Developing and Maintaining Effective Strategies for Collaborative Relationships with your Juvenile Court and County DFCS

PRESENTERS:
HON. MAUREEN WOOD, CWLS – JUDGE, ROCKDALE JUVENILE COURT
CHRISTOPHER HEMPFLING, CWLS – SAAG, ROCKDALE COUNTY DFCS
Disclaimer

All information provided by the presenters is based upon their own opinions and does not represent any agency, or governmental organization. For specific questions regarding any information contained within this presentation, please consult with an attorney.
Session Agenda

- Understanding Various Elements of Effective Collaboration
- Strategies for Collaboration Outside of Hearings
- Methods for Collaboration in Relation to Child-Welfare Proceedings
- Ensuring all Partners are Talking the Same Language
- CASA and the Court: Sharing One Mutual Goal, Exploring the Judge’s Role
- Judicial Collaboration
- Questions and Closing
Use of Interactive Polling - Poll Everywhere

- Text Recipient: 22333
- Message Contents: CHRISTOPHERH591
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Collaborative</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Collaborative</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Collaborative</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What challenges have you experienced that hinder collaborative relationships with your juvenile court or county DFCS?

When poll is active, respond at PollEv.com/christopherh591  Text CHRISTOPHERH591 to 22333 once to join
Why is Collaboration Important

- Embraces diversity of child-welfare agencies
- Unifies common objectives
- Improves open and honest communication
- Prevents overlapping of services
- Enhances supportive environment for employees and families
- Assists in the identification of agency strengths
Building Blocks for Effective Collaboration

- Trust
- Shared Interest & Relevance
- Leadership
- Collaborative Infrastructure
- Time & Patience
- Buy-in at all Levels
Trust is Paramount

- “Cultivate relationships because the beginning of collaboration is all about relationships.” System of Care Director

- Strategies for Developing Trust in Multi-Agency Partnerships – Focus on Relationship Building
  - One-on-one Relationships
  - Special Group Events
  - Cross-System Training
  - Child-Welfare Committee Attendance
  - Listening
Building Collaboration - Before the Call to Order

- Developing Effective Relationships Starts Before Any Hearings Take Place
  - Stakeholders Meetings
  - Staffing Attendance
  - CASA Trainings
  - Attending Mutual Events
  - Proactive Communication and Outreach with Case Managers
  - Public Relations
Tools for Collaboration Associated with Hearings

- CASAs sitting in front of the bar
- Family Treatment Court Team Member
- Distribution of Court Reports
- Utilization of CASA Visitation Center – Services to Parents and Dept.
- Guardianship Transfers from Probate Court
- CASAs Welcome During In-Chambers Meetings
Effective Communication is a Key to Effective Collaboration

Reasons why Communication is important:
- Builds and Maintains Relationships
- Facilitates Innovation
- Builds an Effective Team
- Provides for Appropriate Management of Team
- Contributes to the Growth of the Team
- Ensures Transparency

But we’ve all seen teams have poor communication…
CASA Court Reports

- This is the Primary Method CASAs Communicate with Parties in Dependency Cases
  - State Guidelines for CASA Reports:
    - Background History
    - Placement (adjustment) & Visitation (degree of participation)
    - Sibling and relative connections
    - Parental Info (Housing, job status, mental health, needed services)
    - Compliance with court order and case plan
    - Children’s education
    - Children’s emotional/physical needs (WELL-BEING)
    - Counseling, medical, ILP, RPP & normalcy, cultural considerations
    - Children’s wishes
    - Services children receiving
    - Concerns for the court's attention
    - Recommendations
§ 15-11-26. Best interests of child

Whenever a best interests determination is required, the court shall consider and evaluate all of the factors affecting the best interests of the child in the context of such child's age and developmental needs. Such factors include areas of child safety, bonding, familial attachments, stability, education, community ties, etc.

A Specific Example:

(3) The love, affection, bonding, and emotional ties existing between such child and his or her siblings, half siblings, and stepsiblings and the residence of such other children;
CASA And The Court
Our Mutual Goal: Success, Longevity and Sustainability of the CASA Program

- Establish a Working Understanding of the Relationship (MOU)
- Regularly and Meaningfully Communicate with CASA leadership
- Identify the specific needs in your jurisdiction
Develop a Memorandum of Understanding Address The Following Issues:

- The types of cases appropriate for CASA volunteer appointment
- When a CASA should be appointed (what stage of the case?)
- Protocol for the referral of appointments by the Court
- Establishing the CASA volunteer’s role
- The format and distribution of the CASA reports
- The court’s expectation for Screening and Training Volunteers
- The development of a Conflict of Interest Policy
- The development of a protocol for addressing problems that arise
The development of a protocol for court input regarding program functions and activities

The development of a protocol for volunteer access to court records
Communication Between CASA Leadership And The Court Is Essential

- Expectations of volunteers
- CASA volunteer access to records
- CASA volunteer access to the child
- Volunteer courtroom observation
- Grant applications that require Court support
- National CASA Standards, State and Local Rules
- Expansion or Strengthening the program
- Stakeholder issues
Embrace and Encourage Volunteer Diversity
Translation Can’t Be Lost. Culture Can’t Be Misrepresented.

Gender
Race
Ethnicity
Culture
Sexual Identity
How do you ensure the recruitment efforts address the need for volunteer diversity in your CASA program?
How can the juvenile court judge assist in these same recruitment efforts?

When poll is active, respond at PollEv.com/christopherh591  
Text CHRISTOPHERH591 to 22333 once to join
The Judge’s Role
The Judge’s Role
Protector and Promotor

The Judge can/should:

- Educate the community about CASA
- Train new CASA volunteers
- Swear in advocates
- Encourage citizens to become advocates
- Hold stakeholder meetings
- Evaluate the program
- Be a Champion/ Promotor of the Program
Resources

The Judicial Role in Creating and Supporting CASA/GAL Programs, Judge Leonard Edwards, Judge Ernestine Gray, Judge J. Dean Lewis


http://www.casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJSJ7MPIsE/b.5332553/k.C946/Judicial_Resources.htm
What initiatives or practices work well in your jurisdictions that promotes collaboration with your juvenile court or local DFCS?
Questions and Comments