**Texas CASA Webinar Details**

Webinars can be accessed at:

<http://texascasa.org/learning-center/>

**CASE ADVOCACY**

* **The Seven Habits of the Highly Effective CASA** (broadcast June 11, 2014)  
  Presented by Brenda Sweeten, MSSW, LCSW Lecturer/Field Education Director University of North Texas Social Work.

Strengthen your advocacy by adopting some effective “habits” – things that you do and apply consistently throughout your work, communication and interaction with children, families and system stakeholders.

* **Reasonable Efforts** (broadcast March 12, 2014)  
  Presented by Judge Leonard Edwards, Consultant, Mentor Judge Center for Families, Children & the Courts Administrative Office of the Courts.

This webinar explains how important the “reasonable efforts” finding is to children and families in the child protection system. It also explains:

* what reasonable efforts means,
* how reasonable efforts were written into federal and then state law,
* when the reasonable efforts finding must be made, and
* what the consequences of a “no reasonable efforts” finding are.
* This presentation will address strategies CASA volunteers can use on issues related to reasonable efforts and how to bring these up in court proceedings.
* **How to "Stand Tall" in Court** (broadcast May 15, 2013)  
  Presented by the Honorable Darlene Byrne,126th Judicial District Civil Court and Key Richardson, Program Director, CASA of Travis Co.

This webinar will inform CASA volunteers was how to “stand tall” in court—how to advocate, do your best in oral recommendations from a local program perspective and also from the perspective of a judge.

* **Testifying 201** (broadcast December 19, 2012)  
  Charles G. Childress, Attorney at Law, Austin, discusses strategies and best practices for testifying in court.
* **A Judicial Perspective on CASA Court Reports**Presented by Darlene Byrne, 126th Judicial District Court Judge for Travis County, Austin.

CASA advocacy is grounded in promoting permanency and the best interest of each child. One of the most effective tools to accomplish quality advocacy is the CASA court report. But are we getting the right information to the court that will provide our judges with the type of factual data and needed recommendations to help them make the best decisions possible for children?

Hear from Judge Darlene Byrne, one of the most esteemed judges presiding over these cases, for a judicial perspective on essential elements of a CASA court report.

**EDUCATIONAL ADOCACY**

* **Introducing the Educational Advocacy Toolkit** (broadcast March 11, 2015)  
  In this webinar, Training and Communications Director Leslie Palmer explains what it means to be a Fierce Advocate and what you can expect from the Fierce Advocate Series. She also introduces you to the Educational Advocacy Toolkit and the many helpful resources that are a part of it, such as:
* A short, introductory video,
* A manual for volunteers (and anyone else who is a Fierce Advocate), and
* A facilitator guide for CASA trainers.
* **Response to Intervention (RTI): What CASA Volunteers Need to Know** (broadcast November 12, 2014)  
  Presented by Pamela Bell, Ph.D., Program Director, and Mary Ndande, Ph.D., M.S.S.W., SSHRA-V – Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, UT Austin.

Learn about Response to Intervention (RTI):

* How RTI data may be used in the special education evaluation process,
* How to advocate for educational and transition needs of students in foster care, and
* RTI-related website resources.
* **Surrogate Parent Training** (broadcast September 10, 2014)  
  Presented by Ian Spechler with Disability Rights Texas. This webinar will teach the CASA network about:
* Obtaining and reviewing important school records,
* Requesting evaluations,
* Participating in an ARD (Admission, Review and Dismissal) meeting,
* Accountability requirements for IEPs (Individualized Education Programs),
* Protecting a student’s rights during discipline proceedings, and
* Ensuring services to transition into adulthood.
* **Transforming Educational Outcomes for Foster Children** (broadcast January 16, 2013)  
  Presented by Tiffany Roper, Assistant Director, Texas Children's Commission, this webinar focuses on educational outcomes and primarily discusses the Texas Blueprint findings, its' recommendations and strategies and how to provide effective educational advocacy.

**MEDICAL ADVOCACY :**

* **Behavioral Health Services Under Medicare** (broadcast April 8, 2015)  
  Presented by Richard LaVallo, Legal Director at Disability Rights Texas. In this webinar, LaVallo covers:
* Behavioral health services under Medicaid’s Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT),
* Behavioral health services under the mental health rehabilitative services provisions,
* Due process protections afforded to foster children to ensure the provision of medically necessary behavioral health services, and
* How to advocate for behavioral health services on behalf of foster children.
* **Mental Health Considerations: Working with Children and Youth** (broadcast May 14, 2014)  
  Presented by Seanna Crosbie, LCSW, Director of Program Services, Austin Child Guidance Center.

This webinar provides information on how to appropriately serve children/youth who have experienced or witnessed abuse/neglect, domestic violence or other traumatic events. Learn how trauma impacts a child’s development, ways you can effectively field difficult questions from children/youth, and how to ensure you are best supporting their healing through your actions and language.

* **Mental Health Advocacy for Children in Foster Care** (broadcast April 9, 2014)  
  Presented by Lynda E. Frost, J.D., Ph.D., Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, The University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Frost talked about the mental health advocacy in relation to trauma, behavior management and other mental health issues that CASA should be aware of.

* **Addressing Issues of Grief and Loss for Children in Foster Care** (broadcast February 12, 2014)  
  Presented by Adam Robe, CEO, Foster Care Alumni of America; Speaker/Trainer/Author at Robe Communications, Inc.

How can you help a foster child cope with the inevitable grief and loss they experience just by coming into care? This presentation offers specific and practical strategies and insights to strengthen your advocacy for children experiencing grief and loss.

* **Prenatal Drug and Alcohol Exposure – What CASA Should Know and Do** (broadcast January 8, 2014)  
  Presented by M. Connie Almeida, Ph.D., LSSP, Director of Behavioral Health Services for Fort Bend County.

Many of the children and families that CASA’s are assigned to have mental health and substance abuse disorders. Both have implications for effective advocacy. This webinar will provide participants critical information about not only the effects of prenatal drug and alcohol exposure, but screening, assessment, treatment and interventions that can promote better outcomes for children.

* **Behavior Management and the Use of Restraints on Foster Children** (broadcast March 20, 2013)  
  Presented by Dr. Lynda Frost, Director of Planning and Programs, Hogg Foundation for Mental Health this webinar discusses the use of restraints in relation to psychotropic medications, behavior management and any new requirements that CASA volunteers may need to be aware of.
* **Mental Health Needs of Children in Foster Care** (broadcast August 15, 2012)  
  Presented by Dr. Connie Almeida, Director of Behavioral Health Services, Fort Bend County, this webinar provides an overview of the mental health needs of children in foster care from birth through young adulthood. Participants will gain further understanding of the manifestation of mental health disorders in children and adolescents. The impact of mental health on learning, relationships and well-being will be discussed.
* **Impact of Trauma from Adverse Childhood Experiences** (broadcast June 20, 2012)  
  Presented by Dr. Lynda Frost, Hogg Foundation for Mental Health.

The effects of trauma can be profound and long-lasting. The enduring impact of adverse childhood experiences can shape the lives of youth and adults, presenting physical, psychological, and social challenges. Webinar participants will learn about the latest research on childhood trauma and interventions designed to minimize its impact.

* **Psychopharmacology for Children in Substitute Care** (broadcast May 16, 2012)  
  Presented by Lynn Crismon, Dean of the College of Pharmacy at The University of Texas at Austin.
* **Trauma Informed Advocacy**Presented by Dr. Karyn Purvis, Director of the TCU Institute of Child Development. Child victims of abuse and neglect often suffer from trauma that impacts their functioning in every area of their life. Many of the emotional and behavioral symptoms treated by mental health professions and through psychopharmacology are not adequately recognized as symptoms of trauma. CASA volunteers and those working in related systems (CPS, schools, placement providers) also need to view the child’s emotional and behavioral state through this lens which informs our most basic understanding of the child’s needs.

**TRANISTIONING YOUTH**

* **Youth Self-Advocacy** (broadcast on June 17, 2015)  
  In this webinar, Texas CASA Liaison for Director and Board Development Deedra Baker explains how to understand what each youth needs to learn and experience in their journey to adulthood, and how to promote, at every turn, opportunities for increasing their self-advocacy.
* **Flux – Life After Foster Care** (broadcast August 13, 2014)  
  Presented by Angie Cross, Foster Care Alumni of America-Tx Chapter.

Learn about the culture of foster care and how to support older youth and explore the emotional issues inherent to making the transition from foster care to adulthood.

* **Improving Outcomes for Older Youth in Care** (broadcast November 21, 2012)  
  Presented by Angie Cross, Volunteer Chapter Engagement Manager, Foster Care Alumni of America (FCAA), this webinar provides resources to help CASA volunteers improve the outcomes for youth in care and transitioning youth.

**PERMANENCY**

* **Attorneys and CASA – Permanency Options** (broadcast December 11, 2013)  
  Presented by F. Scott McCown, Clinical Professor at the UT Austin School of Law and Director of the Children’s Rights Clinic.

This webinar discusses how the Attorney Ad Litem (AAL) and CASA / GAL can work together to achieve true permanency for children, particularly children in Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC).

* **Adoption Advocacy** (broadcast November 13, 2013)  
  Presented by Jackie Hubbard, CPS Division Administrator and Jillian Bonacquisti, CPS Adoption Program Specialist, this webinar focuses on the legal requirements and policy practices to advocate for permanency.
* **Engaging Families Through Diligent Recruitment** (broadcast June 19, 2013)  
  Presented by Debbie Williams, Permanency Specialist, CASA of Collin County, McKinney.

Hear from CASA staff involved in a five year DFPS grant that seeks to find permanent homes for children, particularly children with special needs and children that have been in care for a long time. CASA advocates provide “enhanced work” in these cases, receive extra training, and have been instrumental in securing life long connections and permanent homes for children.

* **Permanency Values and Advocacy** (broadcast July 18, 2012)  
  Presented by Elaine DeBose, Casey Family Foundations, this webinar shares some youth stories, and have CASA staff and volunteers think about their own values and gain new tips and skills related to permanency and advocacy.

**GENERAL ADVOCACY**

* **The Life Cycle of Human Trafficking** (broadcast February 11, 2015)  
  Presented by Saul Castellanos, CEO, Freedom Youth Project Foundation.

Learn more about Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST), and understand why everyone has a stake in preventing children from being trafficked.

* **New Laws & Other Successes from the 84th Legislative Session** (broadcast July 8, 2015)

In this webinar, Texas CASA’s Public Policy team will break down (almost) everything that happened during the 84th Legislative Session related to the child protection system, including an overview of CASA’s state funding for the next two years. The webinar will include highlights of some of the most important ways that our Legislative Advocacy Teams (LATs) helped pass our highest-priority bills and will give you concrete information about how this new legislation will impact the children you serve beginning Sept. 1, 2015.

* **CASA Family Finding Initiative** (broadcast December 10, 2014)   
  Presented by Anjuli (AJ) Barak, CASA of Travis County Family Finding Specialist.

Compelling evidence shows that children who have some connection with members of their birth family and symbolic relatives have improved behavior, improved school performance and more hope in their lives. This webinar will explain the family finding process and explore resources available to make the job of tracking down and engaging family members more efficient. It will also detail family finding as an alternate volunteer opportunity for experienced CASA volunteers as a volunteer retention strategy.

* **Latin American Children’s Extraordinary Support (LACES)** (broadcast October 8, 2014)  
  Presented by Doris Foulkes, president of LACES.

Hispanic children removed from their parents by CPS – due to abuse, incarceration or deportation – are often left without any relatives to care for them in the U.S. Learn more about what happens with the families being deported, what Latin American Children’s Extraordinary Support (LACES) is doing to support them, and how CASA can still work to keep these children connected to their families.

* **Communicating with Children** (broadcast July 9, 2014)  
  Presented by Adam Robe, CEO, Foster Care Alumni of America; Speaker/Trainer/Author at Robe Communications, Inc.

It is important to understand what children hope for, feel and think. It is equally important to help children understand who you are and what your role as a CASA volunteer is in their lives. Gain new skills and relation building strategies.

* **Communicating Effectively in the Child Welfare System** (broadcast April 17, 2013)  
  Presented by Beth Boone, Consultant and Alternative Dispute Resolution, Mediation Services of America, this webinar discusses effective ways CASA volunteers can use their communication skills:

Difficult situations create stressful emotions and distance between people working for the same goal – the good of a child. We will discuss twelve strategies to improve our interactions with others by addressing: 1) internal emotions and reactions and 2) communication strategies to connect with another.

* **Process for CASA to Report Concerns about Children's Placements** (broadcast March 21, 2013)  
  Presented by Amii J. Leiner of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), this webinar describes DFPS' new process that allows CASA volunteers to report concerns about paid foster placements (foster homes, group homes, and RTCs) and ensures that these are forwarded to the person who can properly address them.
* **Advocacy for Dual System Youth**

Presented by Ryan Miller of CASA of Travis County, this webinar will explore the juvenile system and the realities of dually-involved youth (youth in the conservatorship of CPS who also have juvenile charges). It will also cover areas in which CASA volunteers and agencies can become involved in advocacy in the juvenile system.

* **Key Elements of Resiliency**

Presented by Deedra Baker, Quality Assurance Manager at Texas CASA. Working with child abuse victims can take an emotional toll on volunteers and staff who not only see the impact of abuse and neglect on children but also struggle with the impact of a broken system on children who need to heal. Understanding and recognizing the influence of this work on our own lives is key to identifying strategic practices that can help us continue to do the work we find so worthwhile. Webinar participants will be able to identify two to three things they can immediately implement to build their resilience for child advocacy.

* **Better Outcomes for Children** (broadcast February 20, 2013)  
  Presented by Sonia Kotecha, Director of Volunteers, CASA of Travis County, this webinar:
* explores attitudes about disproportionality and the underrepresentation of particular groups.
* introduces strategies to improve inclusion, recruitment and retention.
* **Advocating for Undocumented Youth** (broadcast October 17, 2012)  
  Presented by Pamela K. Parker, Special Projects Attorney, DFPS, this webinar:
* Focuses attention on the importance of citizenship and immigration issues for foster children and youth.
* Demonstrates simple tool for identifying children who need help.
* Introduces the most common citizenship and immigration options available to foster children.
* Discusses the role of the foreign consul's office.
* Explains where and how to get more help.
* **How Advocates Can Be Big Voices for Little Texans at the Capitol** (broadcast September 19, 2012)  
  Presented by Andrea Sparks, Director of Public Policy and Outreach, Texas CASA, this webinar discusses the opportunities for CASA volunteers, staff and board members to get involved in legislative advocacy at the state capitol.