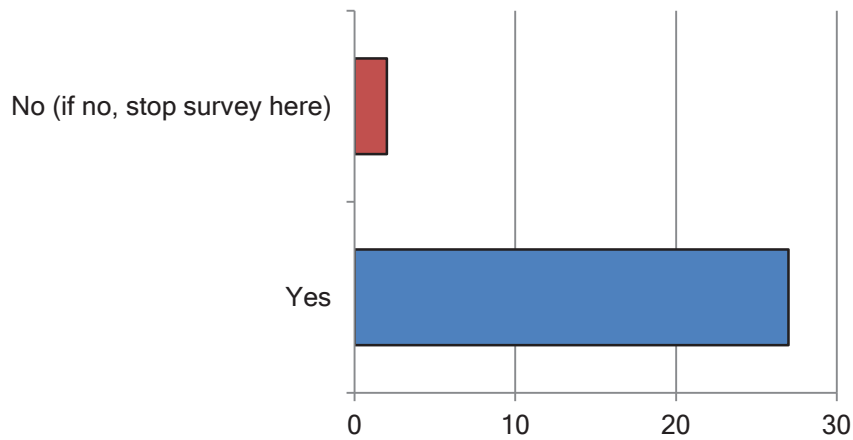


Hearing Master Survey for Judges

There were a total of 33 respondents to this survey. Twenty-four individual counties responded. For reference, based on the latest estimate done by the Hearing Officer Committee, 35 counties use Hearing Masters in dependency proceedings in the Commonwealth. Questions 1 and 2 were identifying information on respondent and county.

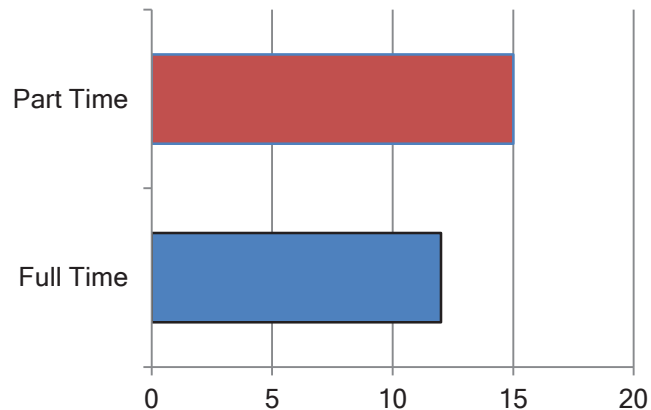
Q3 Do you use Masters in dependency proceedings?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 4



Q4 Masters are:

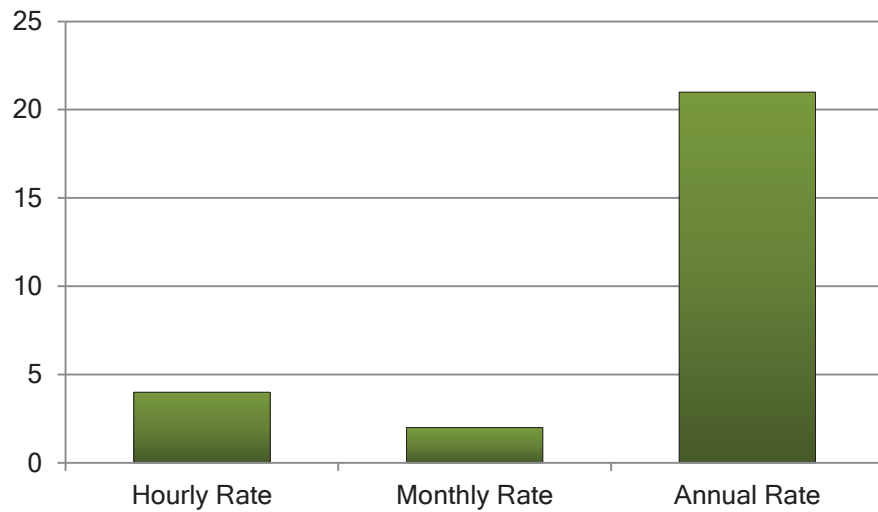
Answered: 27 Skipped: 6



Attachment

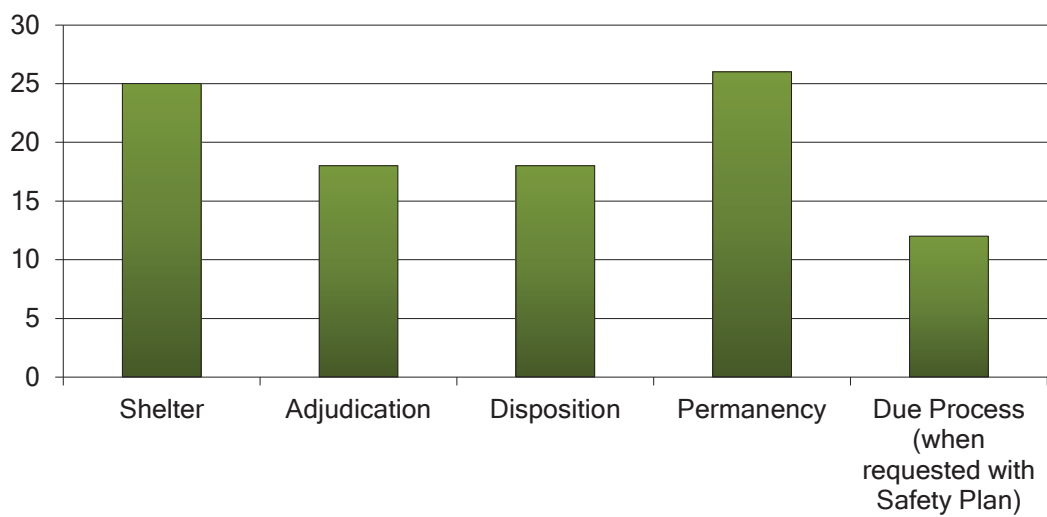
Q5 Masters are compensated by a:

Answered: 27 Skipped: 6



Q6 Types of proceedings Masters hear?

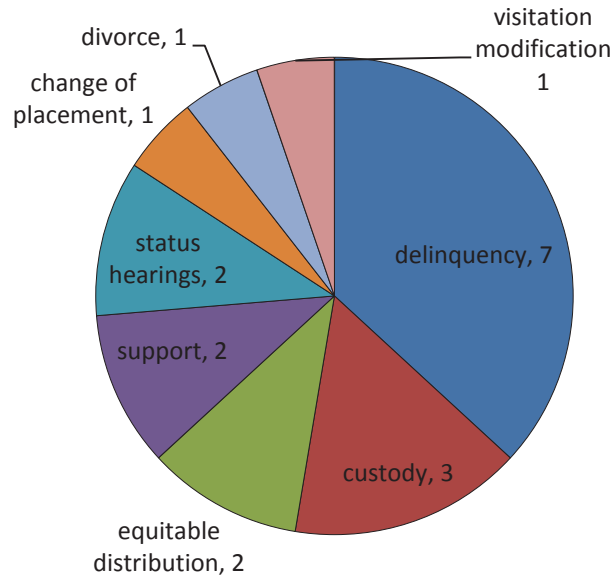
Answered: 26 Skipped: 7



Attachment

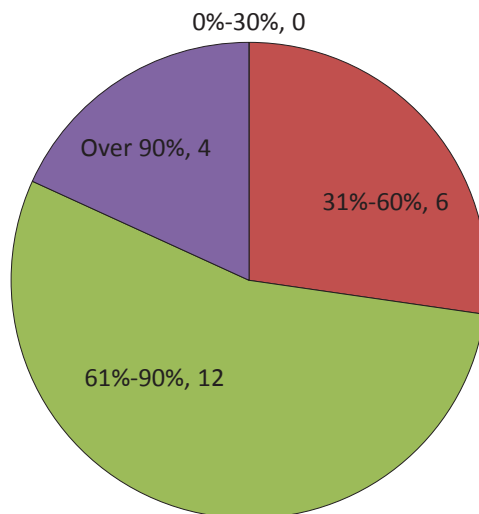
Q7 What other types of proceedings do Masters hear?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 17



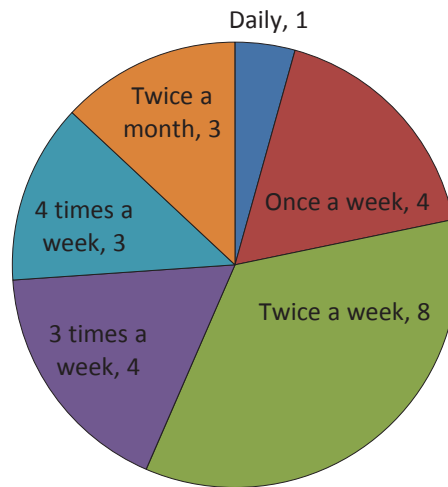
Q8 Estimated percentage of total dependency hearings heard by a Master?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 10



Q9 How often do Masters sit for dependency proceedings?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 10



Q10 On average, what is the caseload size for Masters?

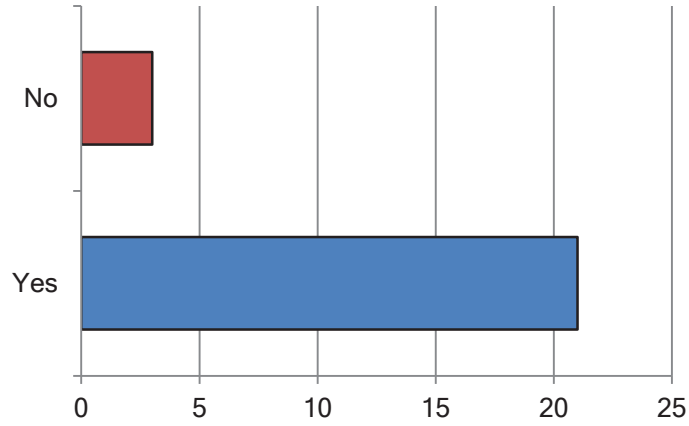
Answered: 20 Skipped: 13

Responses to this question varied and there were many “unknown” responses. Of those who knew, at the low end was 60-70 cases and at the high end, 400. This question needs more refinement to gather a more realistic picture of hearing officer practice.

Attachment

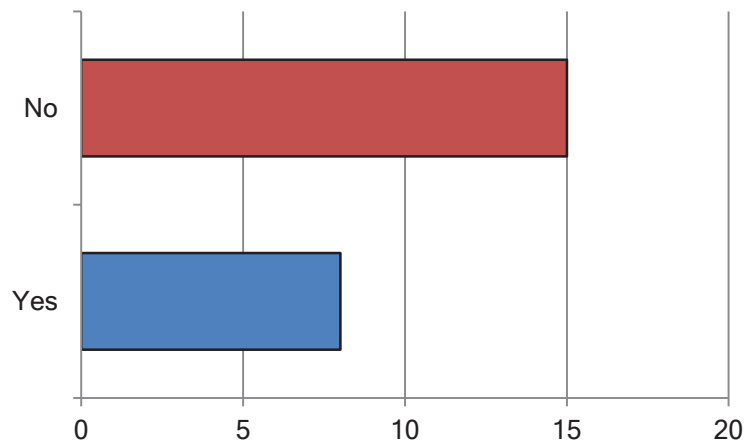
Q11 One Master, one family is a best practice in dependency proceedings. Is this practice used in your county?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 9



Q12 Do you ever observe your Master practice in court?

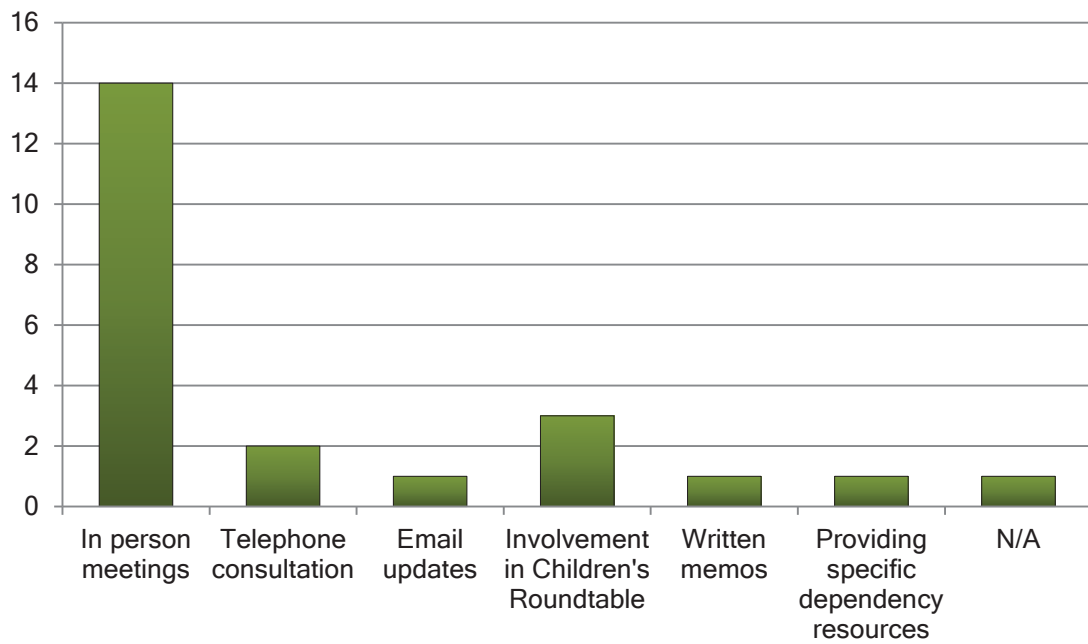
Answered: 23 Skipped: 10



Attachment

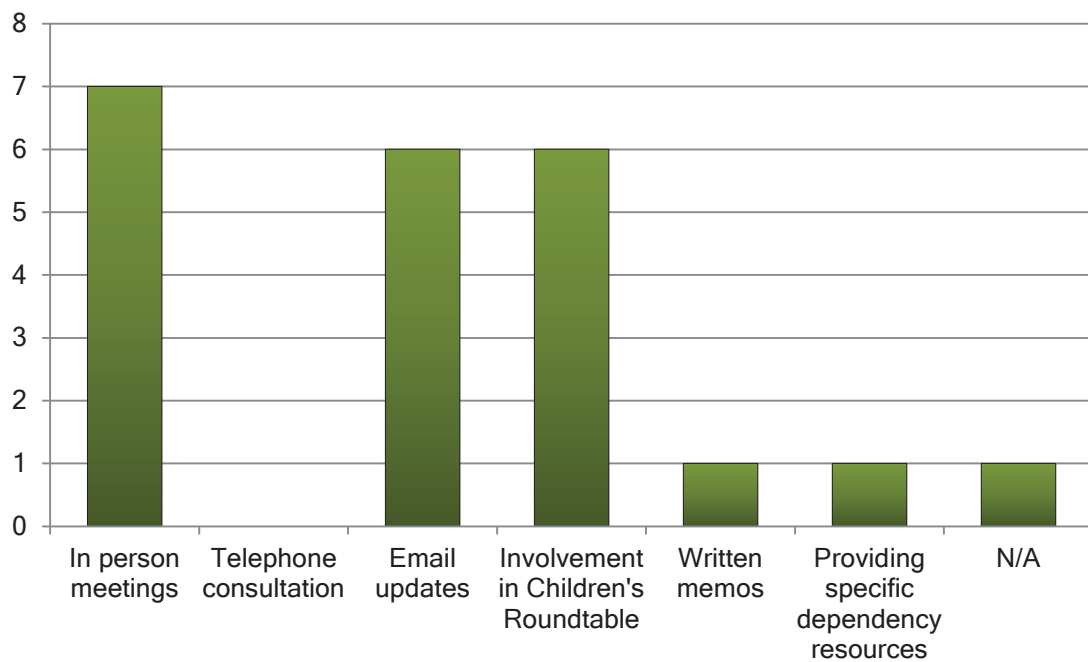
Q13 How do you provide oversight/support to your Master?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 10



Q14 How do you provide information about state initiatives to your Master?

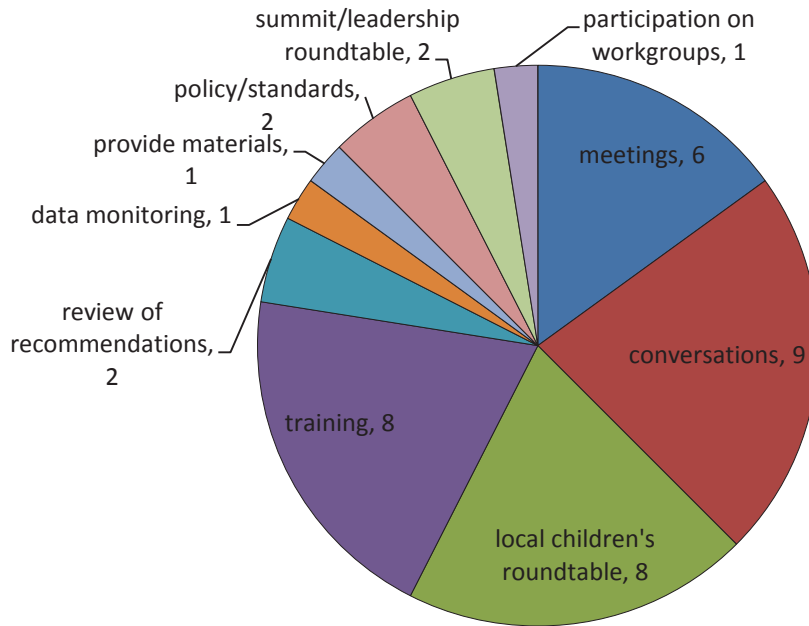
Answered: 22 Skipped: 11



Attachment

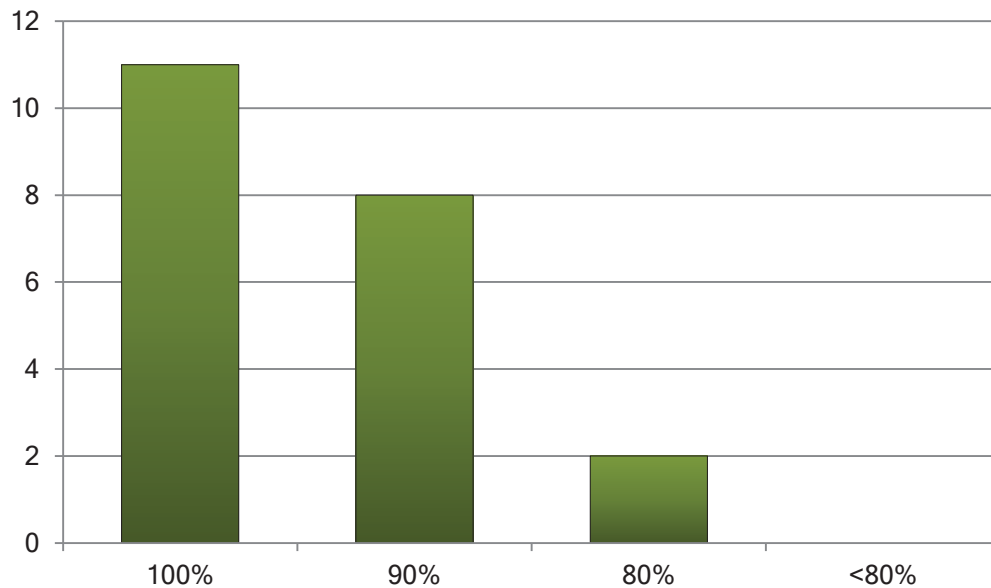
Q15 How do you encourage your Master to implement best practice?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 11



Q16 In what percentage of Master's recommendations do you believe there is adequate information?

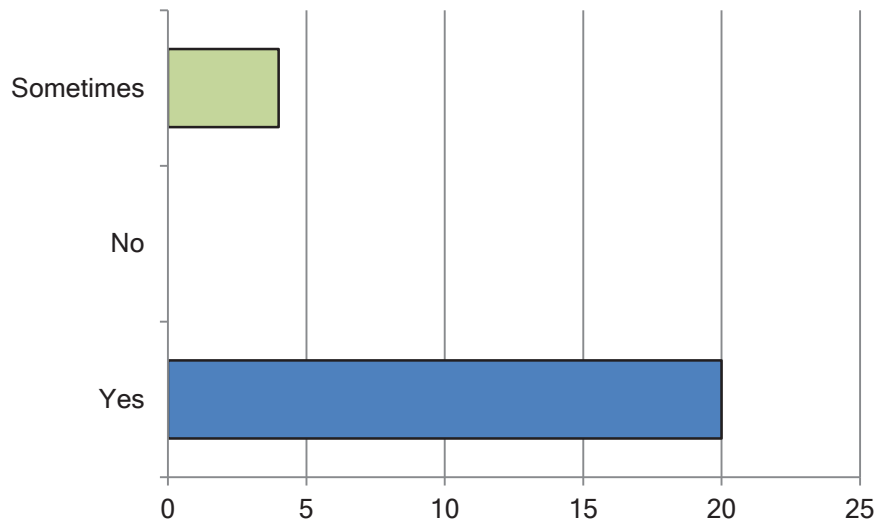
Answered: 21 Skipped: 12



Attachment

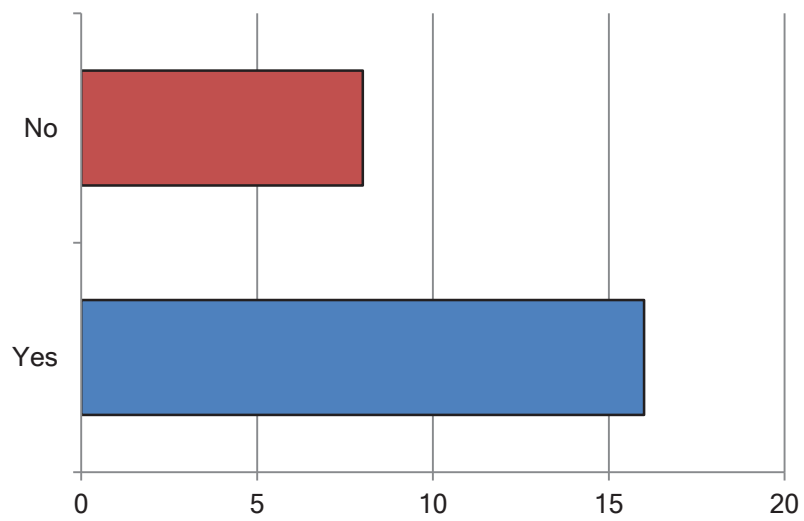
Q17 When reviewing the Master’s recommendation, is the child safety threat clearly identified?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 9



Q18 Do you ever change the recommendation of the Master?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 9

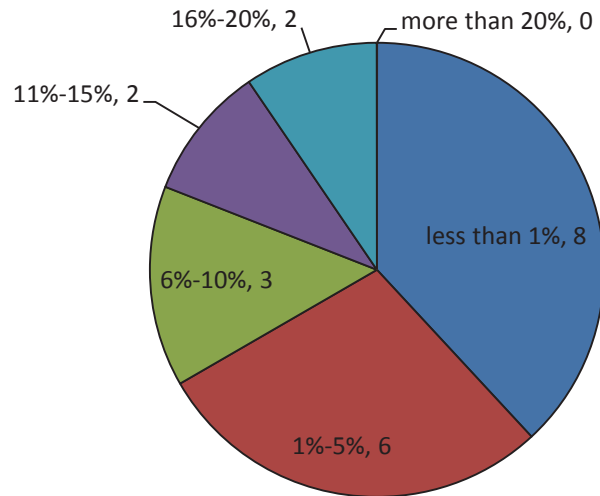


Overall, comments reflect that changes occur in less than 5% of recommendations.

Attachment

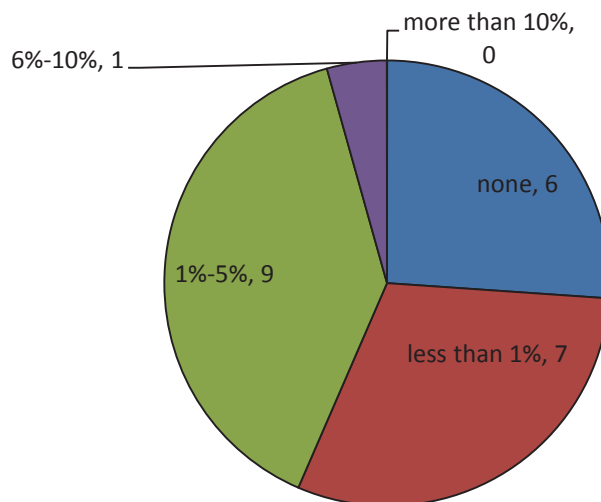
Q19 In approximately what percentage of cases does a party refuse to have a hearing before a Master?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 10



Q20 In approximately what percentage of cases heard before a Master does a party request a re-hearing before the Judge?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 10

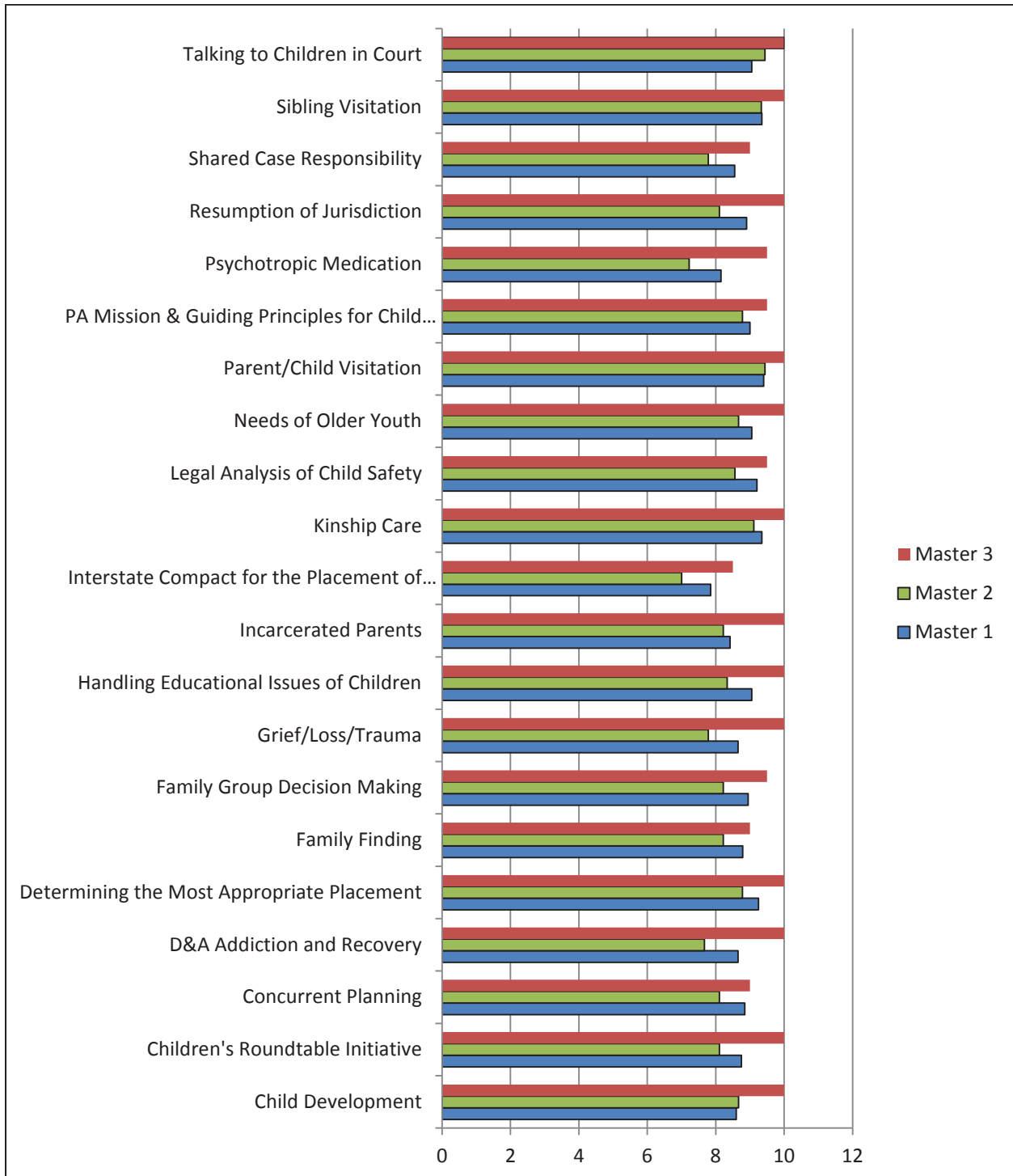


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Q21/23/25 Rate each of your Masters' level of knowledge in the following areas:

20 respondents identified 1 Master, 9 identified 2 Masters, and 2 identified 3 Masters

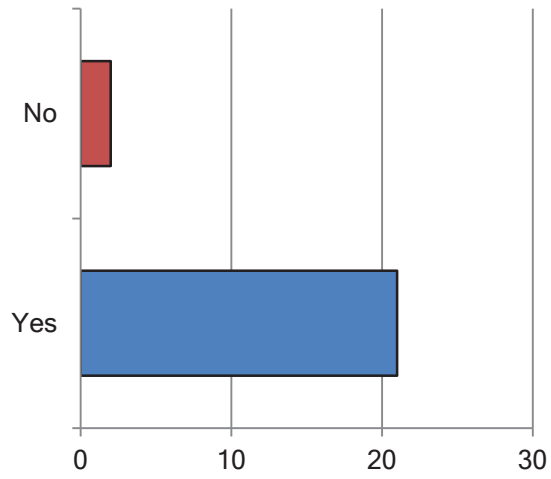
Q22 & Q24 are about adding an additional Master to rate.
 Q26/27/28/29 tell us that no respondent had more than three Masters.



Attachment

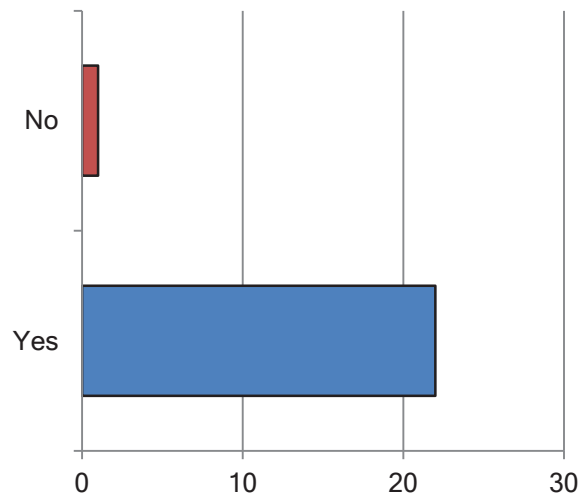
Q30 Are you satisfied with the level of oversight/support you are able to provide your Master?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 10



Q31 Are you satisfied with the quality of practice of your Master?

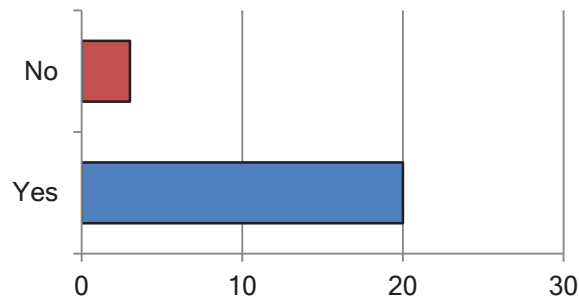
Answered: 23 Skipped: 10



Attachment

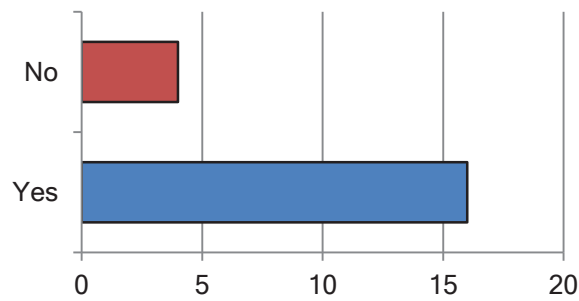
Q32 Do you believe that education for Masters should be mandatory?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 10



Q33 If so, should certain topics be required?

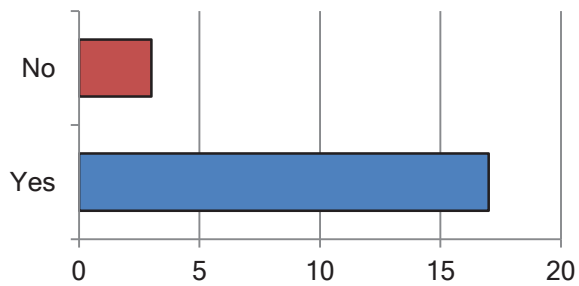
Answered: 20 Skipped: 13



Topics offered by respondents: Child Development; Trauma; D & A; PPI Practices; Child Safety; Grief & Loss; Role of the Judge

Q34 Should these topics be required as part of the annual CLEs?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 13



Q35 On which topics do you believe your Masters need to receive education?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 16

Responses to this question were as varied as the responders. Many re-iterated that they believe that Master's need education in all of the matters stated in Q21. In addition to those topics, the following were also offered:

- "Core" training for new masters
- Replay of judges trainings
- Law updates
- Reasonable efforts determination
- Required findings
- Mental health
- Placement options
- IDEA

Q36 What suggestions do you have about increasing the quality of Master practice?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 17

Half of survey responders answered this question. Of those received, there was great variety. One theme that emerged was the need for mandatory education for Masters. Following the theme of training, suggestions included training specific to the role of Masters, the development of best practice standards and education on such, and the possibility of paid training. Judges also offered suggestions about requiring court oversight, allowing Masters to hear all aspects of dependency cases, and observations being done by both Judges and Masters.

Q37 What suggestions do you have about oversight/supervision/support of Masters?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 17

Half of survey responders answered this question. Of those that responded, most did not have any suggestions. Two novel ideas were noted. One judge suggested that forms to evaluate the Master's practice be given to CYS caseworkers and witnesses. Two others suggested that there needs to be some education or best practice guidance about providing oversight to Masters.