Voices for Children

CASA Program of San Diego County





The CASA Model



- Nearly 1,000 Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs nationwide
- CASA programs in 51 counties of CA, 99% of the region where foster youth live
- Voices for Children (VFC)
 - > Serving foster youth in San Diego County since 1980 and in Riverside County since
 - > Serving justice-involved youth in San Diego County through our Juvenile Justice Program since 2018

VFC Juvenile Justice Program

Youth We Serve

- Youth on formal probation
- Dual status youth
- Dependent youth at risk of justice involvement
- Nonminor dependents

Placement Types

- Resource family approved (RFA) placements
 - · Foster homes, relatives homes, non-relative extended family member (NREFM) homes
- Community-based organizations (CBOs)
- Short-term residential therapeutic programs (STRTPs)
- Custodial programs and detention centers





Risk Factors for Youth in Foster Care

- · History of Trauma
 - 99% of justice-involved youth we serve have prior CWS history
- Academic Achievement Gap
 - Correlation between deprivation of education and delinquency



- Placement Instability & Congregate
 - Children in foster care are significantly more likely to become justice involved and demonstrate a pattern of continued chronic offending
- Transition & Community Re-Entry
 - Challenges of returning to the same environment upon program completion

How CASAs Support Youth



- Foster Healthy Relationships
 - Provide regular contact with a consistent and caring adult / positive role model
 - Build communication skills and assist with goal setting



- Support Prosocial Engagement
 - Support skills building and job readiness
 - Foster extracurricular and community engagement





How CASAs Support Youth

- · Promote Access to Services
 - Advocate for unmet medical or therapeutic needs
 - Connect youth to services
 - Assist with transportation to appointments
- · Provide Educational Advocacy
 - Hold or co-hold educational rights
 - Provide special education support
 - Facilitate access to support services





How CASAs Support Youth



- Support Completion of Probation Requirements
 - Identify community service opportunities
 - Collaborate with service providers to remove barriers
- Provide Transitional Support
 - Assist with accessing community services and resources
 - Explore placement and housing options
 - Support maintaining extended foster care (EFC) eligibility



Key Takeaways

- CASAs are an integral part of the child and family team (CFT)
 - Collaborate with the family, Probation Department, service providers, schools, and community supports to ensure the youth's needs are met
- · CASAs foster improved outcomes in:
 - Academic attainment
 - Prosocial engagement
 - Access to trauma-informed services
 - Progress towards successful completion of probation

