

Appendix W: Hot Wash and Debrief Guide – Child Operations

This guide supports structured debrief discussions following child reunification operations, providing facilitators with prompts to guide reflection and capture key observations.

Focus Area	What Went Well?	What Can Improve?
Activation & Child-Focused Expertise: - When and how were child reunification operations activated? - Were activation criteria clear and timely? - Were pediatric, behavioral health, and child welfare subject matter experts present? - How were SMEs integrated into operations?		
Coordination with Partners: - How effectively did schools, CPS, NGOs, and tribal entities contribute? - What coordination mechanisms worked well or need improvement?		
Custody & Guardian Verification: - How were custody verification and data privacy handled? - Were procedures clear and followed? - How was guardian verification managed at reunification sites? - Were there challenges or delays?		
Staffing & Preparedness: - Were staff and volunteer suitability checks in place? - Were designated child-focused roles staffed appropriately? - Were adequate staff-to-child ratios maintained? - Where were staffing gaps observed? - How effective was staff training for emotional support, behavioral management, and custody handling?		
Family and Public Communication: - How were guardians and families kept informed during operations? - What methods of communication were most effective? - How was public and media messaging managed? - Was misinformation addressed effectively? - How were children's phones and social media activity handled?		

Focus Area	What Went Well?	What Can Improve?
Reunification Process: - How reliably were children tracked and linked to guardians? - What systems supported tracking? - How effective were intake and custody checks? - How effectively were reunification areas organized and operated?		
Special Scenarios and Safe Area: - How were cases of incapacitated or deceased guardians managed? - Were alternate guardianship processes clear? - How were unaccompanied minors supervised and kept safe?		
Security & Transportation: - How were children's movements controlled and monitored for safety? - Were safe, appropriate transportation options available and used?		
Child Health & Specialized Needs: - Were pediatric and trauma-informed medical/behavioral health services accessible? - How well were needs identified and met? - How were children with disabilities, chronic conditions, or language needs supported?		
Recovery & Family Support: - Were follow-up care, referrals, or ongoing support addressed? - Were families provided with developmentally appropriate resources after reunification?		
Other: Are there additional successes, challenges, or gaps not yet discussed?		