



National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association

2014 National Statistics

Following are the latest statistics available at the time of publication. Visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway at childwelfare.gov for updates and other powerful figures on the needs of abused and neglected children.

A Nationwide Program of Advocacy for Abused and Neglected Children

- In 2013, the CASA/GAL network consisted of 951 local and state programs. All programs are united in their mission to provide quality advocacy for abused and neglected children in the court system and adhere to comprehensive program standards.ⁱ
- In 2013, CASA/GAL programs had 74,918 volunteers donate over 5.75 million hours to making a lifelong difference in the lives of abused and neglected children. In that year, approximately 21,966 new volunteers were trained to help meet the need.ⁱⁱ
- An estimated 238,527 children were served by CASA/GAL volunteers in 2013.ⁱⁱⁱ

Changes over the past five years in the number of CASA/GAL volunteers and children served.^{iv}

Year	CASA/GAL Volunteers	Children Served
2009	70,919	237,095
2010	75,087	240,164
2011	77,021	234,238
2012	77,355	234,098
2013	74,918	238,527

A SOLUTION THAT WORKS—THE COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE PROGRAM (CASA/GAL)

Better Outcomes Proven for Children

CASA/GAL volunteers make sure that the abuse and neglect that the children originally suffered at home does not continue as abuse and neglect at the hands of the system.

- Low CASA caseloads mean the courts can make better decisions for children. CASA volunteers handle just 1 or 2 cases at a time, so that they can give each child's case the sustained, personal attention he or she deserves.^v

- Children with CASA volunteers spend 7.5 months less in foster care, experience fewer out of home placements and have significantly improved educational performance.^{vi}
- More than 90% of children with CASA volunteers never reenter the child welfare system, a significant difference compared to the general foster care population. This outcome also results in significant savings in child welfare expenses.^{vii}
- Complex cases receive more attention so they can move forward in a timely way. CASA volunteers are typically appointed to the more complex children's cases – those where there are multiple risk factors which must be fully understood in order to make a placement decision that will be in the child's best interests.^{viii}
- More effective use of service dollars. Children with CASA volunteers, and their families, receive more court-ordered services and because of the volunteer's detailed knowledge of the child's circumstances, those services are more carefully targeted and monitored.^{ix}

Cost Effectiveness

- CASA volunteers save hundreds of millions of dollars in child welfare costs alone. Federal law requires that juvenile and family courts appoint a guardian ad litem, who may be an attorney or CASA/GAL volunteer, in all cases of child abuse and neglect.^x
- The child welfare system could not afford to provide a comparable level of advocacy through non-volunteer approaches. In 2013, CASA volunteers contributed 5.75 million advocacy hours, equivalent to \$290 million in taxpayer dollars if compensated for their service.^{xi}
- By reducing long-term placements, subsequent victimization, and reentry into the foster care system, CASA substantially reduces child welfare costs.^{xii}
- **75 to 1** return on investment. Federal funding for one staff supervisory position within a local CASA program supports 30 trained volunteer workers, assigned to 75+ children's cases within a year.^{xiii}

High Quality Advocacy

- Judges assign CASA/GAL volunteers to 37% of abuse and neglect cases before them. They express a great need for more volunteers for their cases.^{xiv}
- CASA volunteers assure that the court and child welfare systems remain focused on children's well-being, assuring that the specific needs of individual children, including their needs for safety and permanency, are addressed expeditiously.^{xv}
- Judges, attorneys, child welfare workers, and parents overwhelmingly report that CASA volunteers make a difference with the children they serve.^{xvi}
- With a limited number of available volunteers, judges assign CASA/GAL volunteers to their most difficult and complex cases: those with prior maltreatment or contact with child welfare, cases of extreme neglect, physical or sexual abuse, and those where children have a great level of risk.^{xvii}

- CASA volunteers are far more likely than paid attorneys to visit children in their homes, more likely to investigate whether there are appropriate services for the child or family, and to monitor delivery of services.^{xviii}

Efficiency

- Since CASA is a program of citizen volunteers, funds invested deliver a quick and impressive return in terms of children served within communities. Federal funding is turned around by National CASA within months as competitive, peer-reviewed grants to CASA programs.
- Funding from the Justice Department is awarded through a competitive, external review process. By contracting with the National CASA Association to administer the CASA grants program, the Department of Justice is able to assure effective utilization of funds, in compliance with federal regulations and National CASA standards.
- Grants awarded by National CASA allow a large number of communities (140 grants in 2013) to expand volunteer advocacy without becoming dependent upon a single source of revenue. CASA programs leverage the federal investment to attract a greater percentage of state, private and court funding to support advocacy within their communities.^{xix}

Children Continue to Need Protection and Care

- Approximately 3.5 million allegations of child abuse and neglect involving 6.4 million children were made to CPS agencies in Federal Fiscal Year 2013.^{xx}
- In 2013, an estimated 678,932 children were substantiated as victims of child maltreatment, a rate of 9.1 per 1,000 children in the US and Puerto Rico.^{xxi}
- African American children, American Indian or Alaska Native children and children of multiple races had the highest rates of victimization at 14.6, 12.5, and 10.6 victims per 1,000 children, respectively. Hispanic children and White children had rates of 8.5 and 8.1 per 1,000 children, respectively. Asian children had the lowest rate of 1.7 per 1,000 children. Nearly one-half of all victims were White (44%), one-fifth (21.2%) were African American, and one-fifth (22.4%) were Hispanic.^{xxii}
- The youngest children (from birth through age 3) were most likely to be determined to be maltreated compared to all other age groups and the victimization rate was highest for children younger than 1 year (23.1 per 1,000 children in the population of the same age).^{xxiii}
- An estimated 1,520 children nationally (compared to 1,630 children for FFY 2012) died from abuse or neglect. The rate per 100,000 children was 2.04 deaths for FFY 2013 compared to a rate of 2.19 for FFY 2012. Children 0–3 years old accounted for 73.9% of child fatalities. Children younger than 1 year old accounted for 46.5% of all child fatalities.^{xxiv}
- Violence often occurs against women and children in the same family. Research indicates that 50–70% of men who assault their female partners also abuse their children.^{xxv}
- 641,000 children were in foster care in FY 2013. They spent a mean of 21.8 months in foster care.^{xxvi}

The race/ethnicity breakdown of the children in foster care as of September 30, 2013, is as follows:^{xxvii}

Ethnicity	Percentage	Total Children
Caucasian	42%	168,302
African American	24%	98,201
Hispanic (of any race)	22%	86,993
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2%	8,652
Asian American	1%	2,114
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0%	686
Unknown	3%	11,734
Two or more races	6%	24,935

- Of the children in foster care on September 30, 2013, 101,840 were waiting to be adopted. Only 50,608 children were adopted from the public foster care system in FY 2013.^{xxviii}
- States spent \$29.4 billion in federal, state and local funds on child welfare programs in SFY 2010. This is a 2% increase between SFY 2008-2010 after adjusting for inflation.^{xxix}
- In SFY 2010, states spent \$13.6 billion in federal dollars, \$12.5 billion in state dollars and \$3.3 billion in local dollars. Between SFY 2006 and SFY 2010, federal spending increased by 5%, state spending increased by 5%, and local spending declined by 23%.^{xxx}

Total Annual Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect in the United States—Direct Costs (costs associated with the immediate needs of abused or neglected children):^{xxxi}

Services	Annual Estimated Direct Cost
Acute Medical Treatment	\$2,907,592,094
Mental Health Care System	\$1,153,978,175
Child Welfare Services System	\$29,237,770,193
Law Enforcement	\$34,279,048
Total Direct Cost	\$33,333,619,510

Total Annual Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect in the United States—Indirect Costs (costs associated with long-term and secondary effects of child abuse and neglect):^{xxii}

Services	Annual Estimated Indirect Cost
Special Education	\$826,174,734
Early Intervention	\$247,804,537
Emergency/Transitional Housing	\$1,606,866,538
Juvenile Delinquency	\$3,416,149,283
Mental Health and Health Care	\$270,864,199
Adult Criminal Justice System	\$32,724,767,699
Lost Productivity to Society	\$7,834,164,589
Total Indirect Cost	\$46,926,791,578

**TOTAL ANNUAL DIRECT AND INDIRECT COST OF
CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT:**

\$80,260,411,087

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) projects the annual cost is even higher – at \$124 billion. According to the CDC, the average cost for each child victim is \$210,012 over that victim’s lifetime.^{xxiii}
- Abuse is associated with a range of other risks—juvenile delinquency, suicide, unemployment and poor school performance.^{xxiv}

Endnotes

ⁱ National CASA Association, 2013 National CASA Association Annual Local Program Survey, Seattle, WA, (2014). CASAforChildren.org

ⁱⁱ Ibid

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid

^{iv} Ibid

^v Caliber Associates, National CASA Association Evaluation Project, Fairfax, Virginia, 2004.

[vi](#) Calkins and Miller, The Effectiveness of Court Appointed Special Advocates to Assist in Permanency Planning, 1999 and Waxman, Houston, Proffitt & Sanches, The Long-Term Effects of the Houston Child Advocates Inc. Program on Children and Family Outcomes, Child Welfare, vol. 88 #6, pp. 25 – 48, Child Welfare League of America, Nov/Dec 2009.

[vii](#) Office of the Inspector General, Audit Report 07-04, National Court Appointed Special Advocate Program, December 2006.

[viii](#) Evaluation of Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem Volunteer Impact, Organizational Research Services, September, 2005.

[ix](#) Office of the Inspector General, op. cit.

[x](#) Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, Sect. 106, w.B.xiii, P.L. 111-320, as amended 2010.

[xi](#) National CASA Association, 2013 National CASA Association Annual Local Program Survey, Seattle, WA, (2014). CASAforChildren.org

[xii](#) Office of the Inspector General, op. cit.

[xiii](#) National CASA Association Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs, 2012 edition, p. 30 and National CASA Association, 2013 National CASA Association Annual Local Program Survey, Seattle, WA, (2014). CASAforChildren.org

[xiv](#) Evaluation of Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem Volunteer Impact, Judicial Survey, Organizational Research Services, September 2005.

[xv](#) Ibid.

[xvi](#) Ibid.

[xvii](#) Ibid.

[xviii](#) Ibid.

[xix](#) National CASA Association, 2013 National CASA Association Annual Local Program Survey, Seattle, WA, (2014). CASAforChildren.org

[xx](#) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2014). Child maltreatment 2013. Available from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>.

[xxi](#) Ibid.

[xxii](#) Ibid.

[xxiii](#) Ibid.

[xxiv](#) Ibid.

[xxv](#) McKibben, L., DeVos, E. & Newberger, E., "Victimization of mothers of abused children: A controlled study." Pediatrics, 84:531 (1989); Start, E. & Flitcraft, A., "Women and children at risk: A feminist perspective on child abuse." International Journal of Health Services, 18:97 (1988).

[xxvi](#) US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children’s Bureau, The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System Report (AFCARS), Washington, DC (2014). <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/trends-in-foster-care-and-adoption>
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/afcars-report-20>

[xxvii](#) Ibid.

[xxviii](#) Ibid.

[xxix](#) DeVooght, K., Fletcher, M., Vaughn, B. & Cooper, H., Child Trends, Federal, State, and Local Spending to Address Child Abuse and Neglect in SFYs 2008 and 2010 (2012). http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Child_Trends-2012_06_20_FR_CaseyCWFinancing.pdf

[xxx](#) Ibid.

[xxxi](#) Prevent Child Abuse America, Total Estimated Cost of Child Abuse & Neglect In the United States, (2012). [preventchildabusenc.org/assets/preventchildabusenc/files/\\$cms\\$/100/1299.pdf](http://preventchildabusenc.org/assets/preventchildabusenc/files/cms/100/1299.pdf)

[xxxii](#) Ibid.

[xxxiii](#) Fang, X, Brown, D.S., Florence, C.S. & Mercy, J.A. “The Economic Burden of Child Maltreatment in the United States and Implications for Prevention”, Child Abuse and Neglect, Vol. 36, Issue 2, pp. 156 – 165, February 2012
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[xxxiv](#) Cathy Spatz Widom, Summary of Findings for the American Association for the Advancements of Science (1991).



National CASA Association

100 West Harrison • North Tower • Suite 500

Seattle, WA 98119 • (800) 628-3233

CASAforChildren.org