



**It takes many hearts to surround a child in the child welfare system.
Thank you for being one of them! Happy Valentine's Day!**

Monthly Morsels and Musings from the ICAB Administrator

Starting this month, I will include a short article in every newsletter throughout the year. I would like to use this as a means of keeping you up to date with our key initiatives so that you are aware of what is going on. This will include brief reports on:

- program enhancements we are pursuing to increase the impact of your work as you strive to help children find a better future,
- plans for moving into a future in which we work together to provide advocacy and support to more Iowa children through the FCRB and CASA programs,
- status of important program funding and policy issues, and
- messages we would like you to help get out to others in your communities.

I start by thanking all of you for your commitment to the mission of advocating for Iowa's vulnerable children. Please take a look at the Child Advocacy Board Annual Report for fiscal year 2018. You will find it on the Child Advocacy Board website at <https://childadvocacy.iowa.gov/annual-report>

The report highlights the contributions you made during the last year, shares some stories about success that you bring to children in our state, includes some recommendations from the Child Advocacy Board to improve the operation of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and provides an overview of data about children involved with child welfare. I want to be sure you have a chance to see the introductory letter from our Board Chair Beth Myers as well.

During the next few months, we will be ramping up our efforts to get a message to the public and to public officials about what the CASA and FCRB programs do and how your work helps children. We anticipate investing a small

amount in advertising the message, but hope that most of this effort can be accomplished through more informal word of mouth communication. We are most grateful that one of our long-term CASA Advocates, Carol Bamford, has stepped up to help Marla Treiber lead this effort. We will keep you informed of what we are up to and also let you know how you can help share the word.

In this regard, I have a special favor to ask right now. We are working on plans to communicate with public officials, including legislators, about our program success. One feature of this plan is likely to be a CASA and FCRB Day at the Legislature. We would love to gather a huge group of you to bring your own messages to your legislators about the fantastic work you do.

The favor: please let me know by email if you are interested in participating in this effort. If you are not able to get into Des Moines to visit your legislator here, you can also make contact over the weekend when lawmakers go home. You can reach me at jim.hennessey@dia.iowa.gov. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to hearing from you.

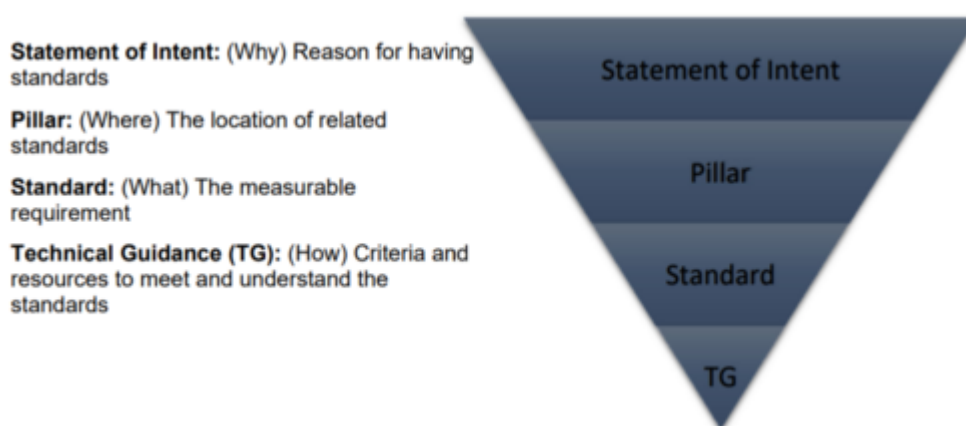
-- Jim Hennessey

National CASA Association Implements New State Program Standards and Measurements

For the past several years, the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (NCASAA) has been working on restructuring their programming in effort to provide better service to their member network of over 900 CASA and GAL programs nationwide. Part of this re-visioning has included the development of State and Local CASA/GAL Program

Standards to better define advocacy issues of quality and effectiveness, along with operational issues such as board governance and program administration.

Although many of standards have been in place for years, the Association has refined the standards, included an explanation of why the standard exists and redefined the measurement of whether a program is meeting the standard.



Each program standard falls under one of six pillars that National CASA has determined most important in working towards becoming a “highly effective” service organization. These pillars are 1. Mission and Values, 2. Funding, Legislation and Presence, 3. Staff, 4. Leadership, 5.

Governance and 6. Service. The National Association will determine if a State Organization is meeting the criteria for each standard by defining the program requirements, required documentation, related practices and resources for each of the 51 standards.

Below is an example of Standard 3 found under Pillar 1: Mission and Values.

3. [State Organization] Has a written mission statement consistent with the mission of National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association

- **Requirements**
 - Written
 - Clear, simple and easily explained
 - Be recognizable as a mission of a state organization
 - State statute that defines and authorizes the work and mission of the organization (public), or
 - Formally developed and adopted by organization's governing body or legislative authority
- **Required Documentation**
 - Mission Statement
 - Written documentation that the mission statement was formally adopted
- **Related Practices**
 - Annual review of the mission statement by the governing body to ensure relevancy
 - Governing body members and staff know the organization's mission
 - Mission statement should inform services, priorities, decision-making, planning, and resource development
 - Avoid elaborate language, buzz words, jargon, abbreviations and acronyms
- **Resources and Links**
 - National CASA Mission Statement: The National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association, together with its state and local member programs, supports and promotes court-appointed volunteer advocacy so every abused or neglected child in the United States can be safe, have a permanent home and the opportunity to thrive.
 - BoardSource: [Tips for Developing a Mission Statement](#)

Each State Organization will undergo an on-site visit from National CASA at which time the State Organization will be responsible for providing all documentation and information necessary to demonstrate compliance with the standards. The State Organization will then receive a rating commensurate with National CASA Association Staff findings. The rating of Established Program, Advancing Program or Highly Effective Program will dictate how often the State Organization will participate in an onsite review with National CASA; annually, bi-annually or every three years. The Iowa CASA State Organization is slated for on-site review in 2020. The new Local CASA Program Standards are scheduled for release in April 2019.

Snapshot of Children in Iowa's Foster Care System

The Iowa Department of Human Services provides a monthly report to the Iowa Child Advocacy Board which contains information about children in Iowa who are in out-of-home placements. During December 2018, there were 6,744 children in an out-of-home placement under the supervision of either the Department of Human Services (DHS) or Juvenile Court Services (JCS). This information is based on data entered into the DHS data system as of December 31, 2018.



Of these 6,744 children,

- 1,167 were in a trial home placement with a birth parent at the end of 2018
- 2,127 placed with relatives (does not include relatives who were licensed foster parents)
- 1,931 were aged 3 years or less
- 1,687 were aged 14 or older
- 263 exited the foster care system and had an average length of stay of 524 days. Of these children,
 - 184 were reunited with a birth parent
 - 11 had custody transferred to the other parent
 - 41 were adopted
 - 13 achieved permanency through guardianship
 - 14 aged out

Trainer's Corner

For FCRB Members & CASA Advocates: February and Loving our Teeth! **Dental Health Care in the Foster Care System**



Dental and oral health care remains some of the most difficult health services to access for children and teens in foster care. Common dental and oral health problems include bottle tooth decay in very young children, multiple dental cavities in older children, and malocclusion. In fact, approximately 35% of children and teens enter foster care with significant dental and oral health problems.

Children and teens have often received only fragmentary and sporadic dental and oral health care prior to foster care.

Typically, they enter foster care with a high prevalence of undiagnosed or under-treated acute and chronic dental or oral health problems. Even after entering foster care, all necessary health care may not be met because of a variety of barriers to good dental and oral health care. The AAP recommends that every child and teen entering foster care have a dental evaluation within 30 days of placement.

Read more using the links below:

- [Health Care Issues for Children and Adolescents in Foster Care and Kinship Care](#)
- [Social Emotional WellBeing Newsletter.pdf](#)
- [Special Clinic Could Hold Key to Helping Iowa's troubled Foster Kids](#)
- [Oral Health a Critical Component of Physical Health and Well-Being](#) Scroll to the article found on page 12.

For CASA Advocates: In-Service Training Credit



To build upon your child development related advocacy knowledge and skills for working with children, we offer an independent study option, *Attachment Vitamins: Interactive Course on Early Childhood Development, Attachment, Stress and Trauma for CASA Advocates*. This online study can be completed in the comfort of your own home and can provide up to four hours of credit while you learn more on topics of temperament, developmental milestones, social and emotional development, mental health concerns, the impact of toxic stress and cultural considerations.

CASA Advocates can request this independent training from their Local Coordinator or the ICAB State Training Specialist at lesa.christianson@dia.iowa.gov

For a complete list of all available CASA in-service training's: [Advocate In-Service Training's](#)



Reminder CASA Advocates:

Fostering Futures: Supporting Youth Transitions to Adulthood Training is required for Advocates serving on cases of youth 14 or older. You may also attend a training session prior to the youth's 14th birthday, as this curriculum addresses the unique need of building rapport and trust with an older child.

Upcoming Fostering Futures Sessions:

April 6 Cedar Rapids

Staff Corner:



KEPRO EAP On-Demand Webcast

Topic: **Eating Your Way to Wellness**

Tips and resources on how to eat your way to better and long-lasting health.

Broadcast Length: 50 Minutes

How to Access: Go to the EAP website at <http://www.EAPHelpLink.com>. Enter your Iowa Employee code and look for *Online Seminars* within the scrolling tab area on the homepage or you can search for them by title.

For login code information, contact your State Training Specialist.

From Mayo Clinic Healthy System's **Speaking of Health Blog**

Thursday, May 18, 2017



Helping people, changing lives: The 6 health benefits of volunteering

Volunteers make an immeasurable difference in the lives of others. Oftentimes, they perform with the core intention of helping others. But did you know that volunteering can benefit your own health as well? Researchers have attempted to measure the benefits that volunteers receive including positive feeling referred to as helper's high, increased trust in others and increased social interaction. From lowering stress to boosting self-confidence, research has shown that volunteering offers many health benefits, especially for older adults, such as:

1. Volunteering decreases the risk of depression. Research has shown that volunteering leads to lower rates of depression, especially for individuals 65 and older. Volunteering increases social interaction and helps build a support system based on common interests — both of which have been shown to decrease depression.
2. Volunteering gives a sense of purpose and teaches valuable skills. Volunteers, such as those at Mayo Clinic Health System, perform critical roles in assisting patients, families and staff. They serve as greeters providing patient room information and directions, as transporters of patients and patient items, and as surgery and Critical Care waiting room attendants. They make prayer shawls, blankets, sweaters and hats typically given to newborn babies and cancer patients. Services they provide include working in the hospital gift shop, performing clerical duties for staff and offering pet therapy to patients through the Paws Force team. The work that volunteers provide is essential to everyday processes, which gives volunteers a sense of purpose.
3. Volunteering helps people stay physically and mentally active. Volunteer activities get you moving and thinking at the same time. One study found that volunteering among adults age 60 and over provided benefits to

physical and mental health. Another study found that, in general, volunteers report better physical health than do non-volunteers. Older volunteers experience greater increases in life satisfaction and greater positive changes in their perceived health as a result of volunteering.

4. Volunteering may reduce stress levels. Volunteering may enhance a person's social networks to buffer stress and reduce risk of disease. By savoring time spent in service to others, you will feel a sense of meaning and appreciation, both given and received, which can have a stress-reducing effect.
5. Volunteering may help you live longer. An analysis of data from the Longitudinal Study of Aging found that individuals who volunteer have lower mortality rates than those who do not, even when controlling for age, gender and physical health. In addition, several studies have shown that volunteers with chronic or serious illness experience declines in pain intensity and depression when serving as peer volunteers for others also suffering from chronic pain.
6. Volunteering helps you meet others and develop new relationships. One of the best ways to make new friends and strengthen existing relationships is to participate in a shared activity together. Volunteering is a great way to meet new people who share common interests with you. Dedicating your time as a volunteer also helps you expand your network and practice social skills with others.

Volunteers at Mayo Clinic Health System come from a wide variety of backgrounds, but share the common desire to help others. They are men, women, retirees, teenagers, former patients, professionals, homemakers and students. They volunteer for different reasons: to explore health care careers, sharpen skills to re-enter the work world, stay active during retirement and put their free time to good use.

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2-0-1-9

2 many children are in need of an adult to be their advocate in the child welfare and Juvenile Court arenas, because they have been abused and neglected.

0 time to waste to use your gifts of care, communication, empathy and commitment to help a child rise above it.

1 person is able to make all the difference by speaking up for a vulnerable child in need.

9 hours a month given in your role as a CASA Advocate volunteer will influence your own life, your community, and a child's life forever.

Will 2019 be the year that
YOU become a CASA Advocate as
a powerful voice in the life of a child?
866-469-2522
