am enrolled in a Bachelor’s in Social.. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am enrolled in a Master’s in Social .. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am enrolled in an education/degree ..

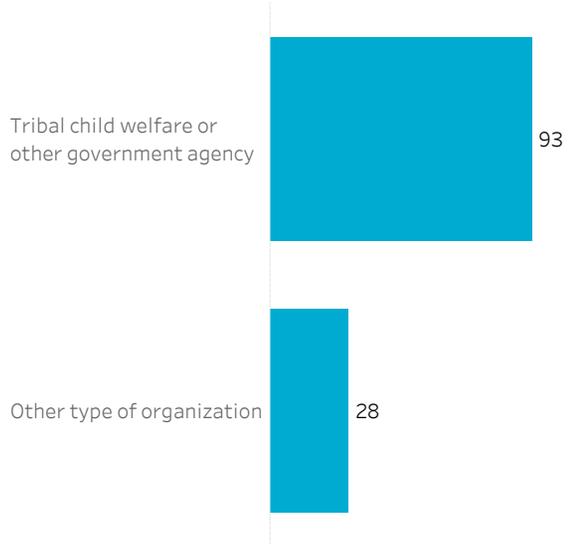
Click next to view the generated profile.



122 Respondents

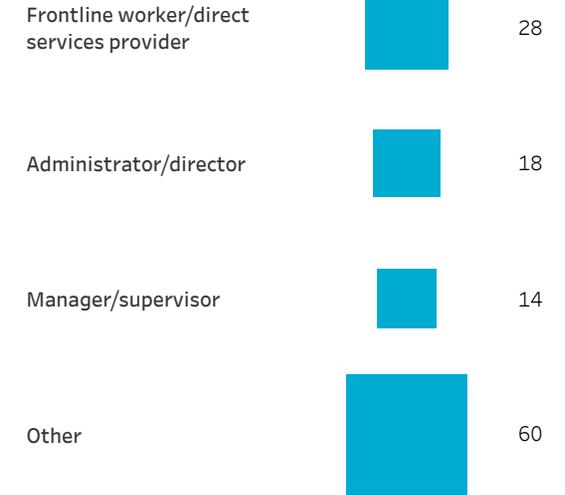
Profile Demographics

Organization Type

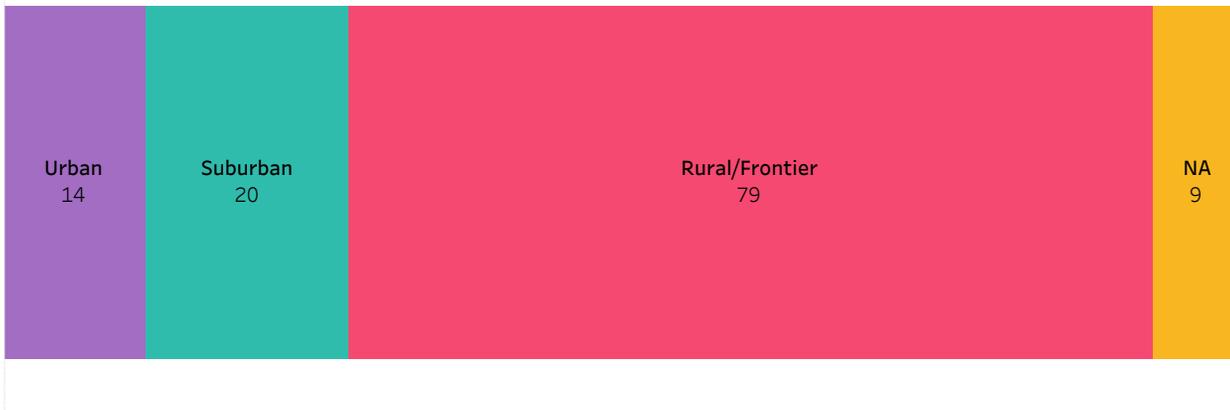


Responsibilities

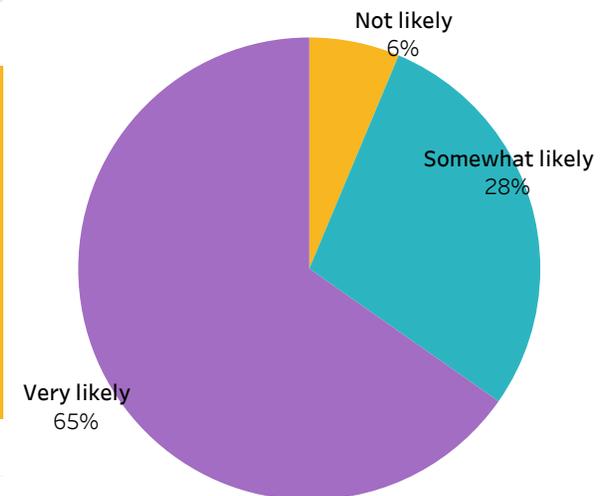
Role



Urbanicity

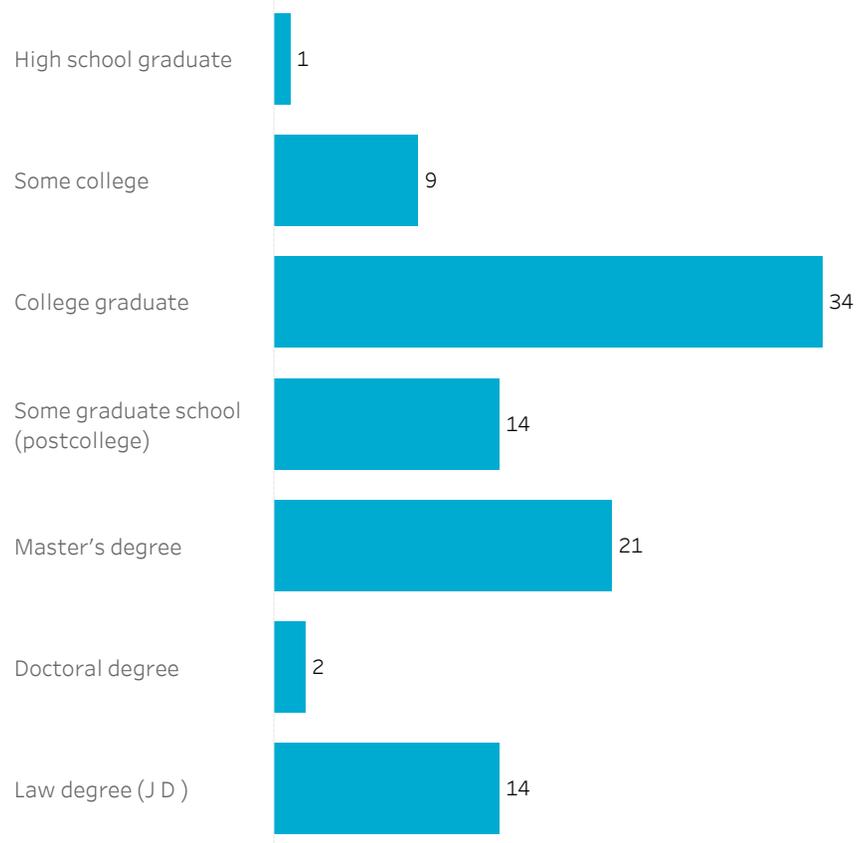


Will you work in child welfare in five years?

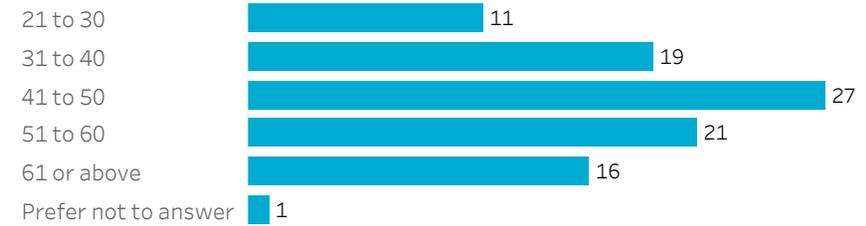


■ Urban
 ■ Suburban
 ■ Rural/Frontier
 ■ NA

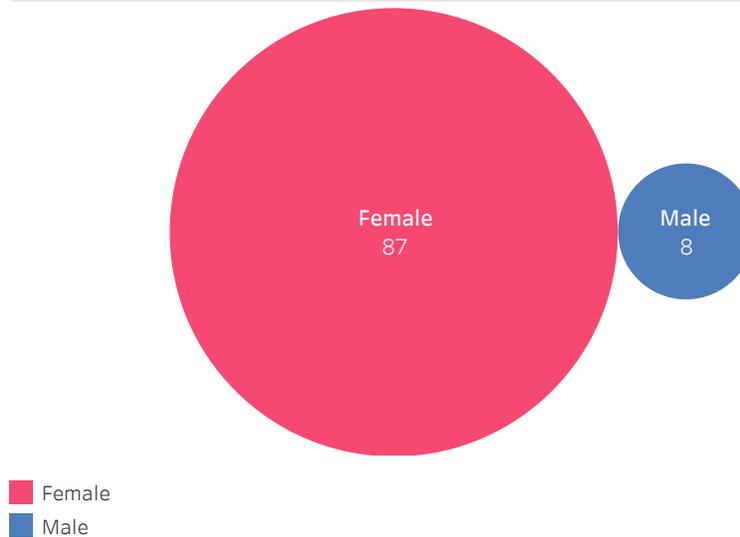
Highest Education



Age



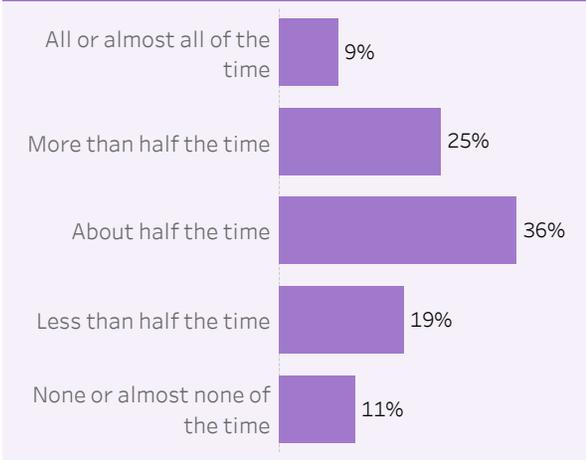
Gender



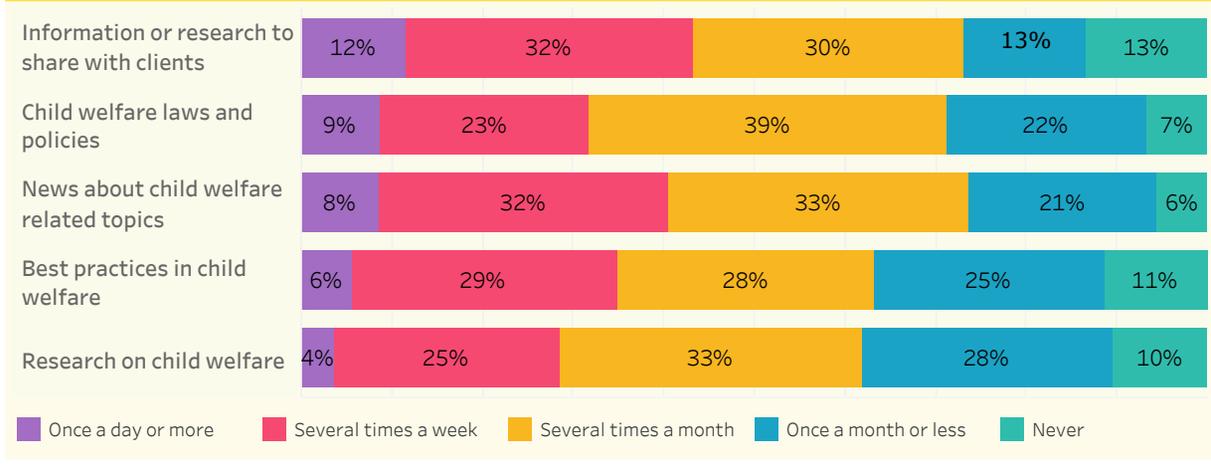
Years of Service



I am away from my desk...



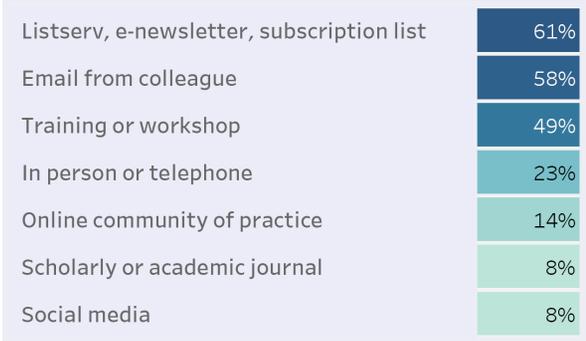
I search for...



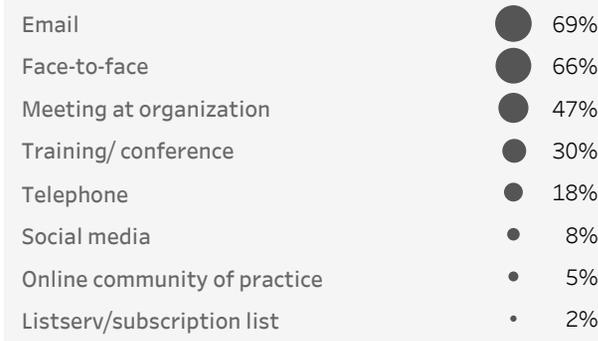
I use my mobile device for purposes related to child welfare...



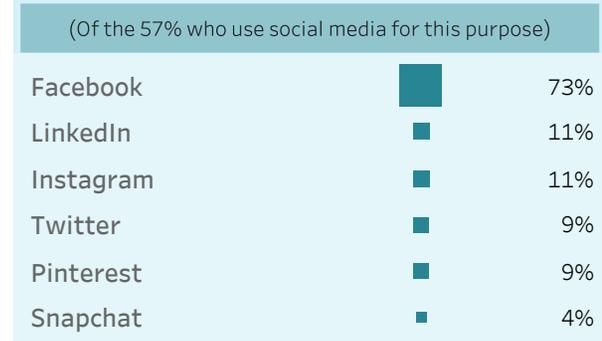
The most important ways I receive information are...



I most frequently share information via...



I use these social media sites for professional information...

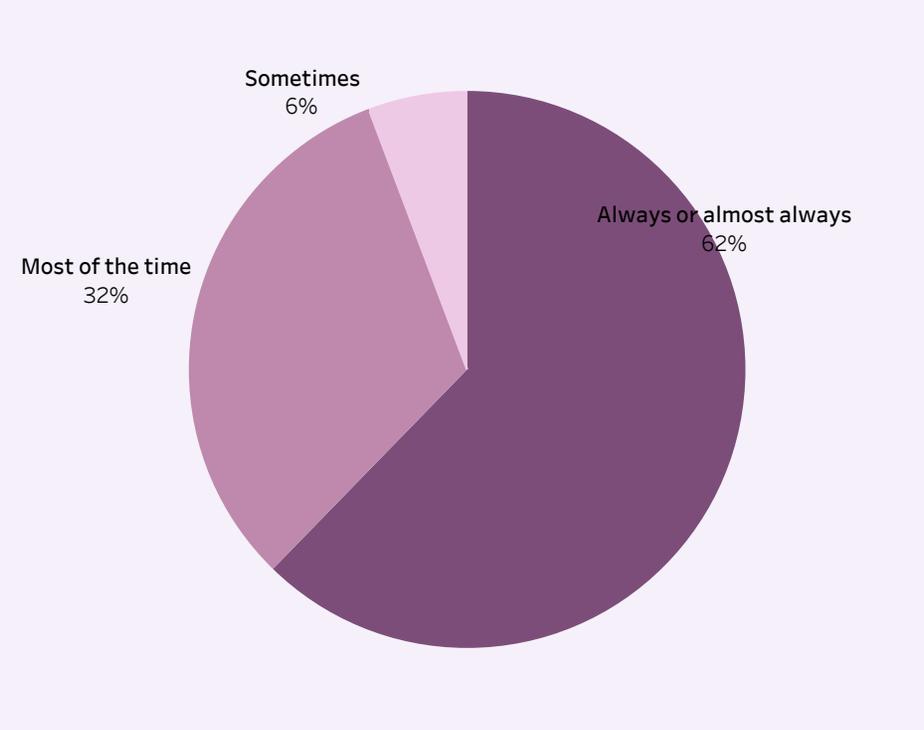
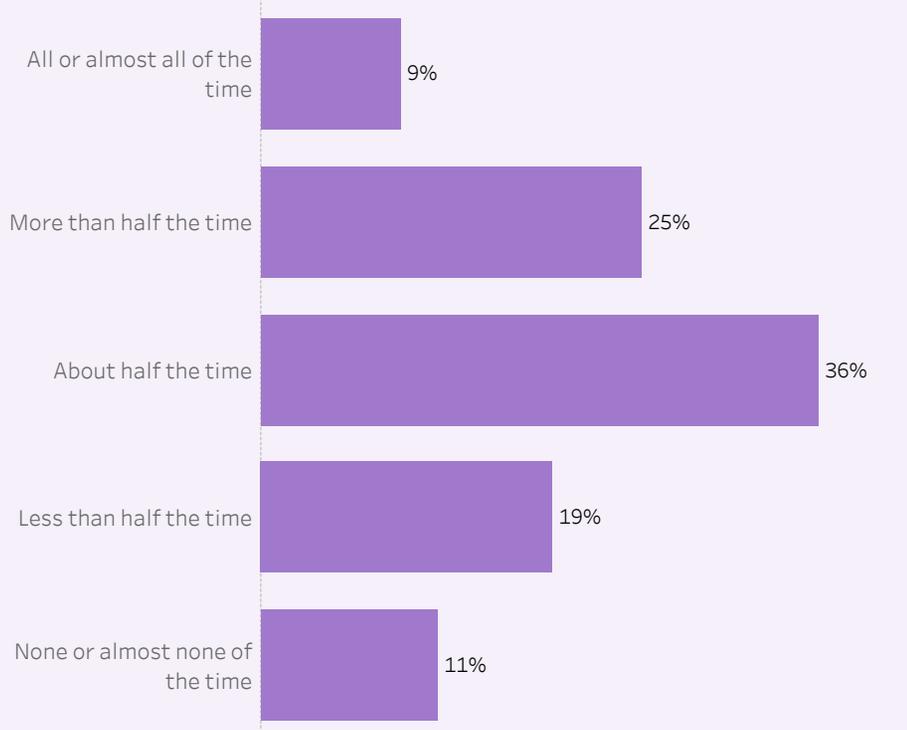




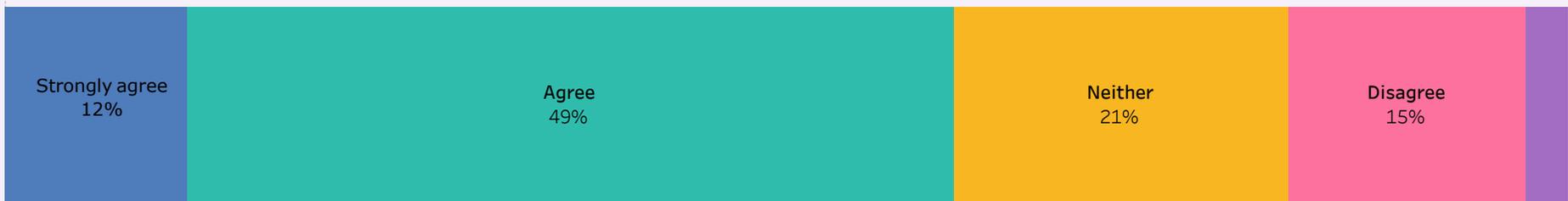
Access

I am away from my desk...

I have reliable Internet during my work day...



I have enough access to information.

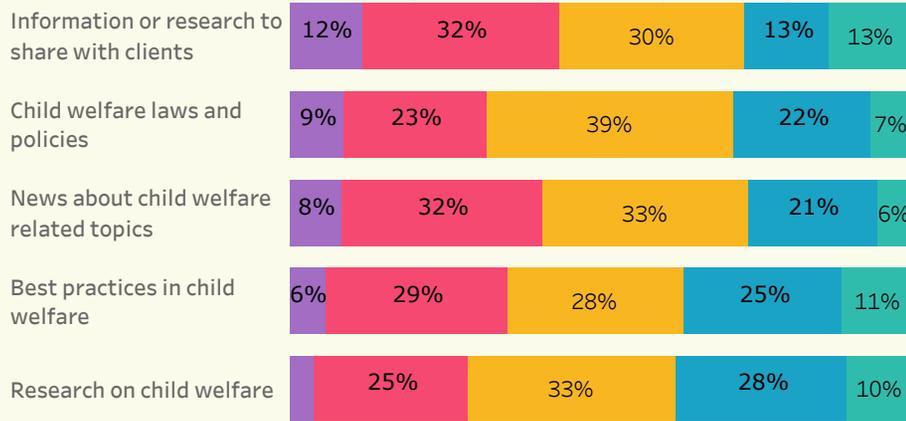


Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree



Search

I search for...



■ Once a day or more
 ■ Several times a month
 ■ Never
■ Several times a week
 ■ Once a month or less

I search by...

(Of the 97% who search for information)



Share

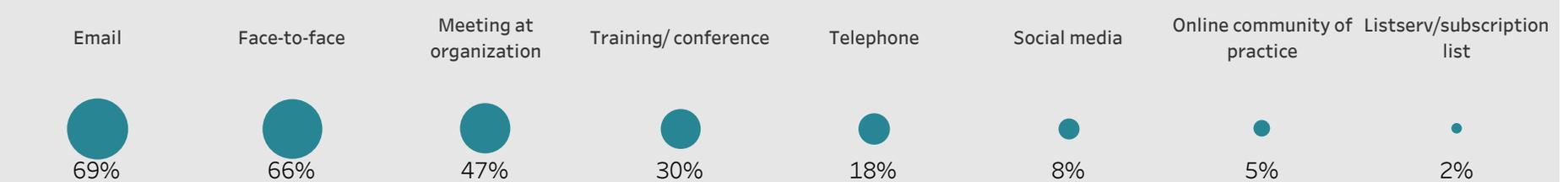
I share child welfare information with colleagues...



■ Never
 ■ Once a month or less
 ■ Several times a month
 ■ Several times a week
 ■ Once a day or more

I share via...

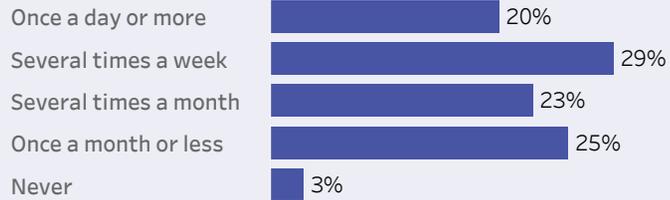
(Of the 98% who share)





Receive

I receive information that I did not search for...



The most important ways I receive information are...

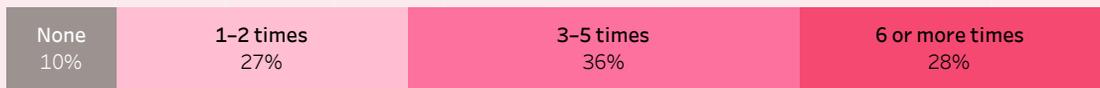


I want to receive information by...

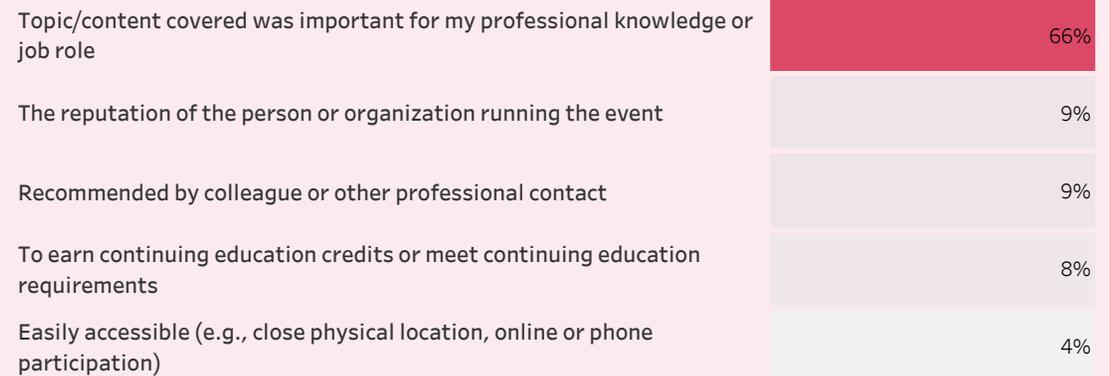


Training

In the past year, I attended trainings outside of my organization...



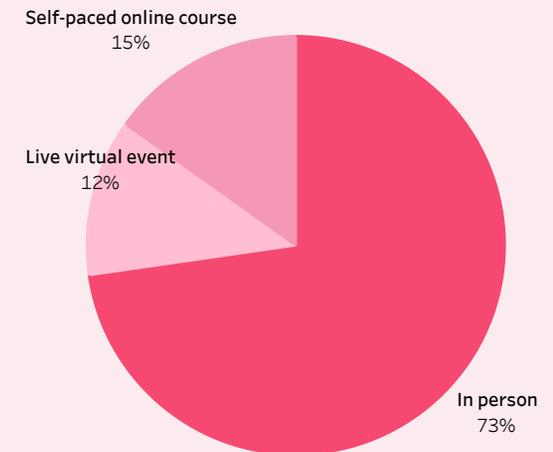
I decided to attend my most recent training because ...



I found the training by...



I want to be trained via...





Mobile Use and Social Media

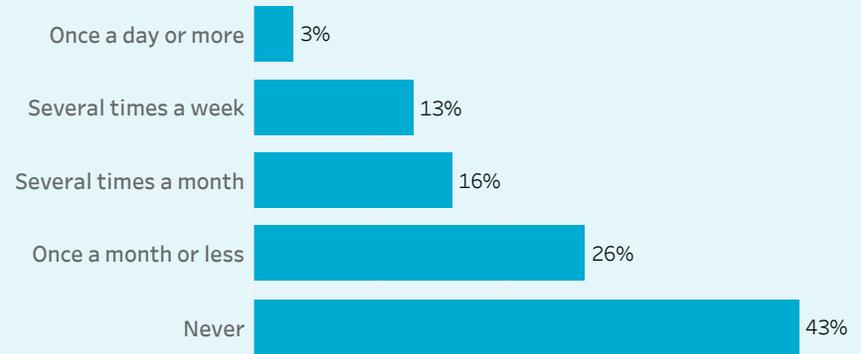
I use a mobile device to search for, access, or share child welfare information...



If I use my mobile device for this purpose, I use it to...

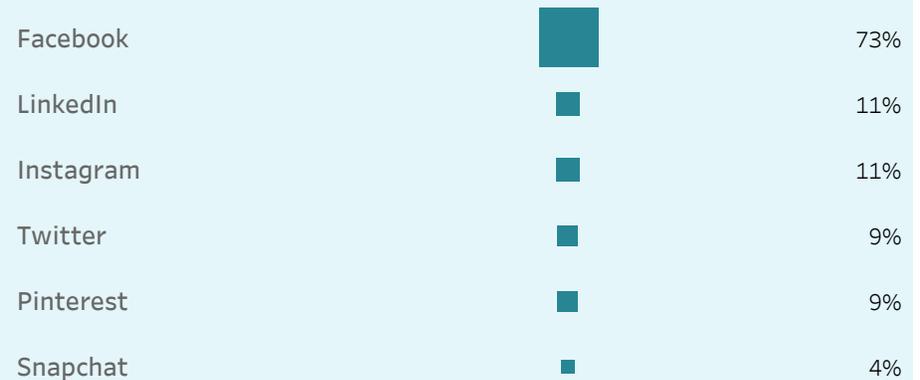


I search for child welfare information on social media...

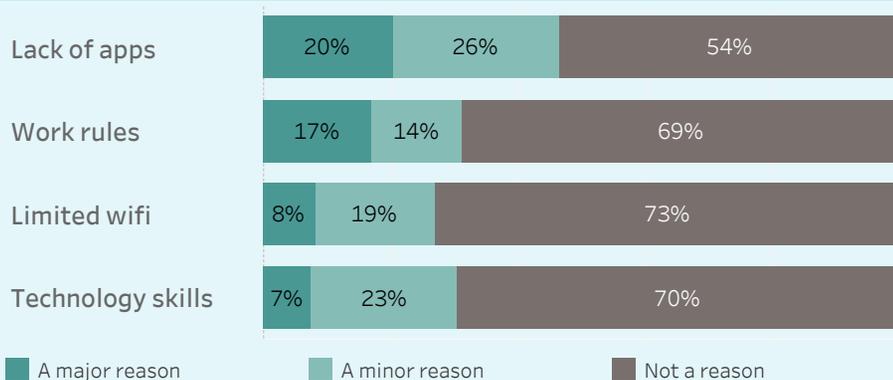


I usually search these social media sites for information...

(Of the 57% who use social media for this purpose)



I do not use my mobile device to access child welfare info because of...



Appendix C2: Profile of Frontline Child Welfare Professionals

The following pages provide a summary of responses from the 1,761 survey respondents who self-identified as frontline child welfare professionals. This group includes direct service providers and caseworkers, as well as other professionals who chose this as the best description of their role.

The Child Welfare Information Gateway, funded by the Children's Bureau, conducted a study to better understand how people who work and study in the field of child welfare use and access job-related information. The survey included questions about how child welfare professionals access and use information personally and professionally as well as their preferences for receiving information and training.

Create a profile by selecting from the filters below

Organization Filters

Profession

- BSW/MSW Students
- Child Welfare Professionals (non-tribal)
- Legal Professionals
- Tribal Child Welfare Professionals

Organization Type

- No response
- County-administered child welfare agency
- Other type of organization
- Private child welfare agency
- State-administered child welfare agency
- Tribal child welfare or other government ..

Urbanicity

- No response
- NA
- Rural/Frontier
- Suburban
- Urban

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities

- No response
- Administration
- Adoption/guardianship
- Child protective services
- Continuous quality improvement/evaluation
- Foster care
- In-home services
- Indian Child Welfare Act
- Information technology/SACWIS/data systems

Workplace Role

- No response
- Administrator/director
- Attorney for child welfare agency
- Attorney for parents, children, or families
- BSW/MSW Student
- Court Improvement Program director/staff
- Frontline worker/direct services provider
- Judge
- Manager/supervisor

Individual Demographics

Years of Service

- No response
- 0 years (current student)
- 1 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 15 years
- 16 + years
- Less than 1 year

Age

- No response
- 20 or under
- 21 to 30
- 31 to 40
- 41 to 50
- 51 to 60
- 61 or above
- Prefer not to answer

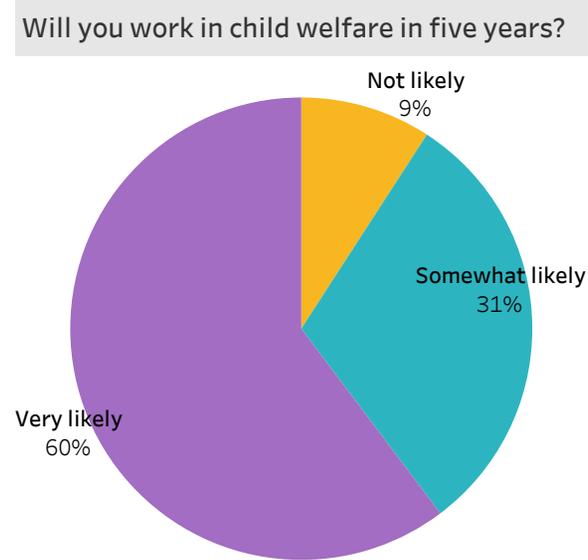
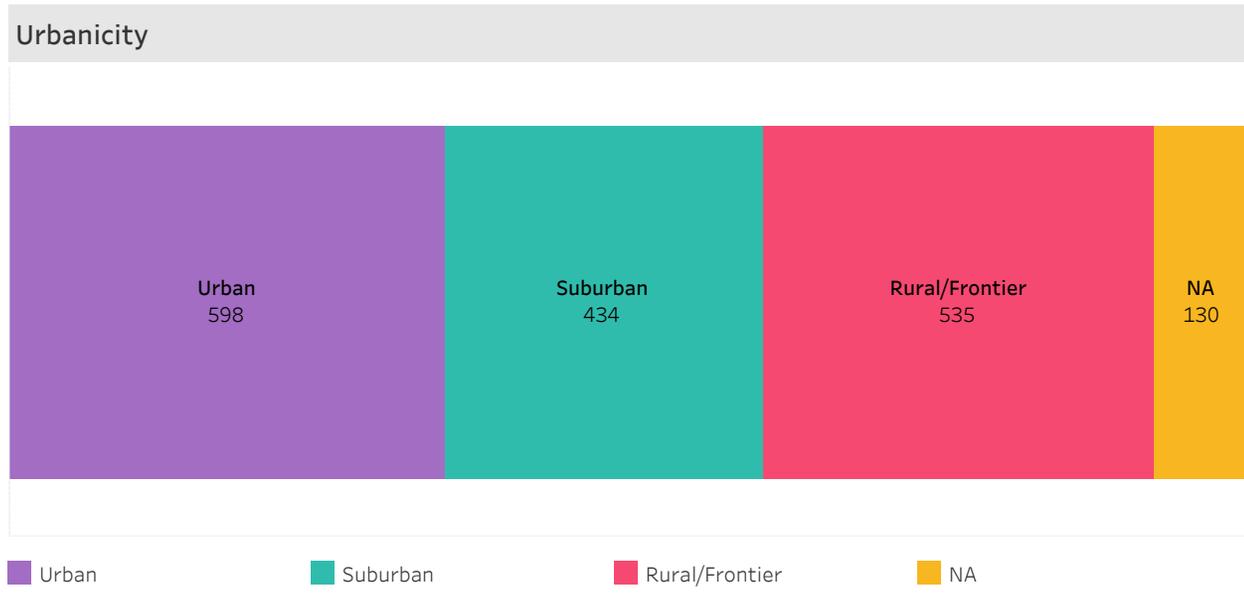
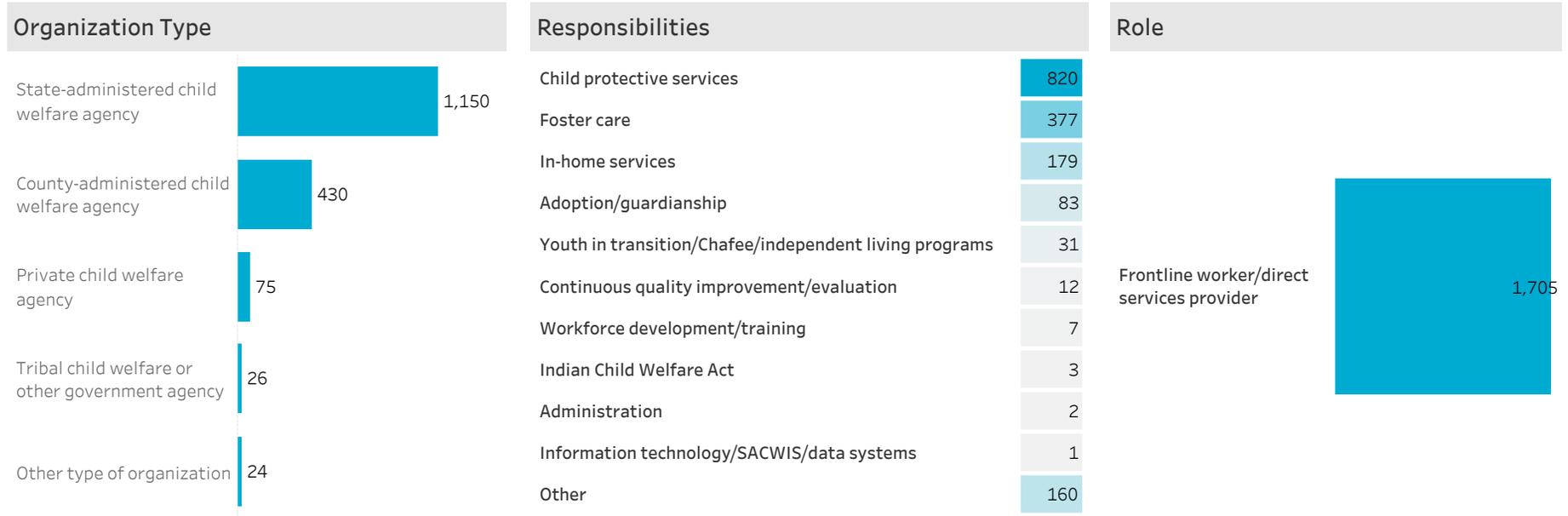
Current Education

- No response
- No
- Yes, I am enrolled in a Bachelor's in Social..
- Yes, I am enrolled in a Master's in Social ..
- Yes, I am enrolled in an education/degree ..

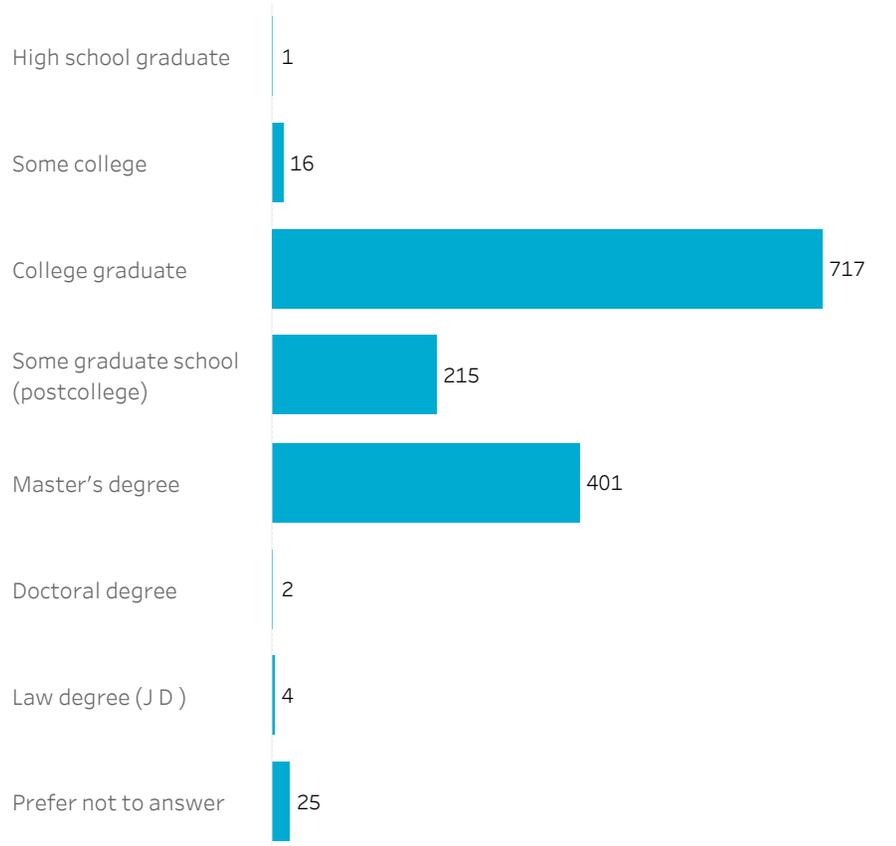
Click next to view the generated profile.



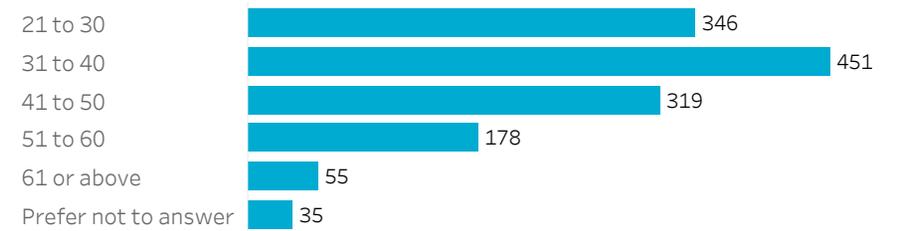
1,761 Respondents



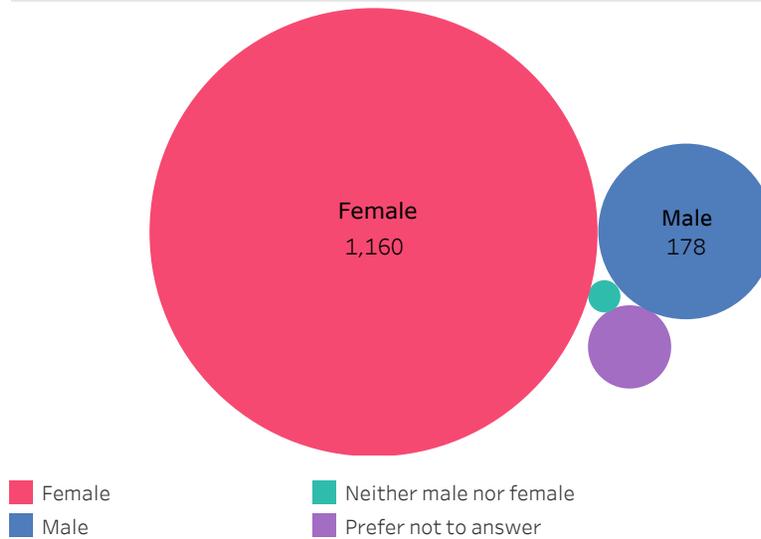
Highest Education



Age



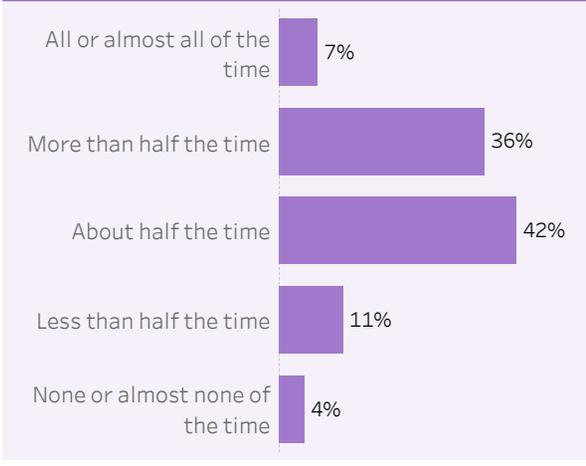
Gender



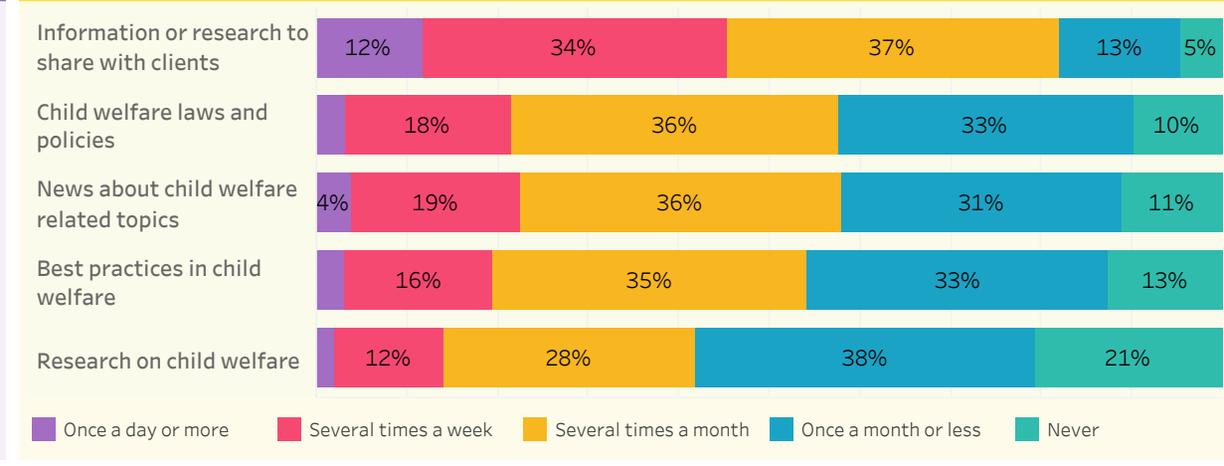
Years of Service



I am away from my desk...



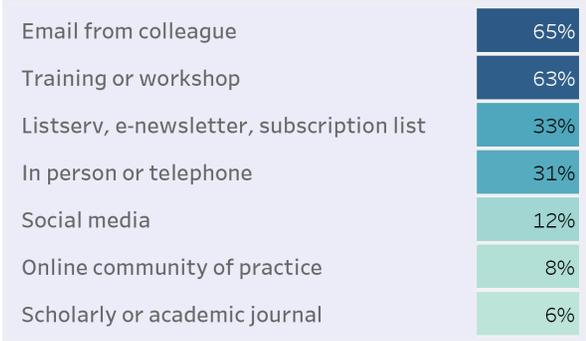
I search for...



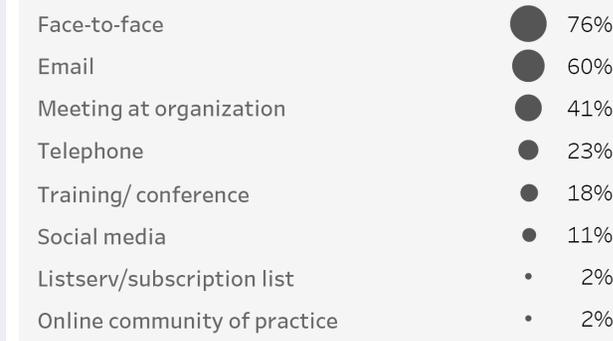
I use my mobile device for purposes related to child welfare...



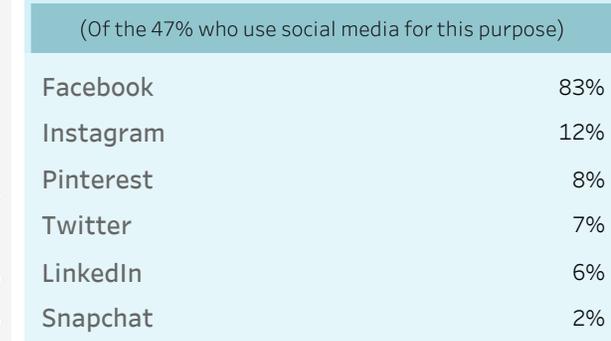
The most important ways I receive information are...



I most frequently share information via...



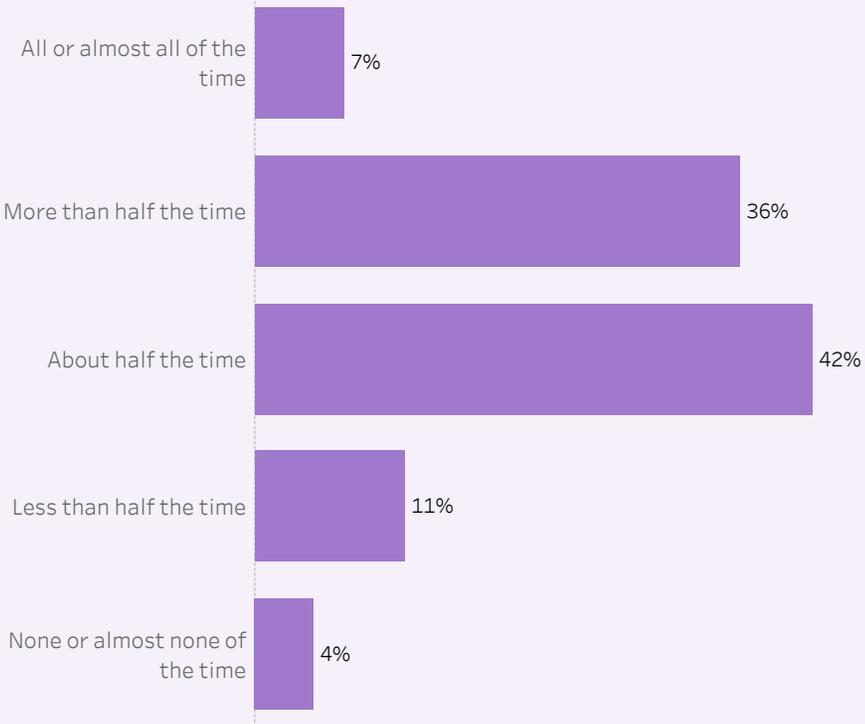
I use these social media sites for professional information...



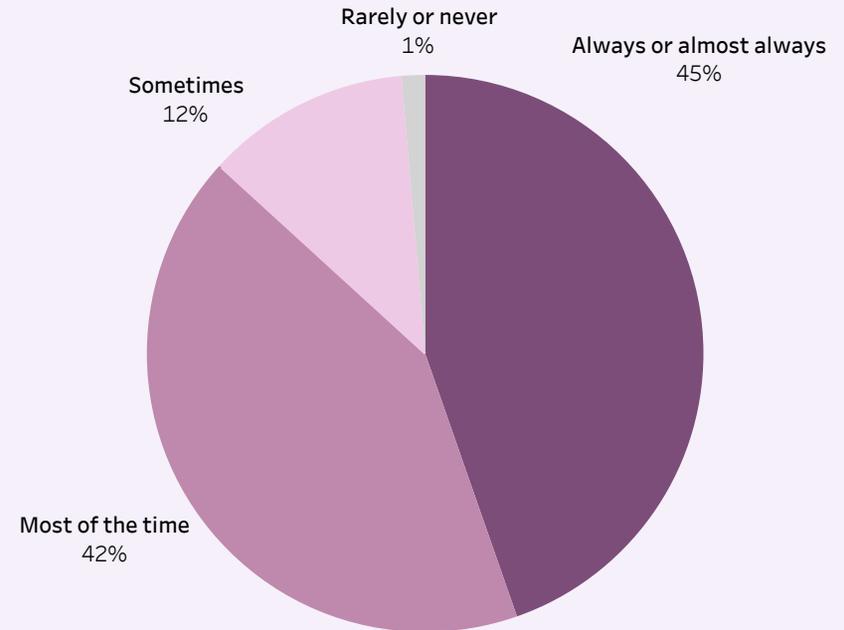


Access

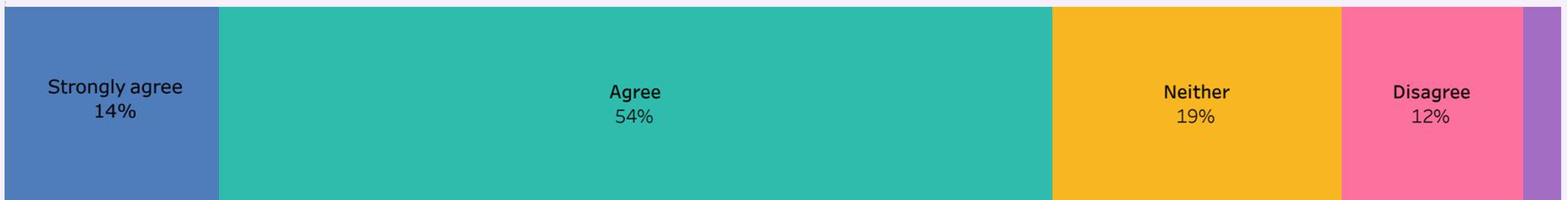
I am away from my desk...



I have reliable Internet during my work day...



I have enough access to information.

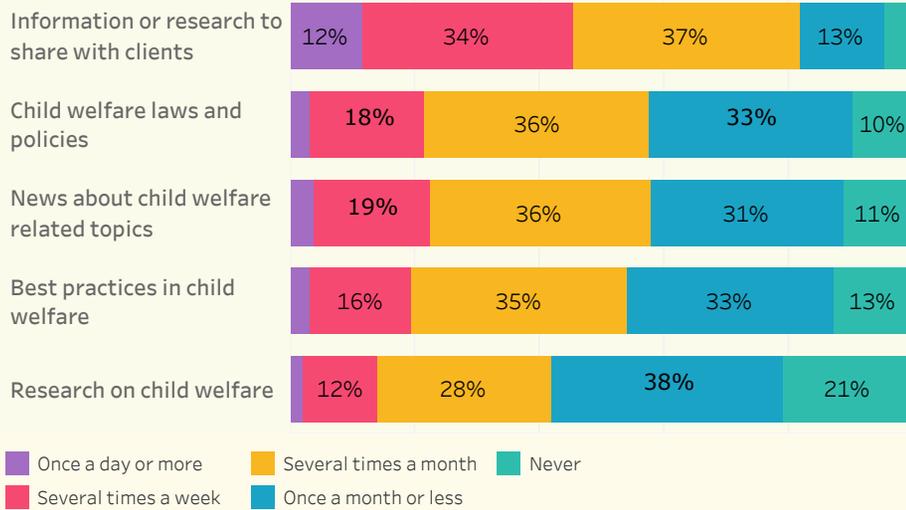


Strongly agree Agree Neither Disagree Strongly disagree



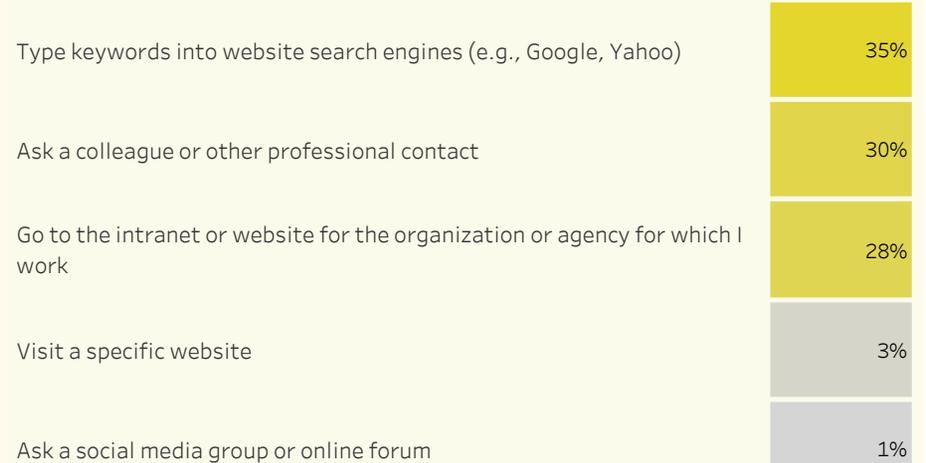
Search

I search for...



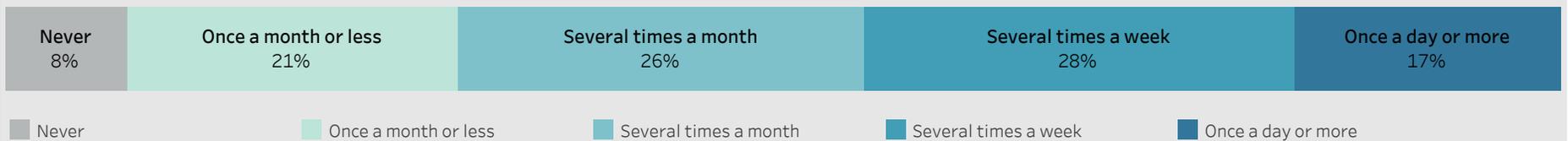
I search by...

(Of the 98% who search for information)



Share

I share child welfare information with colleagues...



I share via...

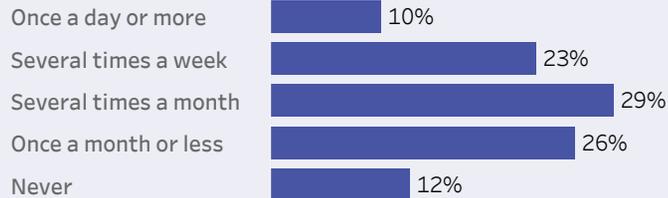
(Of the 92% who share)





Receive

I receive information that I did not search for...



The most important ways I receive information are...



I want to receive information by...

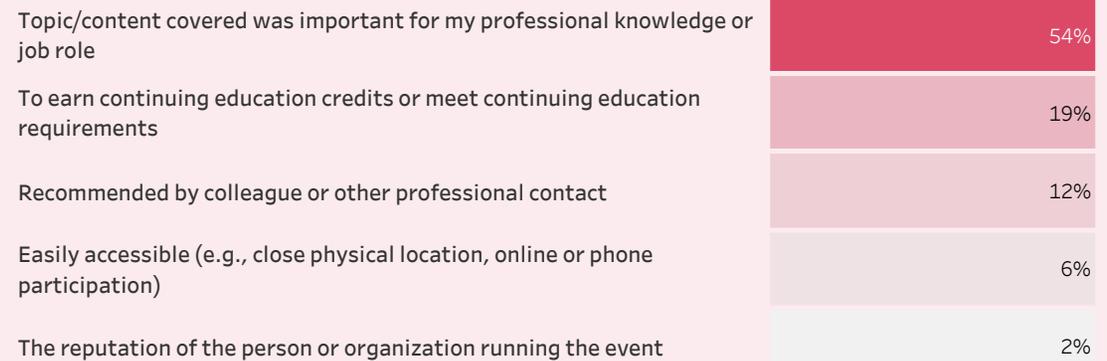


Training

In the past year, I attended trainings outside of my organization...



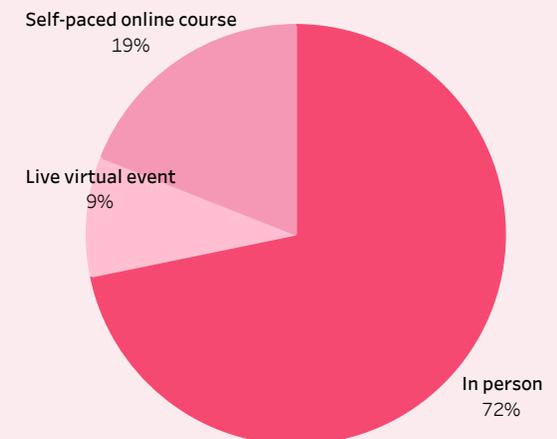
I decided to attend my most recent training because ...



I found the training by...



I want to be trained via...





Mobile Use and Social Media

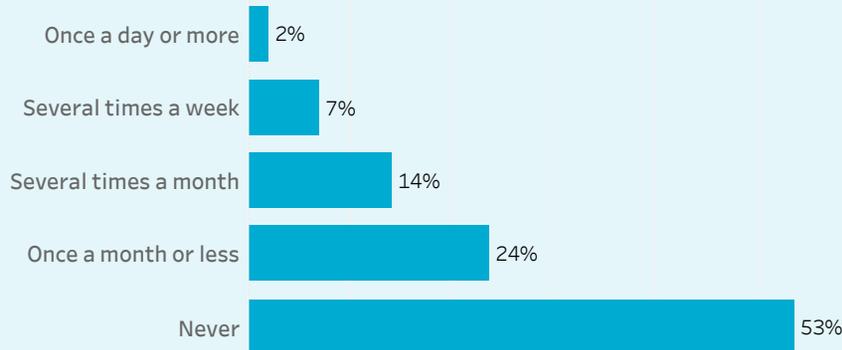
I use a mobile device to search for, access, or share child welfare information...



If I use my mobile device for this purpose, I use it to...

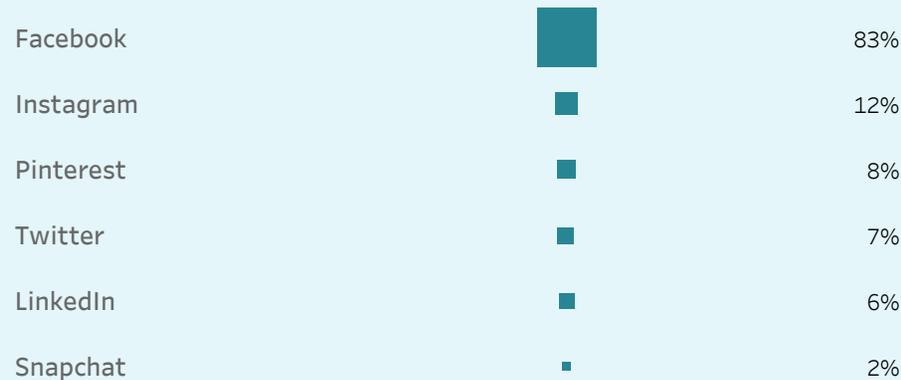


I search for child welfare information on social media...

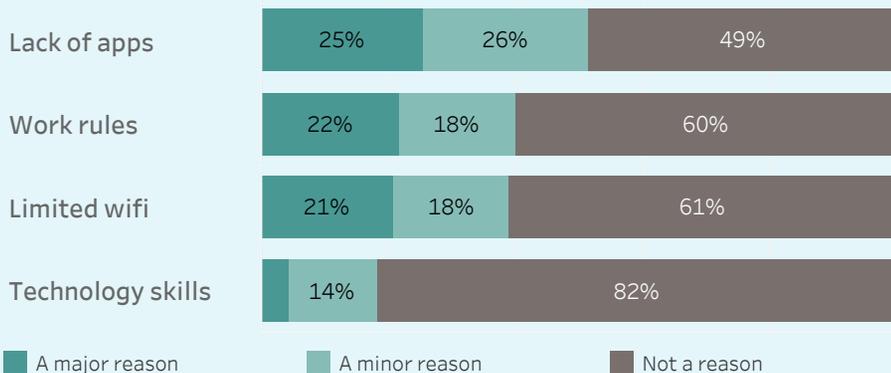


I usually search these social media sites for information...

(Of the 47% who use social media for this purpose)



I do not use my mobile device to access child welfare info because of...



Appendix C3: Profile of Child Welfare Managers and Supervisors

The following pages provide a summary of responses from the 940 survey respondents who self-identified as child welfare managers or supervisors.

The Child Welfare Information Gateway, funded by the Children’s Bureau, conducted a study to better understand how people who work and study in the field of child welfare use and access job-related information. The survey included questions about how child welfare professionals access and use information personally and professionally as well as their preferences for receiving information and training.

Create a profile by selecting from the filters below

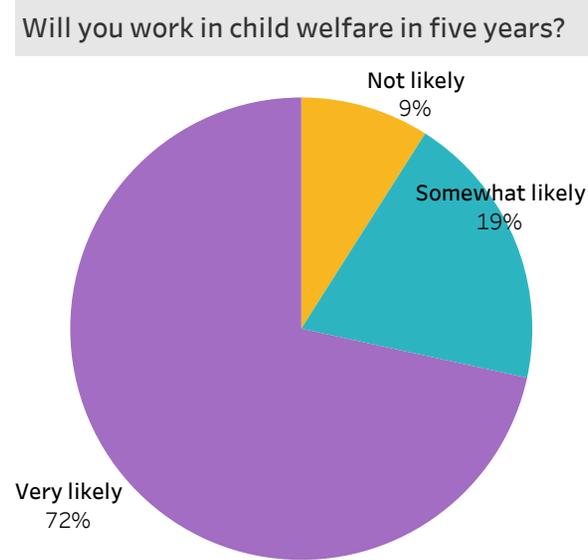
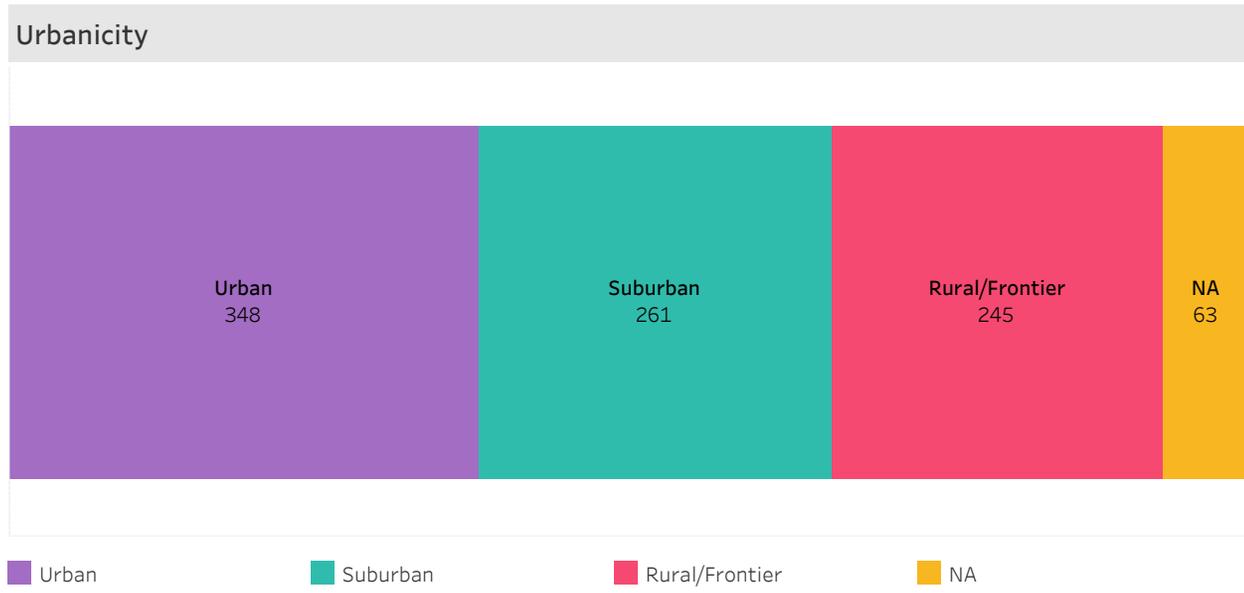
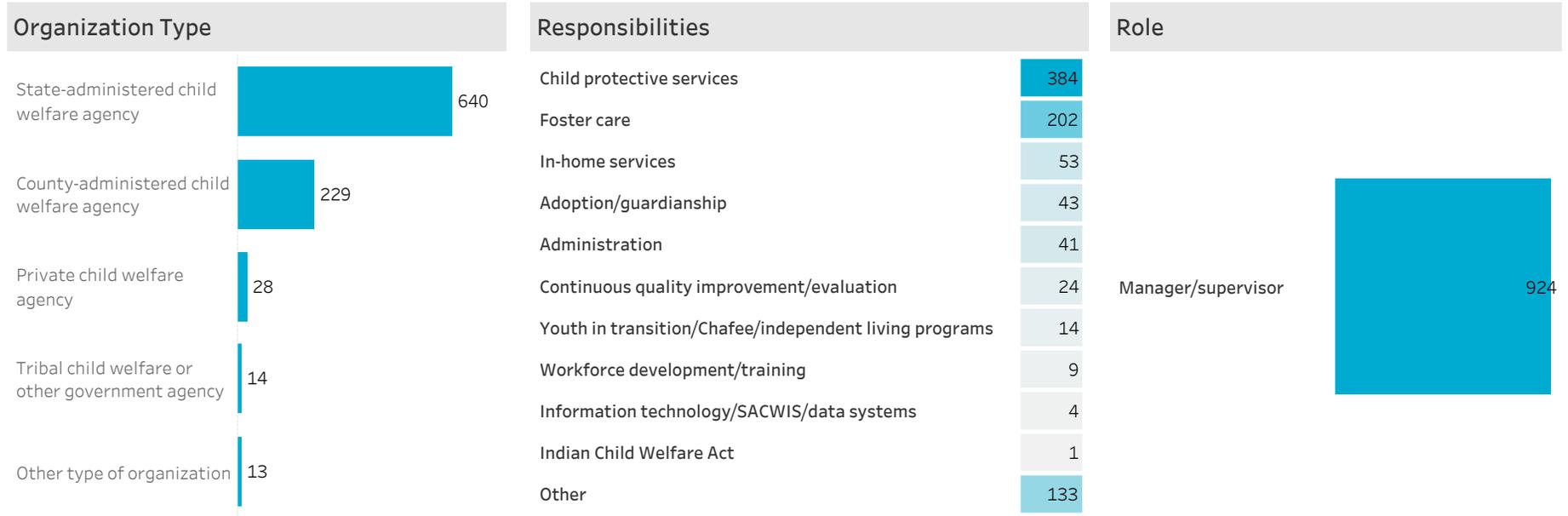
<h1>Organization Filters</h1>	Profession <input type="checkbox"/> BSW/MSW Students <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Child Welfare Professionals (non-tribal) <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Professionals <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal Child Welfare Professionals	Organization Type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County-administered child welfare agency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other type of organization <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private child welfare agency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State-administered child welfare agency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal child welfare or other government ..	Urbanicity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural/Frontier <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban
	<h1>Roles and Responsibilities</h1>	Responsibilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adoption/guardianship <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Child protective services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuous quality improvement/evaluation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foster care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In-home services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indian Child Welfare Act <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information technology/SACWIS/data systems	Workplace Role <input type="checkbox"/> No response <input type="checkbox"/> Administrator/director <input type="checkbox"/> Attorney for child welfare agency <input type="checkbox"/> Attorney for parents, children, or families <input type="checkbox"/> BSW/MSW Student <input type="checkbox"/> Court Improvement Program director/staff <input type="checkbox"/> Frontline worker/direct services provider <input type="checkbox"/> Judge <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager/supervisor
<h1>Individual Demographics</h1>		Years of Service <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 years (current student) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 to 5 years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 to 10 years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11 to 15 years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 16 + years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year	Age <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20 or under <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 21 to 30 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 31 to 40 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 41 to 50 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 51 to 60 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 61 or above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer

Click next to view the generated profile.

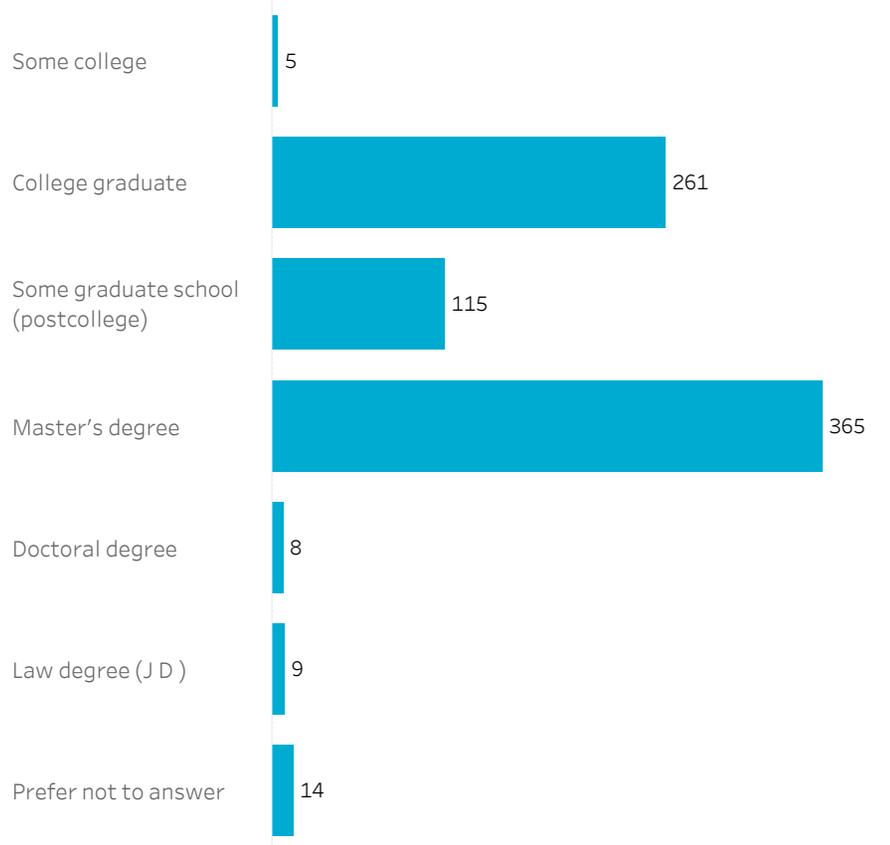


940 Respondents

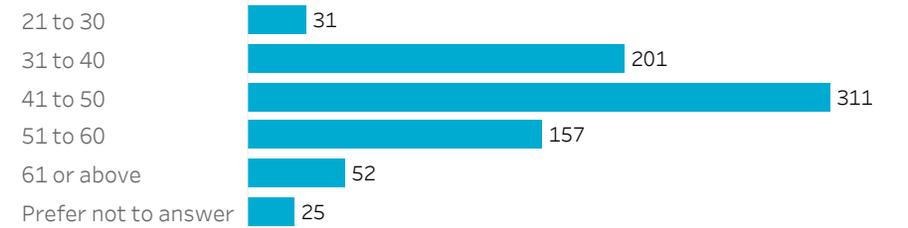
Profile Demographics



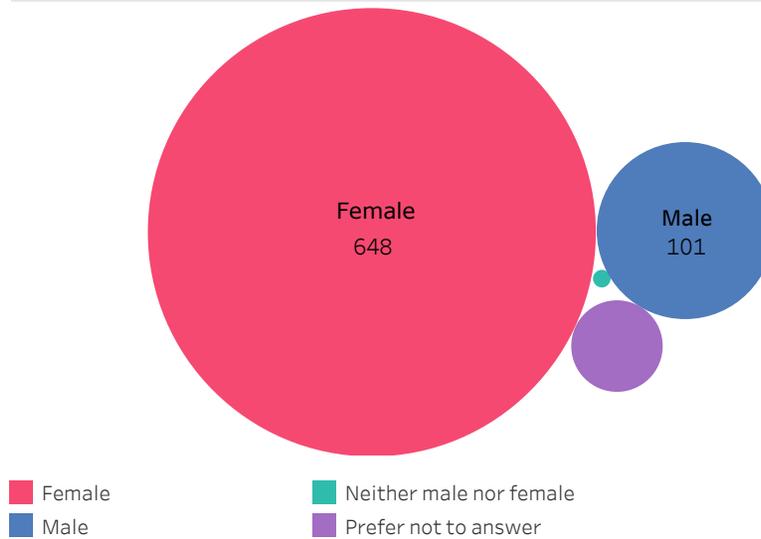
Highest Education



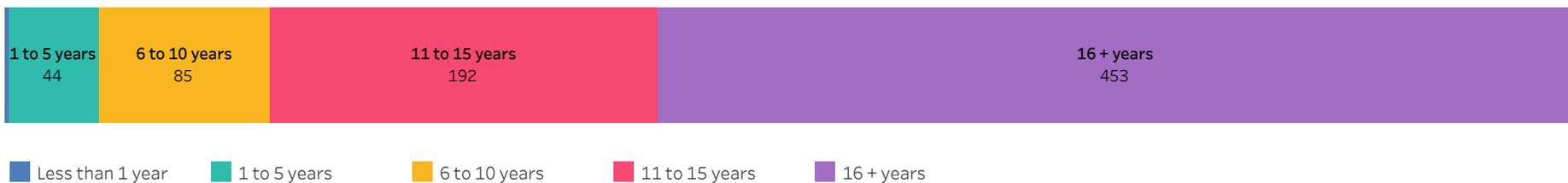
Age



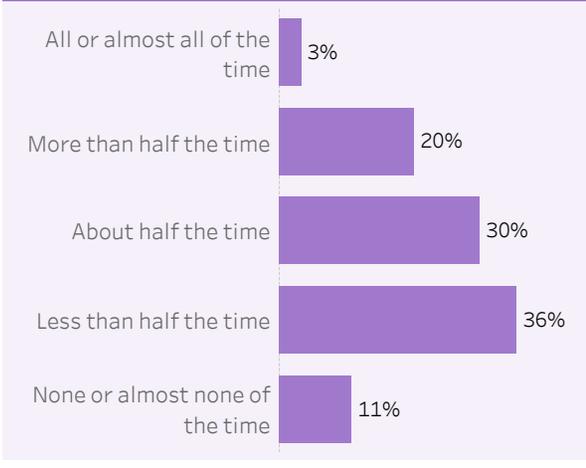
Gender



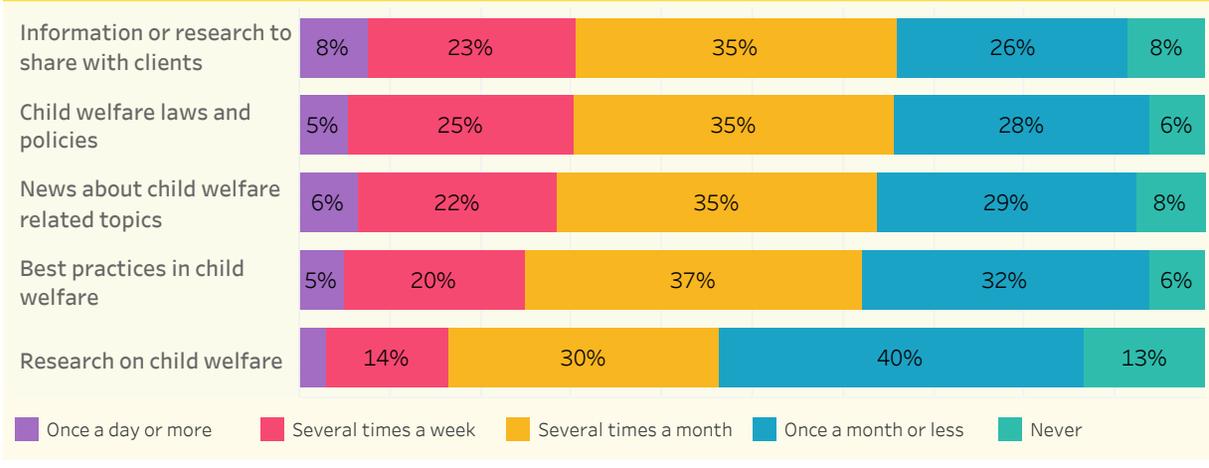
Years of Service



I am away from my desk...



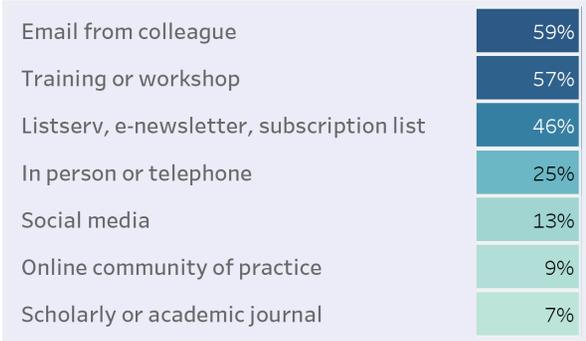
I search for...



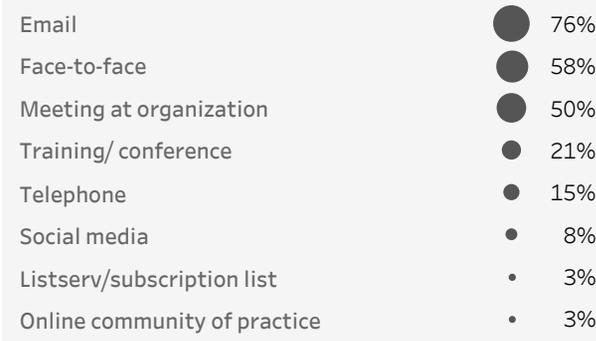
I use my mobile device for purposes related to child welfare...



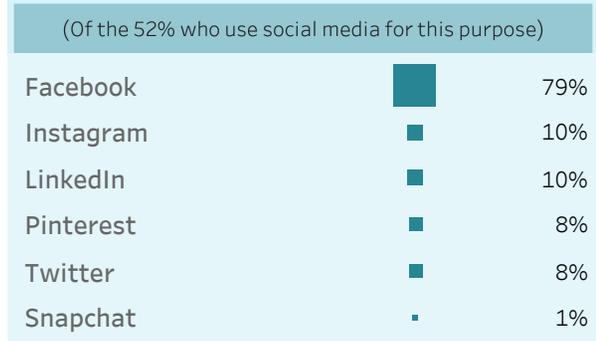
The most important ways I receive information are...



I most frequently share information via...



I use these social media sites for professional information...

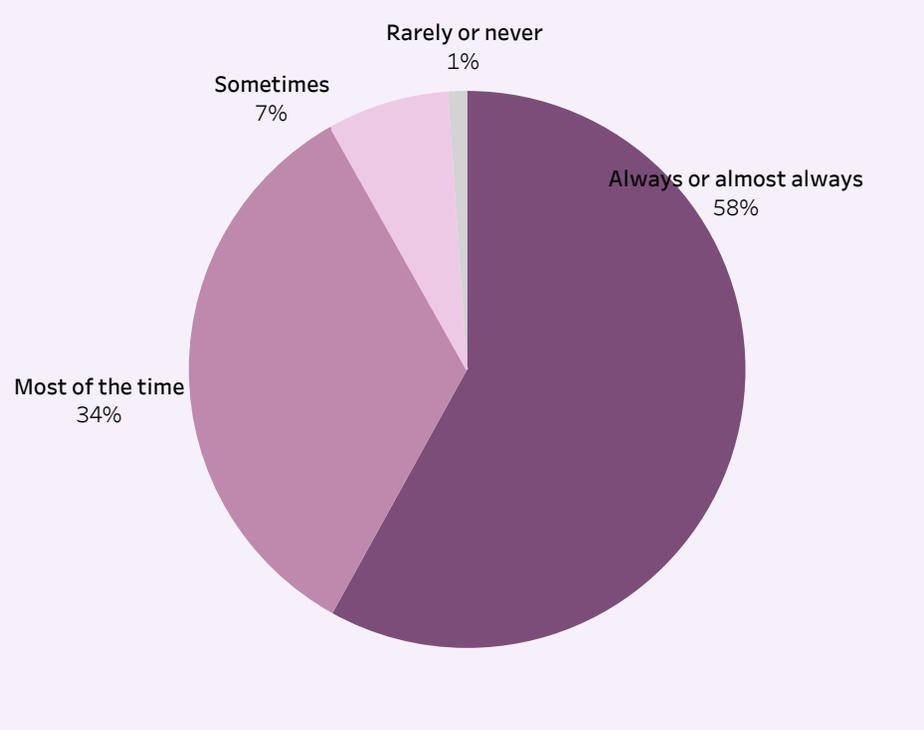
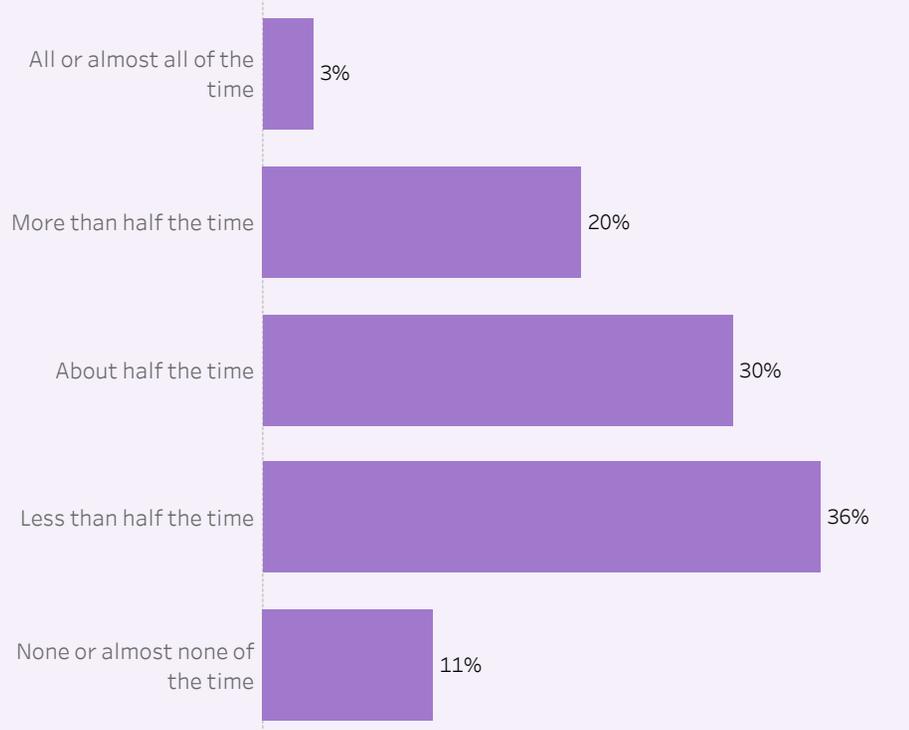




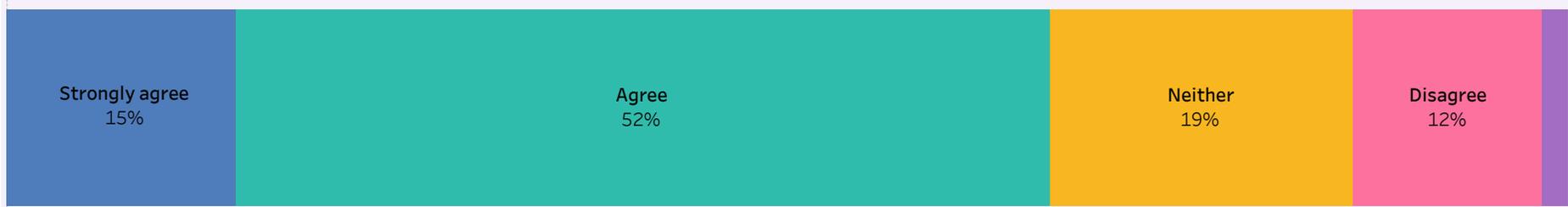
Access

I am away from my desk...

I have reliable Internet during my work day...



I have enough access to information.

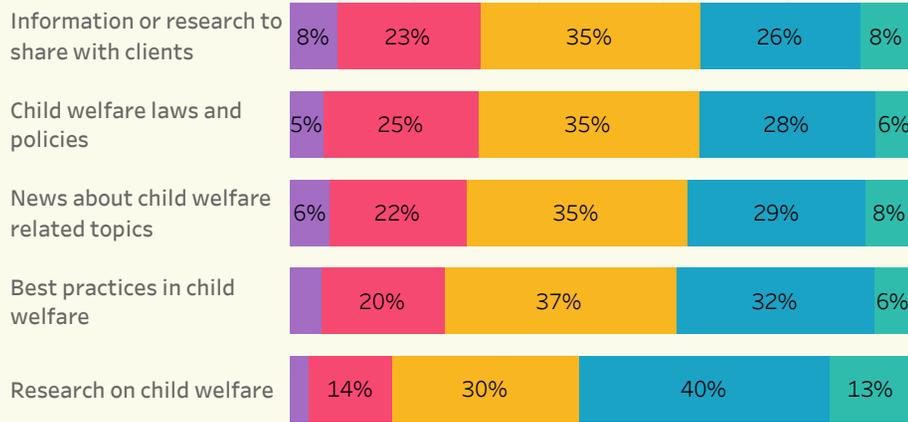


■ Strongly agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Neither
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree



Search

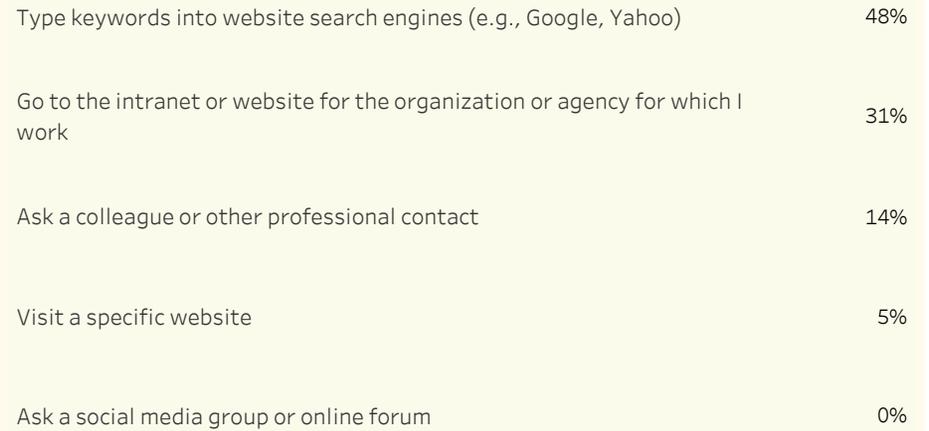
I search for...



■ Once a day or more
 ■ Several times a month
 ■ Never
■ Several times a week
 ■ Once a month or less

I search by...

(Of the 98% who search for information)



Share

I share child welfare information with colleagues...



■ Never
 ■ Once a month or less
 ■ Several times a month
 ■ Several times a week
 ■ Once a day or more

I share via...

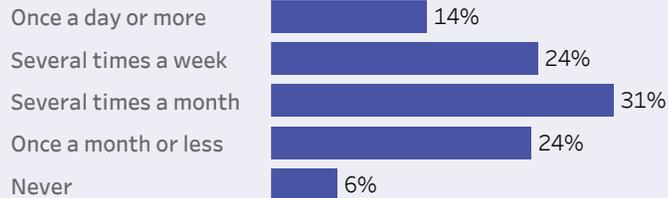
(Of the 97% who share)





Receive

I receive information that I did not search for...



The most important ways I receive information are...



I want to receive information by...

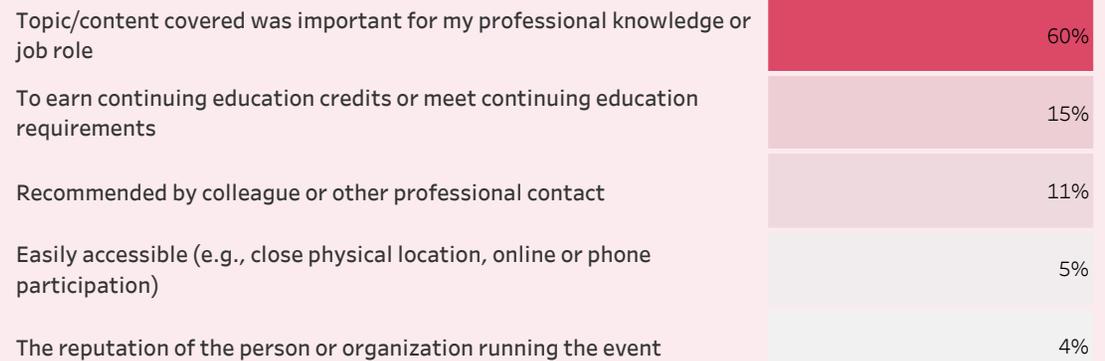


Training

In the past year, I attended trainings outside of my organization...



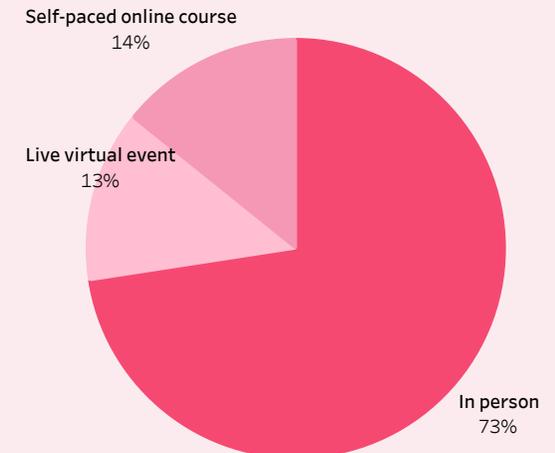
I decided to attend my most recent training because ...



I found the training by...



I want to be trained via...





Mobile Use and Social Media

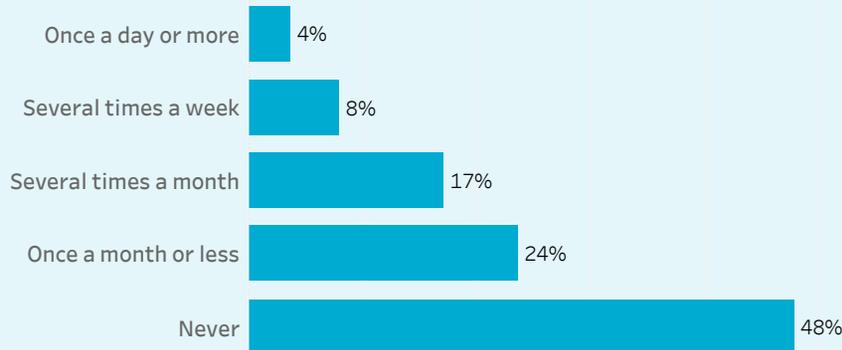
I use a mobile device to search for, access, or share child welfare information...



If I use my mobile device for this purpose, I use it to...

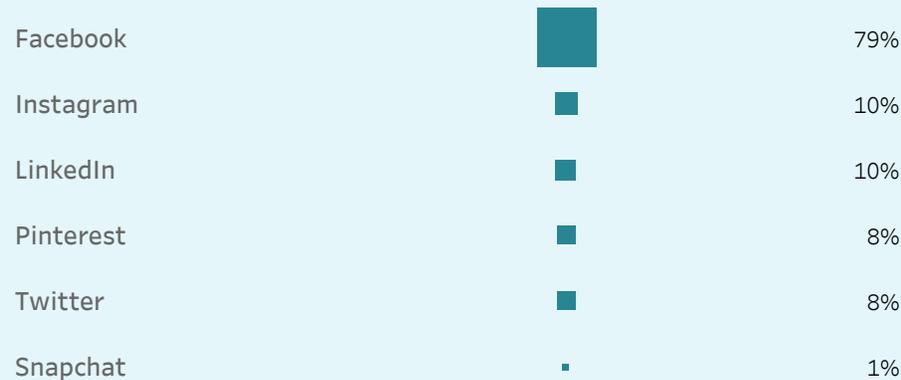


I search for child welfare information on social media...

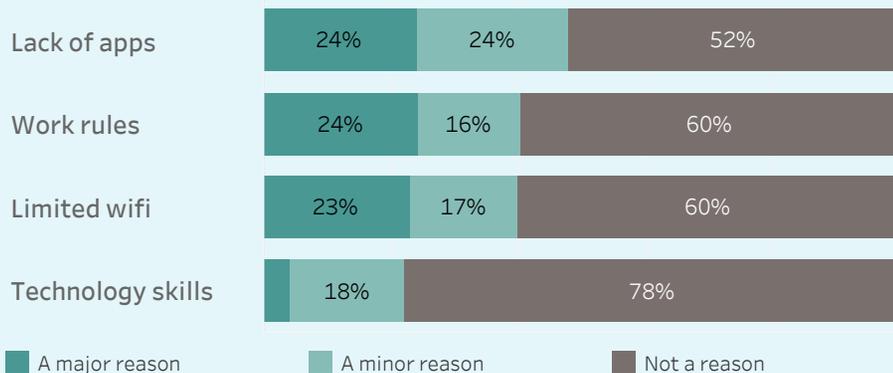


I usually search these social media sites for information...

(Of the 52% who use social media for this purpose)



I do not use my mobile device to access child welfare info because of...



Appendix C4: Profile of Child Welfare Directors and Administrators

The following pages provide a summary of responses from the 221 survey respondents who self-identified as child welfare directors or administrators.

The Child Welfare Information Gateway, funded by the Children's Bureau, conducted a study to better understand how people who work and study in the field of child welfare use and access job-related information. The survey included questions about how child welfare professionals access and use information personally and professionally as well as their preferences for receiving information and training.

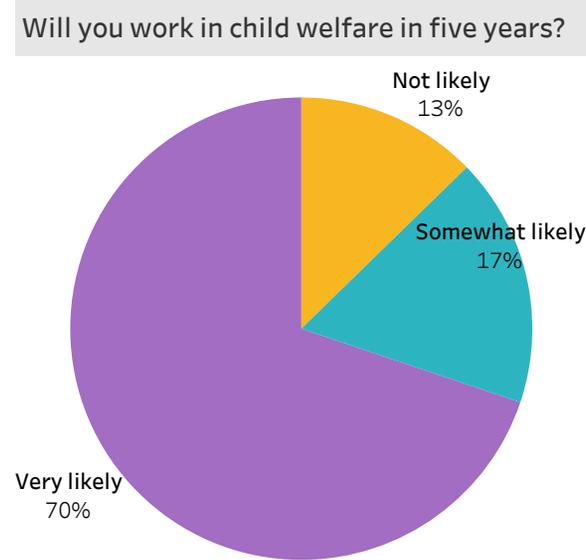
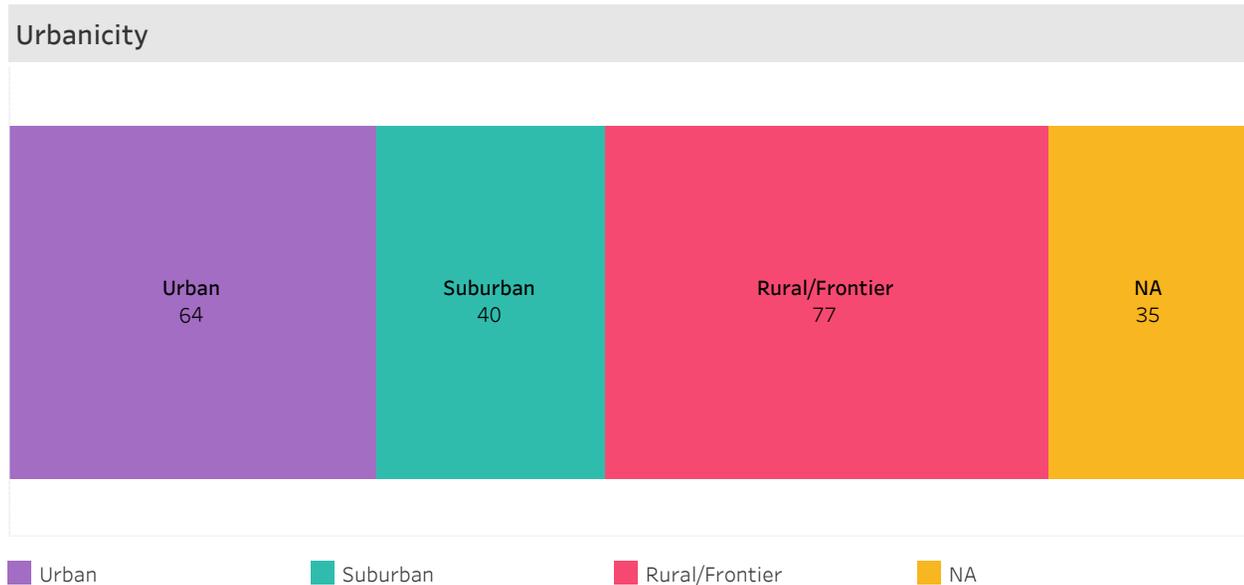
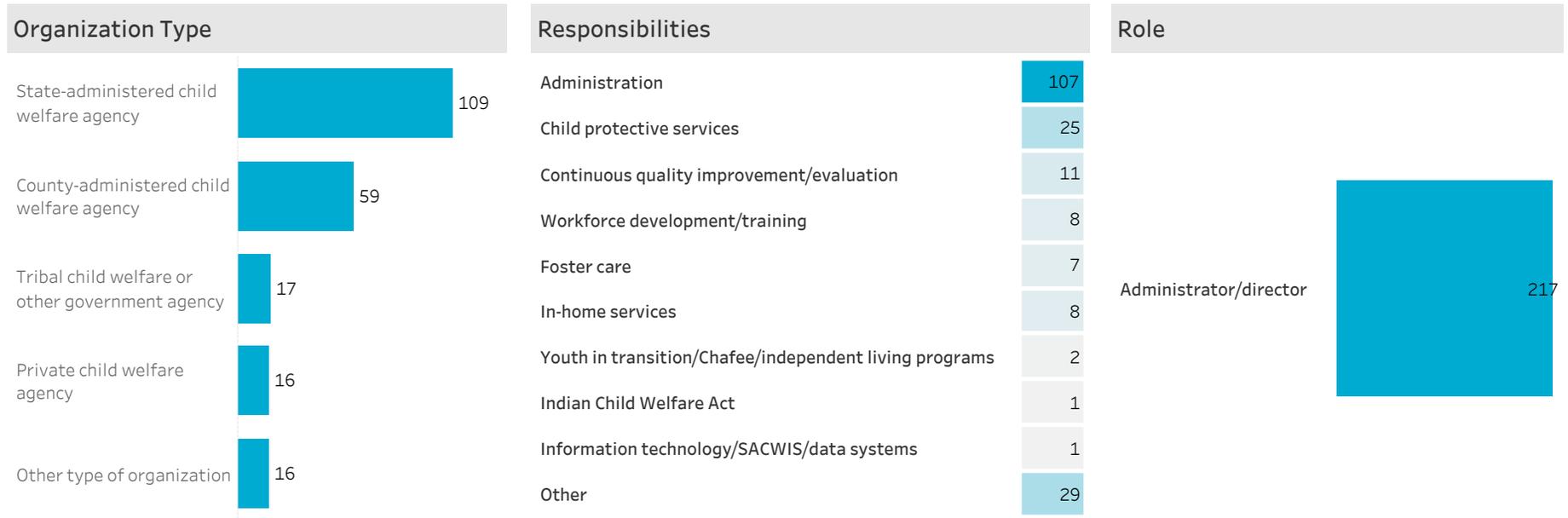
Create a profile by selecting from the filters below

<h3>Organization Filters</h3>	Profession <input type="checkbox"/> BSW/MSW Students <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Child Welfare Professionals (non-tribal) <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Professionals <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal Child Welfare Professionals	Organization Type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County-administered child welfare agency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other type of organization <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private child welfare agency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State-administered child welfare agency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal child welfare or other government ..	Urbanicity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural/Frontier <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban
	Roles and Responsibilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adoption/guardianship <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Child protective services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuous quality improvement/evaluation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foster care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In-home services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indian Child Welfare Act <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information technology/SACWIS/data systems	Workplace Role <input type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administrator/director <input type="checkbox"/> Attorney for child welfare agency <input type="checkbox"/> Attorney for parents, children, or families <input type="checkbox"/> BSW/MSW Student <input type="checkbox"/> Court Improvement Program director/staff <input type="checkbox"/> Frontline worker/direct services provider <input type="checkbox"/> Judge <input type="checkbox"/> Manager/supervisor	
<h3>Individual Demographics</h3>	Years of Service <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 years (current student) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 to 5 years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 to 10 years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11 to 15 years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 16 + years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year	Age <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20 or under <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 21 to 30 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 31 to 40 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 41 to 50 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 51 to 60 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 61 or above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer	Current Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No response <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am enrolled in a Bachelor's in Social.. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am enrolled in a Master's in Social .. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am enrolled in an education/degree ..

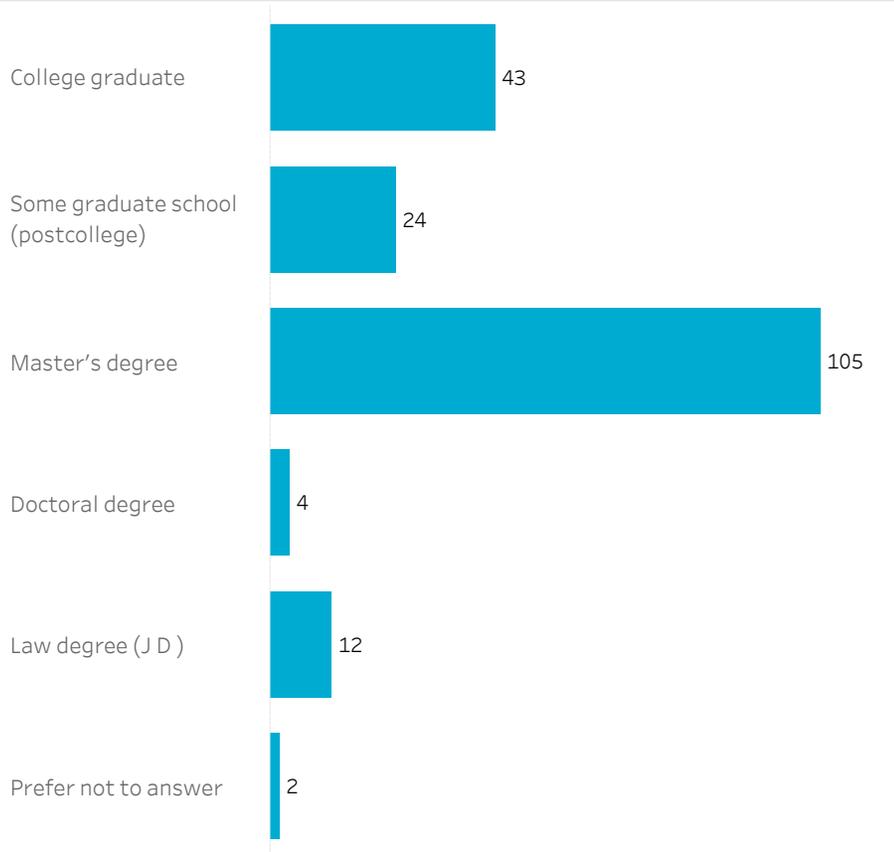
Click next to view the generated profile.



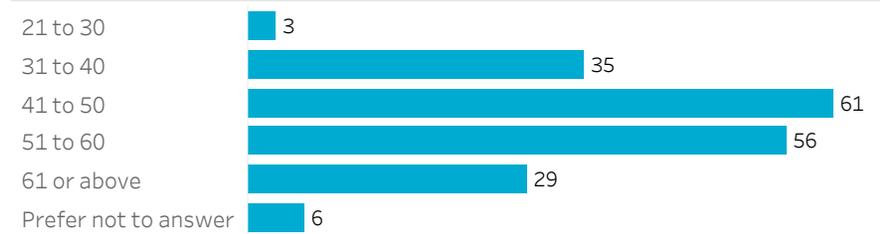
221 Respondents



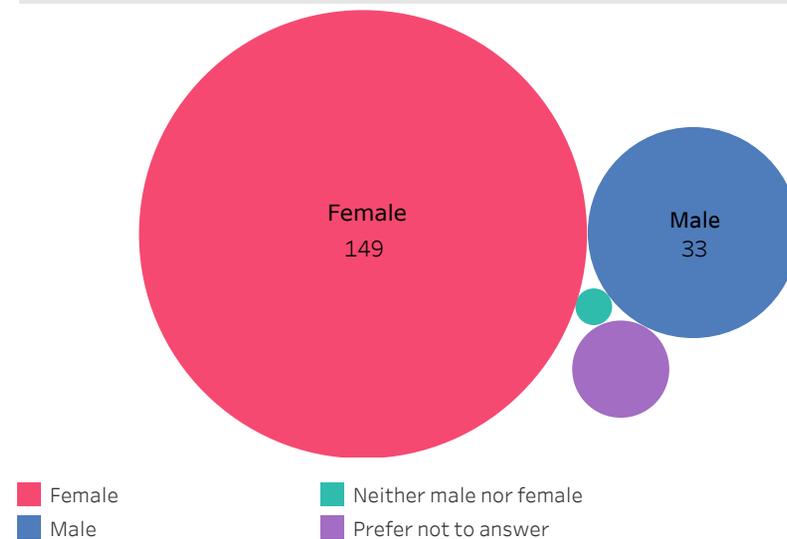
Highest Education



Age



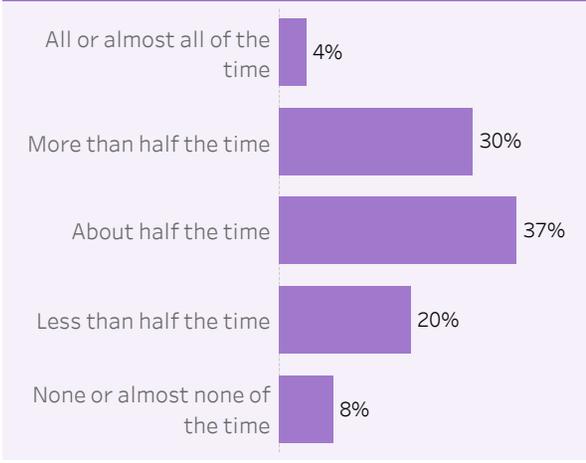
Gender



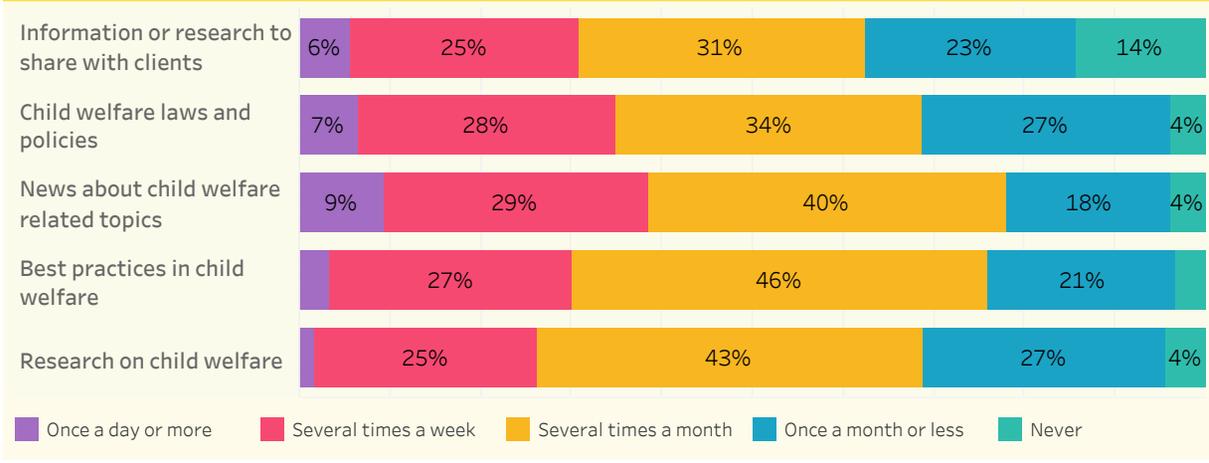
Years of Service



I am away from my desk...



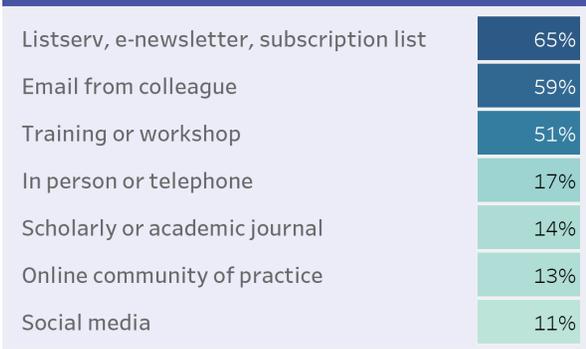
I search for...



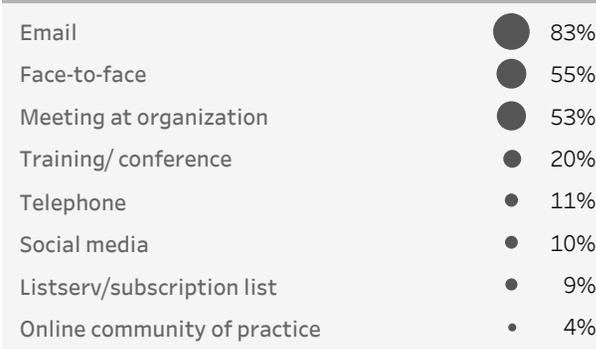
I use my mobile device for purposes related to child welfare...



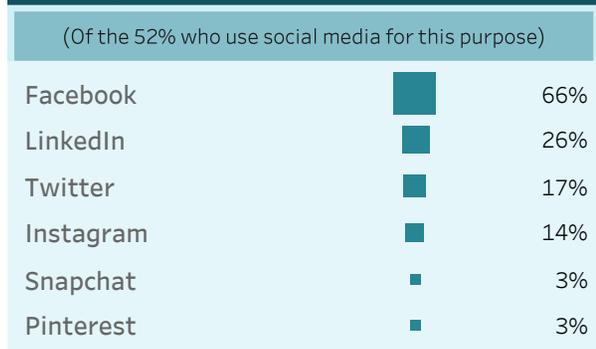
The most important ways I receive information are...



I most frequently share information via...



I use these social media sites for professional information...

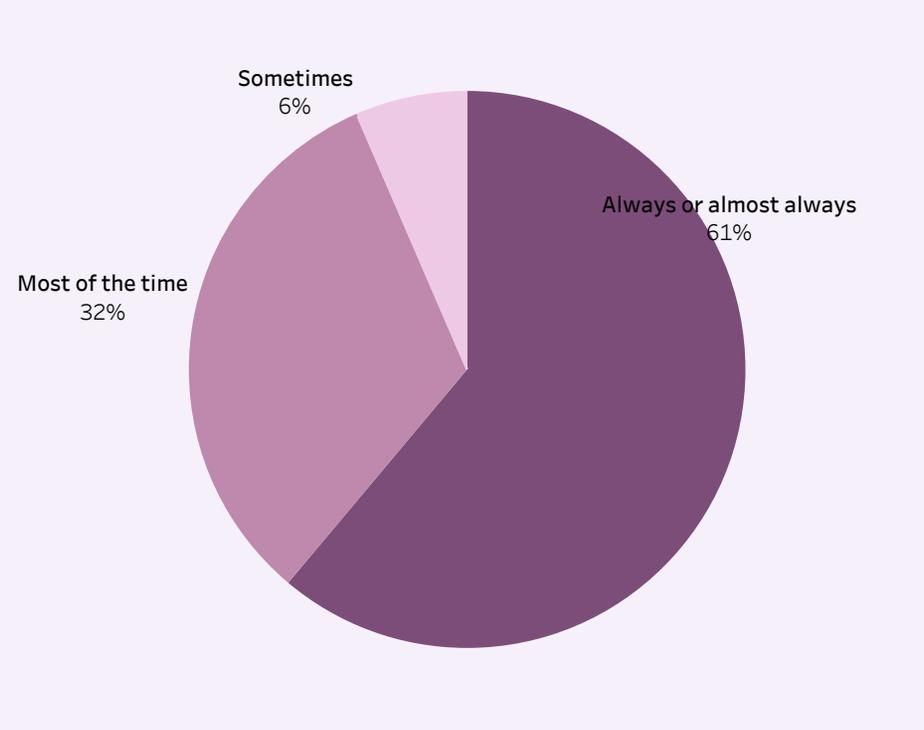
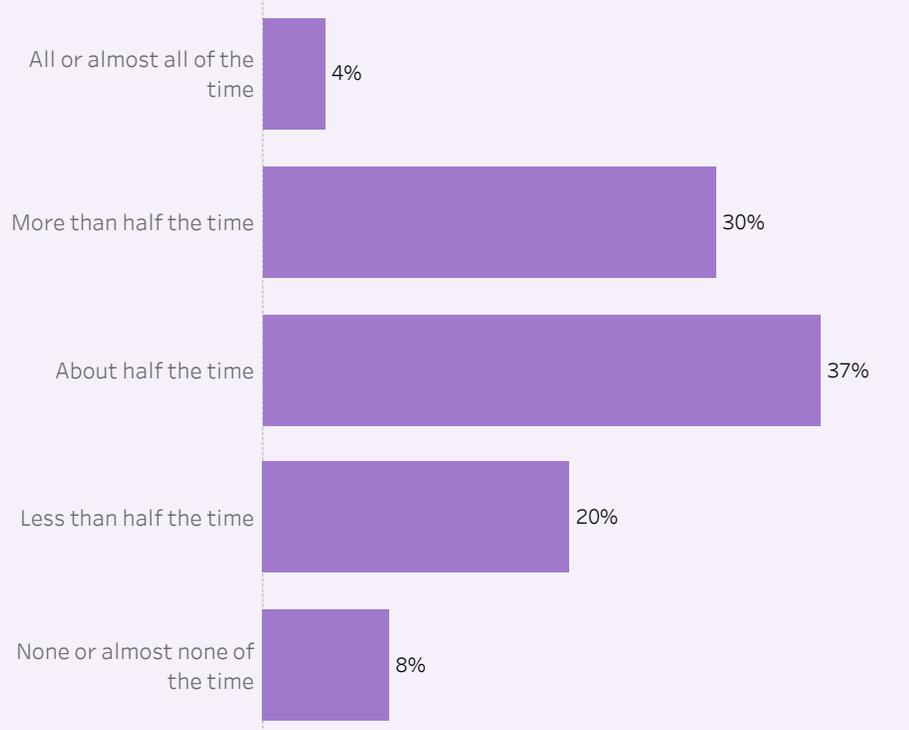




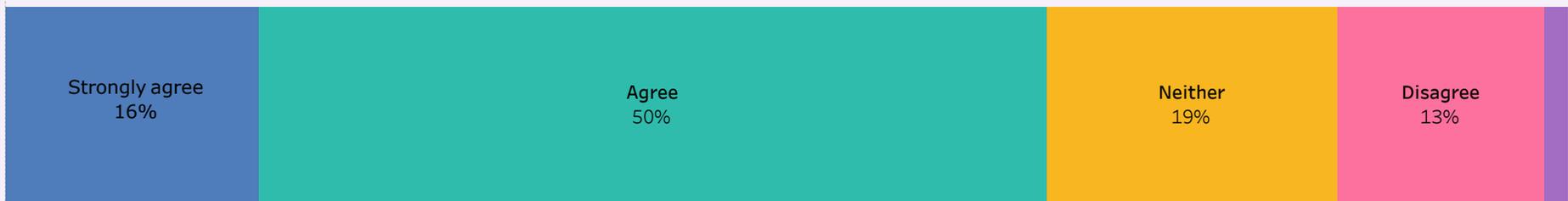
Access

I am away from my desk...

I have reliable Internet during my work day...



I have enough access to information.

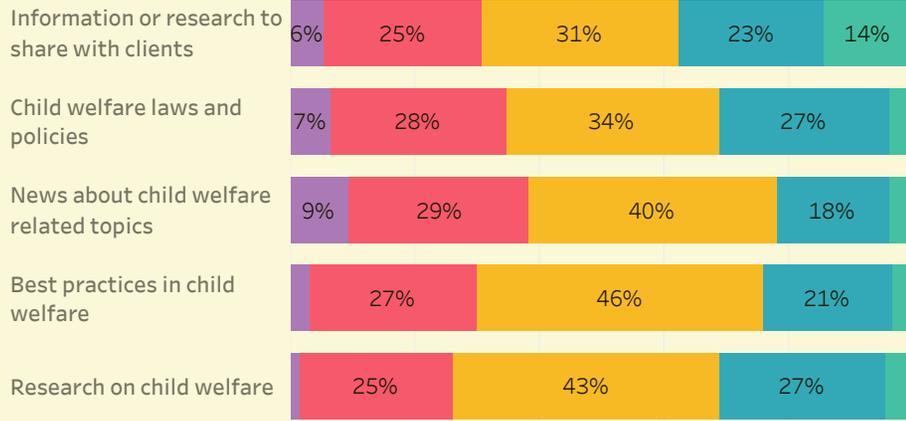


■ Strongly agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Neither
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree



Search

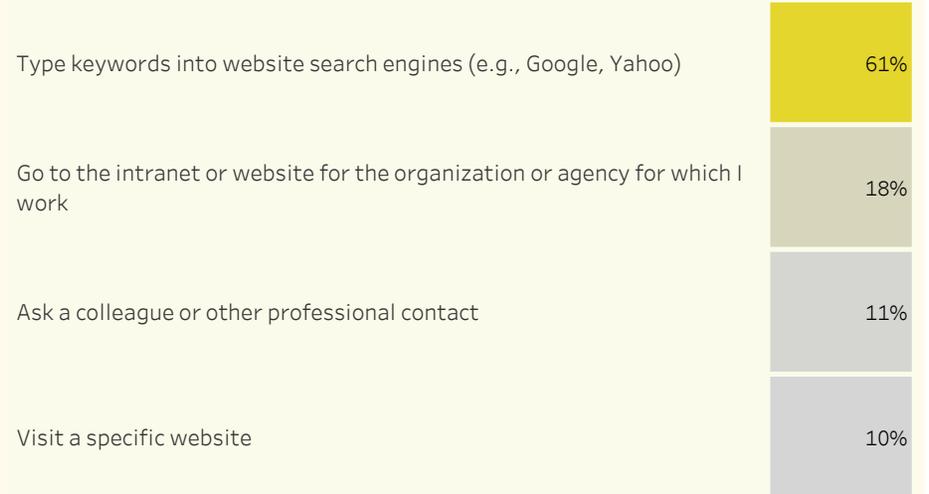
I search for...



■ Once a day or more
 ■ Several times a month
 ■ Never
■ Several times a week
 ■ Once a month or less

I search by...

(Of the 99% who search for information)



Share

I share child welfare information with colleagues...



■ Once a month or less
 ■ Several times a month
 ■ Several times a week
 ■ Once a day or more

I share via...

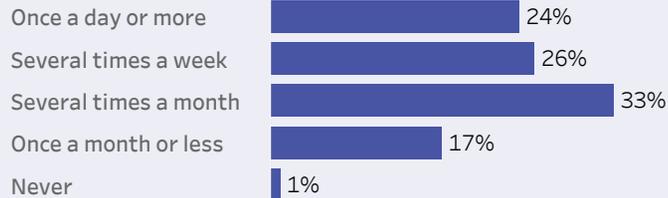
(Of the 100% who share)





Receive

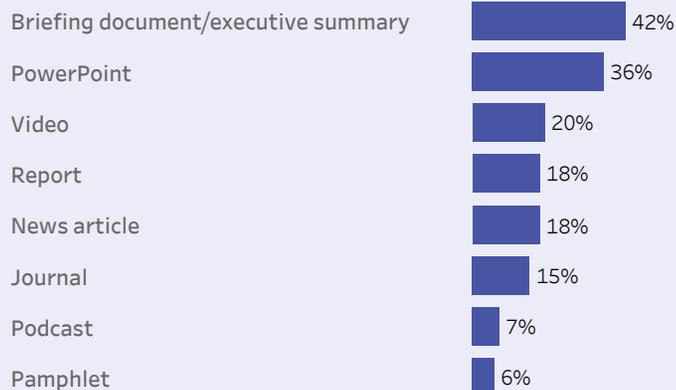
I receive information that I did not search for...



The most important ways I receive information are...

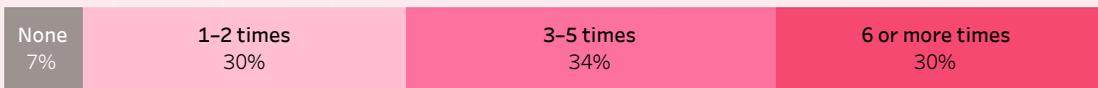


I want to receive information by...

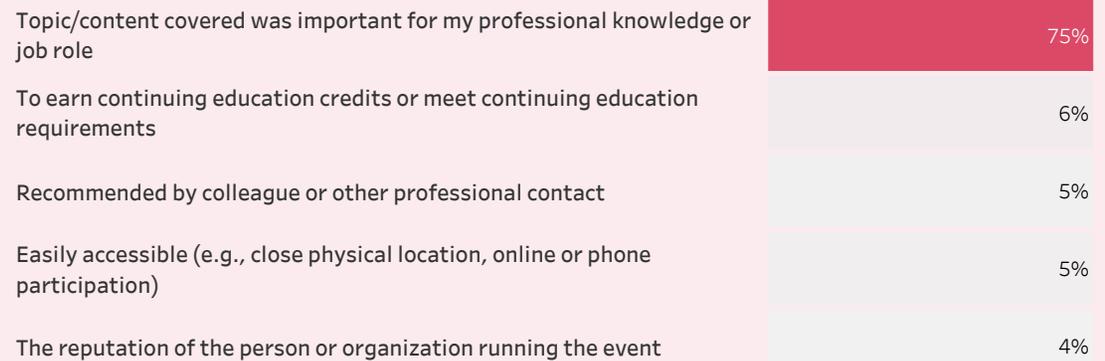


Training

In the past year, I attended trainings outside of my organization...



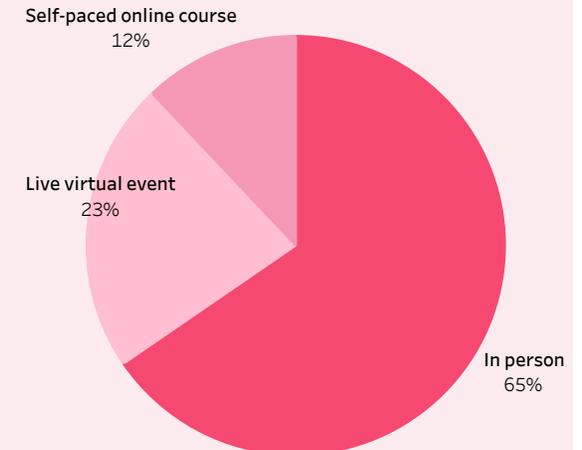
I decided to attend my most recent training because ...



I found the training by...



I want to be trained via...





Mobile Use and Social Media

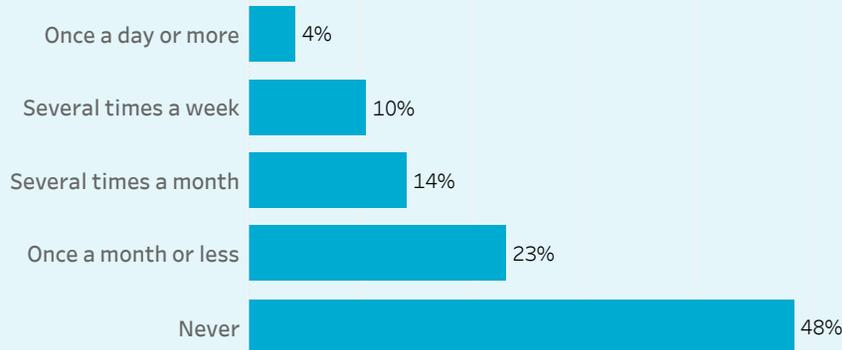
I use a mobile device to search for, access, or share child welfare information...



If I use my mobile device for this purpose, I use it to...

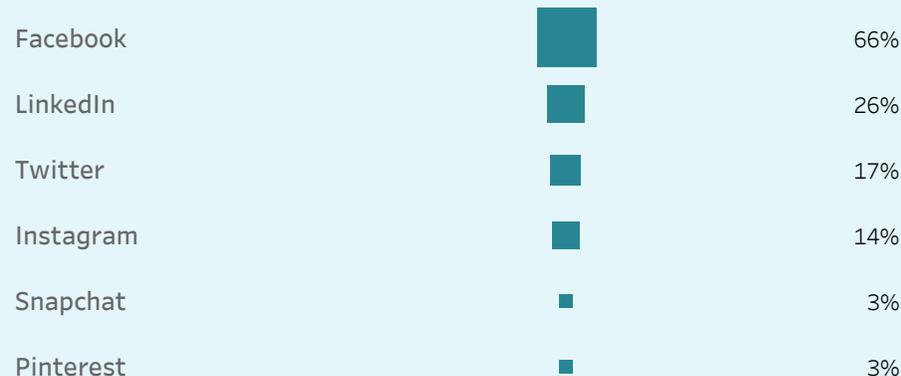


I search for child welfare information on social media...



I usually search these social media sites for information...

(Of the 52% who use social media for this purpose)



I do not use my mobile device to access child welfare info because of...

