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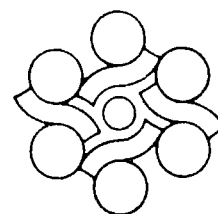
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Publication, "Children and Youth Services Review," 186 pgs.

CHILDREN and YOUTH SERVICES REVIEW



*an international multidisciplinary quarterly
review of the welfare of young people*

SPECIAL ISSUE

Social Services for Children, Youth and
Families in the United States



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FAX MESSAGE

TO FAX #: 202-456-2878

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6/20/96

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part 1/2

Piraino
Executive Officer

Dec 11 1961
New York
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Subject
Family
Planning
Rides

TO: Carol Rasco

Title: Assistant to the President
for Domestic Policy

At: The White House

From Michael Piraino

Title: Chief Executive Officer

Subject:

Connie Hickman Tanner suggested I call you concerning CASA. I understand you are especially interested in studies done on volunteer representation of abused and neglected children. Attached is a summary of several studies. We are also convening an expert's group on evaluation here in Seattle in late July. We also publish annual program surveys with statistical information on CASA programs nationally. I'd be glad to discuss any of this information, or CASA in general, with you. Please give me a call, or let me know if you'd like more information sent to you.

In the event of error or omission please contact us immediately.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

FAX COVER SHEET

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR DOMESTIC POLICY
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TO: Lyn Hagan

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FROM: Carol Rasco (Intern: Farrell 65965)

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The "CASA Index"

1. Growth of the CASA network:

	<u>1985</u>	<u>Today</u>
Number of CASA programs:	169	641
Number of volunteers	4,235	38,000
Children served:	10,848	129,000

2. Commitment of individual volunteers:

Average annual hours of volunteer advocacy per volunteer: 110

Total advocacy hours nationally: 4,190,000

3. Costs:

Value of the volunteer hours (if performed by attorneys): \$209,000,000

Cost of a year in foster care: \$17,500

Cost of CASA advocacy per child: \$477

Median budget of CASA program: \$50,146

SUMMARY: Evaluative Studies of GAL/CASA Representation

- ◆ Abramson, S. "Use of court-appointed advocates to assist in permanency planning for minority children," *Child Welfare*, Volume LXX, Number 4, 1991.

An outcome-focused study of CASA, examining the Fresno, California CASA program and a total of 122 children. Study had an experimental design with assignment of children to one of two groups, those with CASAs and those without. It found that children with CASAs were significantly more likely to be placed in adoptive families, and significantly less likely to be placed in long-term foster care, than the comparison group.

- ◆ National Center for State Courts. "Citizen Volunteers: The New York Experience." Unpublished, 198.

Report gives an overview of three CASA programs in the state of New York, considering how they select, train, and retain volunteers, their form of management, and their method of funding. Key people associated with the programs such as judges and child welfare workers were interviewed; their impressions of the programs were largely positive.

- ◆ CSR, Inc./U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "National study of Guardian ad Litem representation," 1990.

A 2-year national study that compared five GAL models: 1) Private Attorney Model; 2) Staff Attorney Model; 3) Law School Clinic Model; 4) CASA-Attorney Model; 5) Unassisted CASA Model. Part I examined process variables under the different GAL models, as well as presenting qualitative findings based on interviews of various participants in the system. Part II considered the implications for the system of the best interests standard, and what GAL activities lead to better outcomes.

The study found that unassisted CASA cases had more treatment orders in the child's record, that CASA models had more services ordered per hearing, and that CASA models were more likely to recommend appropriate services. Unassisted CASA and private attorney models showed the highest number of permanent placements. The fewest permanent placements were achieved through the staff attorney model. Siblings were permanently placed together most often under the CASA models.

Case plan changes were more frequent under the staff attorney and unassisted CASA models. There was no difference in time spent in the system under the different models. Staff attorney and CASA/Attorney models were more likely to maintain reunification as goal.

◆ CSR, Inc./U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "Final Report on the validation and effectiveness study of the legal representation through guardian ad litem," 1994.

Extension of the study above, examining the tasks performed by (now) three GAL models. Some findings of the study are subject to challenge because of the limited number, and unrepresentativeness, of the volunteer programs examined. The study considered these issues:

Roles of Attorneys, GALs, and CASAs. Findings: CASAs provide a different style of advocacy and perform many activities that attorneys do not (such as investigation, monitoring, and resource brokering). CASAs tend to avoid the legal aspects of representation, and place greater emphasis on promoting cooperation among the parties. CASAs and attorneys prioritize their time differently, reflecting their areas of training and expertise--attorneys in legal representation and courtroom activities, CASAs in nonlegal and social service activities outside the courtroom.

Training, Accountability and Quality Control. Findings: Both CASAs and staff attorneys have a system of supervision and control. Staff attorneys probably receive more training than CASAs, private attorneys less. CASA training, however, covers more topics (e.g., identification of services, cultural sensitivity).

Timeliness of Appointment. Findings: In half the locations, CASAs were appointed late in the process.

Caseloads and Time Spent per Case. Findings: CASAs have lower caseloads and spend more time per case.

Tenure and Turnover. Findings: CASAs have the shortest tenure--only 13.2% had served more than 5 years. This may have been due to the newness of the CASA programs. 90% of CASAs and private attorneys were the original representatives for the child.

Fact-finding. Findings: CASAs more often had contact with the child, and were much more likely to observe parent/child interactions. CASAs were less likely than staff attorneys to consult the child about placement and service needs, but this may have been because staff attorneys represent more older children. CASAs were more likely to have contacted the caseworker and other sources (except the state's attorney). They were more likely to discuss placement options with foster parents.

Preparation. Findings: CASAs reported the most extensive preparation for cases. This was confirmed by the judges interviewed.

Legal Representation. Findings: The study expresses concern about CASAs' low level of courtroom activity. CASAs have less legal experience, and place less emphasis on attending hearings. In contested proceedings where there is a CASA but no lawyer, legal representation will be inadequate. CASAs place greater emphasis than attorneys on preparing written reports for court, and are more likely to recommend a case plan. When they disagreed with caseworkers, CASAs

were somewhat less likely than lawyers to resolve all their differences. CASAs were less likely to disagree with the child, but also less likely to express both the child's and their own views to a court when they did disagree.

Effectiveness of Legal Representation. Findings: CASAs rated themselves less forceful in their representation. Judges rated 27.8% of CASAs as very forceful. The other two models were rated more effective in legal representation.

Mediation and Negotiation. Findings: CASAs are more often trained to encourage cooperation among parties, but they are less likely to negotiate an agreement. (It is possible, however, that another party initiated negotiations in these instances). Judges rated most CASAs effective in negotiations, but they rated staff attorneys more highly.

Monitoring. Findings: CASAs were more likely to contact the child after the review hearing. More than half the judges reported that CASAs maintained sufficient contact. CASAs were much more likely to have contacted caseworkers. Judges rated CASAs more diligent in following up on case plans and court orders. CASAs spent much more time in monitoring activities. Caseworkers rated CASAs more effective in monitoring, as did the judges.

Resource Identification. Findings: CASAs were more likely to provide information on resources and broker resources. Attorneys were less likely to see this as part of their role, and caseworkers rated CASAs more effective in this role.

◆ Dameron, Samuel L.. "Evaluation of the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program of Cabell County, West Virginia." Unpublished, 1995.

Project assessed perceptions through survey documents to determine how court and social service professionals, parents of children served by CASA volunteers, and CASA volunteers themselves view the quality of CASA services and the professional staff. Surveys solicited input as to what each group perceived as the strengths and weaknesses of the CASA program and suggestions for its improvement. While CASA volunteers were more enthusiastic about the program than professional respondents, all respondents were basically positive.

◆ Duquette, D. "Using Lay volunteers to represent children in child protection court proceedings." *Child Abuse and Neglect*, Volume 10, 1986.

A small-scale (91 cases) experimental study comparing the effectiveness of four differing approaches to representation of abused children: 1) lay volunteers teamed with specially trained attorneys; 2) specially-trained law school students; 3) specially-trained private attorneys; 4) private attorneys without special training.

Part I: A qualitative inquiry involving interviews with the various types of advocates to learn what they actually did, and their self-perceptions of effectiveness. Results indicated that law school students conducted more thorough investigations than volunteers or attorneys; and law

school students were more likely than volunteers or attorneys to feel they had made a difference. Beyond these, there were few differences in the models.

Part II: Studied case outcomes for the different models by examining case records. Results: no differences found in the three models with specially trained advocates. The three trained groups were then aggregated and compared to the untrained attorney group. Findings: 1) trained advocates spent more time on cases; 2) trained advocates obtained more services for children and families; 3) trained advocates made more recommendations to decisionmakers; 4) children with trained advocates were less likely to be made wards of the court; 5) children with trained advocates moved more quickly through the court process; 6) children with trained advocates were somewhat more likely to return to the family home.

◆ Erny, S.W. "Evaluations of the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program of Jefferson County, Kentucky," Unpublished, 1988 and 1991.

Two studies based on satisfaction surveys sent to attorneys, parents, judges, social workers, mental health workers. Social workers were the most likely to respond. Questions asked revolved around the quality of CASA court reports and -recommendations. Results: CASA ranked highly, thought to well-represent the best interests of the child.

◆ Poertner, J. & Press, A. "Representation of children in child abuse and neglect cases: a comparison of court appointed special advocates with staff attorney models. Who best represents the interest of the child in court?" *Child Welfare*, Volume LXIX, Number 6, 1990.

Focused on a single midwestern community, this very solid, quasi-experimental, retrospective study compared files of CASA cases with cases represented by staff attorneys on process and outcome variables. Results: no differences found in two groups on most variables. There was a difference in time spent in own home (CASA kids spent more) and number of services (CASA kids had more). CASA cases were more likely to end in adoption than attorney cases.

◆ Vandiver, R. D. and Shaw, E. "Report of Evaluation of Court Appointed Special Advocate Program in Iowa." Unpublished, 198_.

Study looked at the initiation, evolution and current operations of the CASA program in Iowa. Part of the study evaluated the program to determine if its goal were being met. Documents were reviewed and interviews conducted with key people. Findings, based principally on qualitative data, were that the "CASA program is valuable to all parties" and that 1) children with a CASA moved through the system quicker; 2) received more — and more appropriate — services; 3) were more quickly permanently placed.

- ◆ Wert, E.S. Fein, E. and Haller, W. "Children in Placement" CIP A Model for Citizen-Judicial Review" *Child Welfare*, Volume LXV, Number 2, 1986.

Compared two groups of cases 1) in the Children in Placement project 2) in a city with similar characteristics. The Children in Placement (CIP) project operated with a highly trained volunteers, supervised by social worker/program coordinator, each volunteer is assigned to children in judicial system. The study found that the presence of the program was associated with more rapid movement of cases through the judicial system. Children were being freed for adoption in less time, and cases on the average took nine weeks less to reach final disposition. Furthermore, a child entering the system with CIP period had a 50% chance of having his/her case reach disposition within three months; before CIP the wait was approximately twice as long. [CIP recently became a full-fledged CASA program.]

- ◆ Alabama CASA Network, Survey of Judges, 1995.

Brief summary of a survey of 77 judges. with 31 responses. All responding judges who use CASA volunteers indicated they were satisfied to extremely satisfied with the volunteers, and found CASA an effective means for making independent recommendations to the court on behalf of the child.

- ◆ The Strategy Team, "A Report to the Ohio Children's Foundation on the Effectiveness of the CASA Program of Franklin County: Phase II," March, 1996.

Quantitative evaluation, following up upon earlier qualitative research. Concludes that CASA program represents the best interests of the child in court better than or at least as well as the private attorney Guardian ad Litem program. CASA volunteers were more likely to appear for court proceedings, were more active in the proceedings, rarely required continuances, had lower case dismissal rates, had almost twice as many mothers appear at proceedings, and were more likely to participate in case plan reviews. Out of 31 attributes, CASA/GAL volunteers outperformed private attorney GALs on nine, and scored about the same on 22.

- ◆ Patrick Leung, "Is the Court-Appointed Special Advocate Program Effective? A Longitudinal Analysis of Time Involvement and Case Outcomes," *Child Welfare*, volume 75, May-June, 1996.

An experimental group that received CASA services was compared to a randomly selected group of cases without CASA volunteers. The CASA program was found effective in several ways: by reducing the time spent in out of home care, minimizing placement changes, and assisting more children in returning home.