



Evidence of Effectiveness

The Office of the Inspector General Report

In 2006, the US Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (OIG) conducted an audit of the National CASA Association, as required by Congress.

Following are highlights of the findings.

1. Children with a CASA volunteer are substantially less likely to spend time in long-term foster care, defined as more than 3 years in care: 13.3% for CASA cases versus 27.0% of all children in foster care.
2. When a CASA volunteer was involved, both children and their parents were ordered by the courts to receive more services. The audit concluded that this was an indication that “CASA is effective in identifying the needs of children and parents.”
3. Cases involving a CASA volunteer are more likely to be permanently closed than cases where a CASA volunteer is not involved. The statistics vary from only 1.4% of children with a CASA volunteer reentering the CWS (CASA Data Request) to 9% of CASA children reentering the CWS (Youngclarke Review). This is in contrast to 16% for children not served by a volunteer.
4. Children with a CASA volunteer are more likely to be adopted and less likely to be reunified with their parents than children not assigned a CASA volunteer. The audit explains this finding as the result of CASA volunteers serving on typically the most serious cases of maltreatment and therefore cases where children are less likely to be reunified with their parents.

Additional Studies Document Results of CASA Volunteer Advocacy

Like our volunteer advocates, the National CASA Association and our local programs strive for fact-based decision-making. Below is a summary of conclusive results from a 2004 study conducted by Caliber Associates and other CASA studies selected by researchers with the University of California, San Francisco Fresno Medical Education program for their high methodological quality.

Notable conclusive results from these studies include the following (numbers refer to studies referenced after results):

- CASA volunteers spend most of their volunteer time in contact with a child. (1)
- CASA volunteers spend significantly more time in contact with a child than a paid guardian ad litem. (2)
- CASA volunteers are far more likely than paid attorneys to file written reports. (3, 4, 5)

- CASA volunteers are highly effective in getting their recommendations accepted in court. In four out of five cases, all or almost all CASA volunteer recommendations are accepted. (1)
- When a CASA volunteer is assigned, a higher number of services are ordered for children and families. (1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9)
- A child with a CASA volunteer is more likely to be adopted. (8, 9, 10, 11)
- A child with a CASA volunteer is as likely to be reunified with their birth parent as a child without a CASA volunteer. (3, 9, 11)
- A child with a CASA volunteer is less likely to reenter the child welfare system. The proportion of reentries is consistently reduced by half. (8, 11, 12)

References

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