

2019 |



Washington CASA

Advocacy Report for 2017 - 2018

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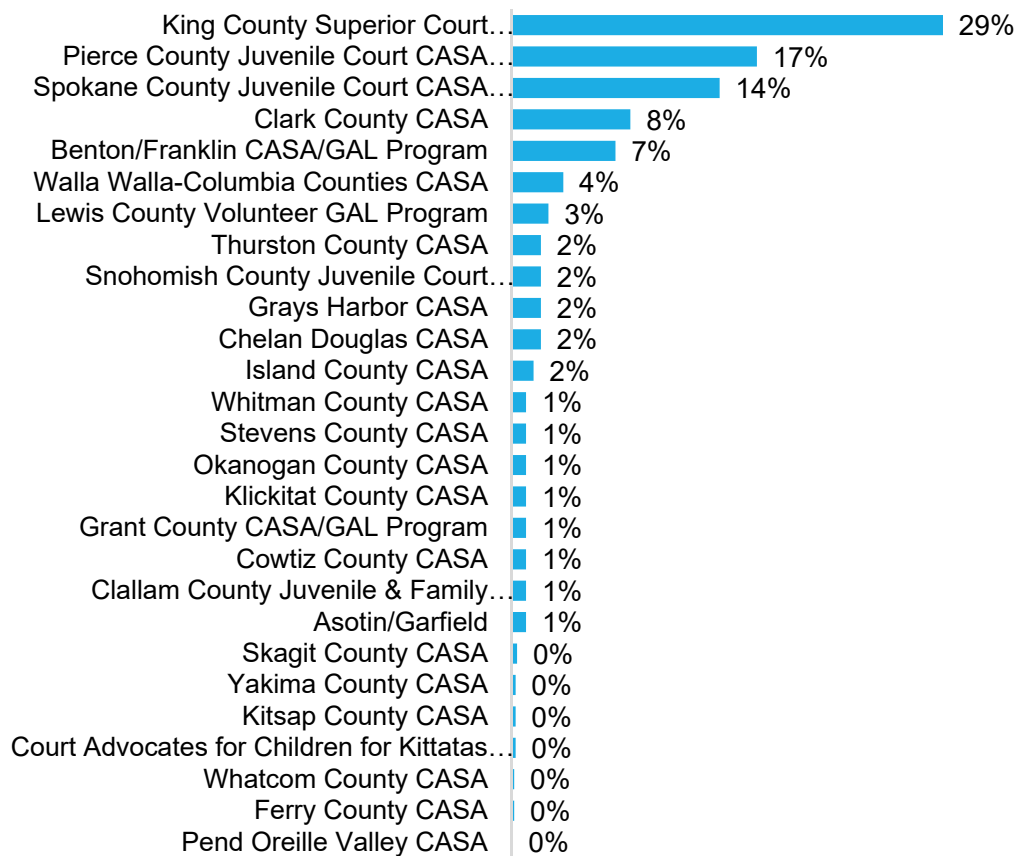
Washington CASA Advocacy Report (2017- 2018)

Introduction

In Washington State, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers have been asked to complete a survey every six months, beginning in September of 2017. The Survey has been completed on three occasions, September 2017, March 2018, and September 2018. Data from these surveys were analyzed and provided back to the Washington CASA program to better understand current practice. This report compares the three data points to examine all the data and any differences over time. It is important to note that survey responses may include the same case and multiple points in time and does not reflect new youth every time. The survey asked a series of questions about children the CASA represent, including visitation, well-being, placement, and education related information.

A total of 1,491 entries, representing 1,227 unique children involved in the foster care system, were made by CASA across the state of Washington. Twenty-seven counties were represented in the survey, with the highest percentage (29%) from King County. Counties that indicate 0% represent less than 1% of the sample.

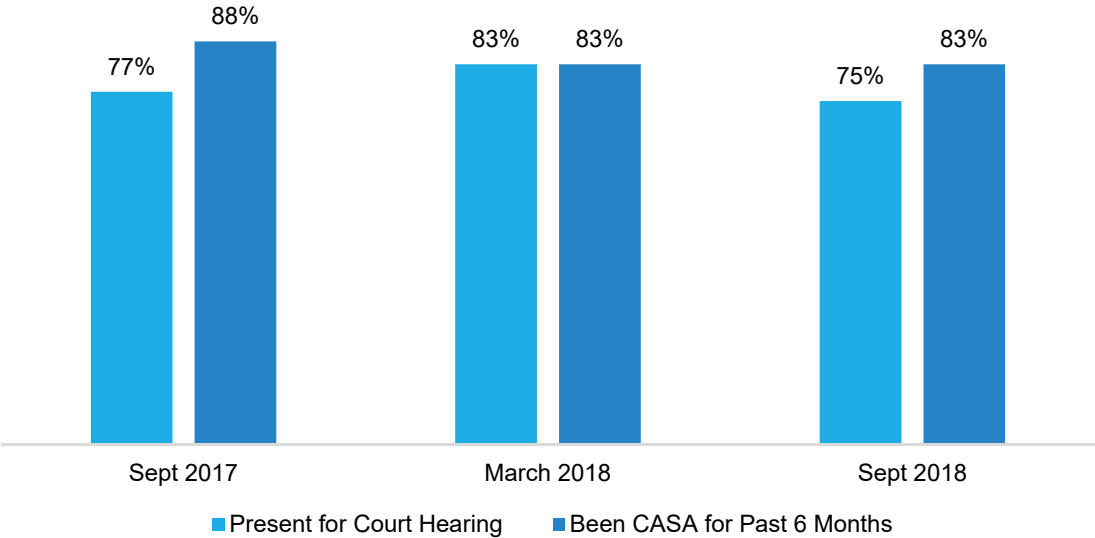
CASA Volunteer Jurisdiction



Findings

The CASAs were appointed a median of 36 days after the case opened (range of 718 days prior to case opening, to more than 10 years after a case opened). CASAs were asked if they were present at the most recent court hearing and if they have been the CASA the entire time for the last 6 months. There was a significant difference between time periods for presence and assignment. *The March 2018 sample were significantly more likely to have been present for court than other time periods and the Sept 2017 sample were significantly more likely to have been the CASA for the past 6 months.*

CASA Presence and Assignment



	Sept 2017	March 2018	Sept 2018
Has the child reunified with his/her parents?	17%	21%	20%
Any additional findings of abuse/or neglect?	9%	6%	5%

The median number of CASA visits in the last six months was **6** for both March 2018 and September 2018.

Placement & Visitation

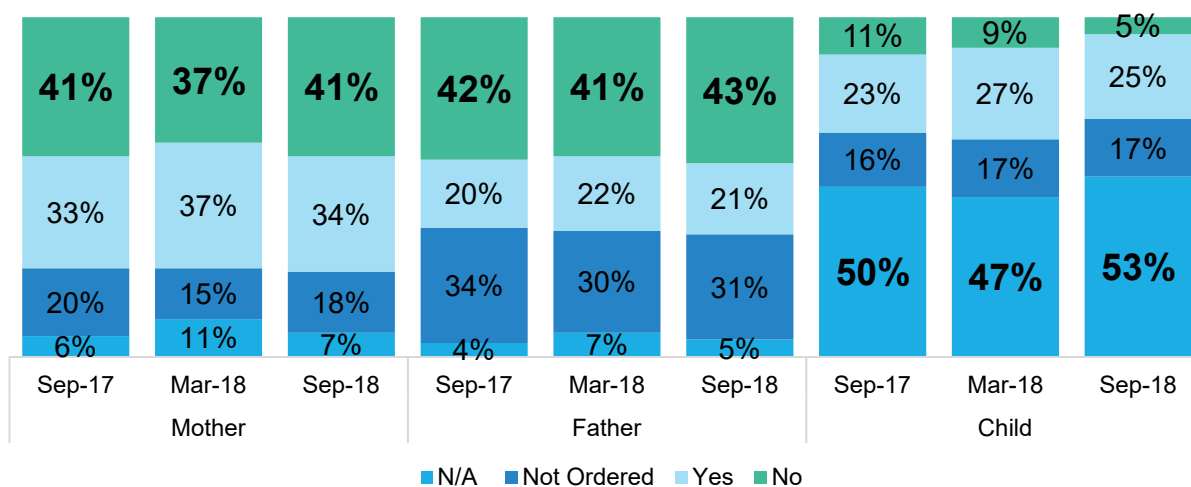
A series of questions asked about child’s placement and visitation with the mother, father, and siblings on the case. The data collected was compared to statewide data from the 2016 Adoption and Foster Care

Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). The CASA Survey data is consistent with the national data trends for placement type. As illustrated in the graph below, the most common placement type is Foster Care with a non-relative.

Placement	Sept 2017	March 2018	Sept 2018
In home with parents	15%	20%	17%
With relatives/kin	35%	33%	37%
A "suitable" other	3%	3%	2%
Foster Care	43%	43%	42%
Group/Congregate Care	2%	1%	1%
Hospital/Treatment Center	1%	1%	< 1%
Detention	1%	<1%	0
Placement Moves			
0	65%	68%	65%
1	20%	22%	22%
2	9%	6%	10%
3	4%	3%	2%
4 or more	2%	1%	1%

The survey also asked if the child has maintained consistent visits with parents and siblings in the last six months. As noted in the Visitation graph below, the most common response for maintaining visits with mothers and fathers was "No." For sibling visits, the majority of cases indicates that this was not applicable (i.e., youth did not have siblings or were placed together). *There was a statistically significant difference in child visits with siblings across time periods, with the highest percentage of "no's" occurring in 2017 and the lowest in September of 2018 (5%).*

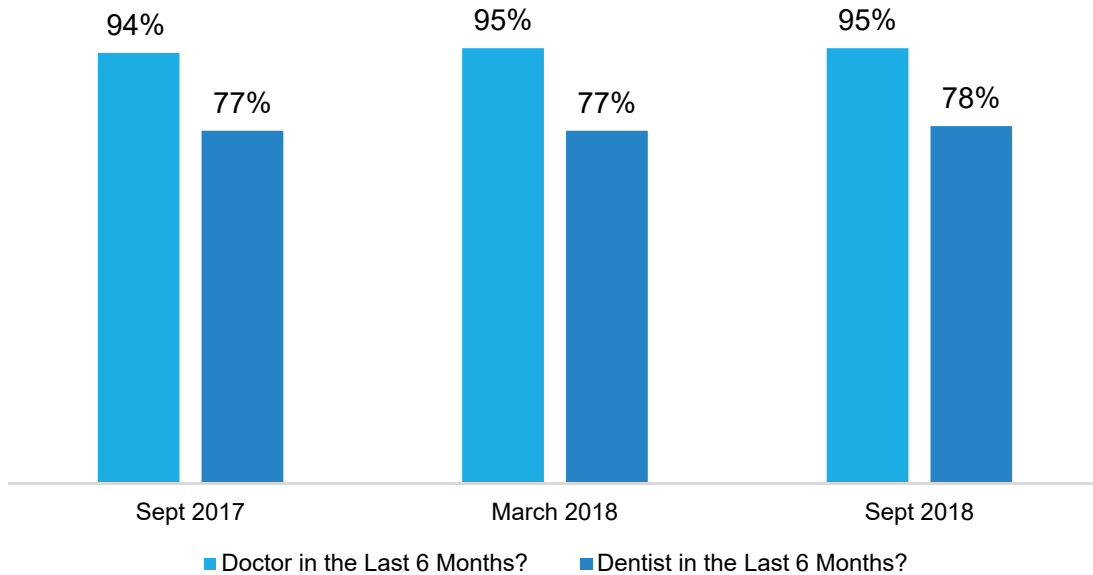
Visitation



Health & Well-being

The CASA survey asked about child's health and wellbeing. In particular the survey asked about participation in services with the last 6 months. The majority of children has been to the dentist and to the doctor in the last 6 months. There were no significant differences in the last three reporting periods.

Percent Yeses Regarding Health Check-ups

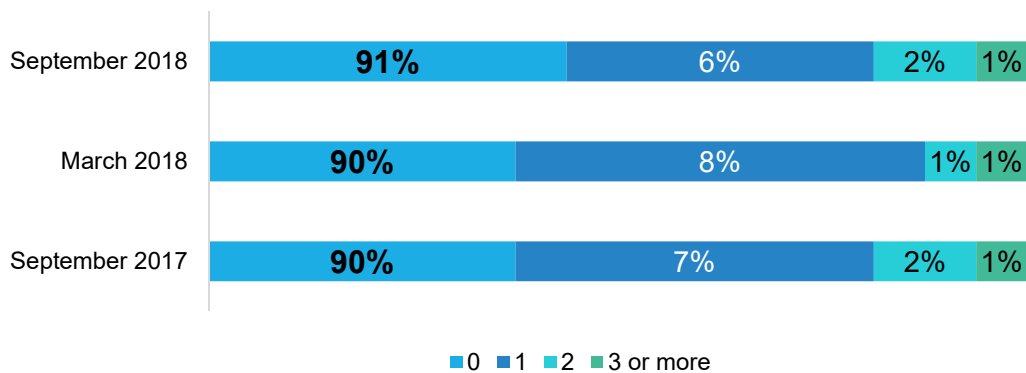


In addition to general wellbeing the survey asked about mental health. The majority of youth were not ordered to go to mental health counseling by the court. Of those who were ordered, the vast majority were being provided services. There was very little variation across time periods.

Mental Health Services	September 2017	March 2018	September 2018
Not Ordered	55%	55%	60%
If ordered, services being provided (YES)	88%	88%	89%
If ordered, services not being provided (NO)	12%	12%	11%

The survey also asked about psychotropic medication use. Ninety percent of youth were not reported to be on any psychotropic meds. Seven percent were on one psychotropic med and 3% were on two or more.

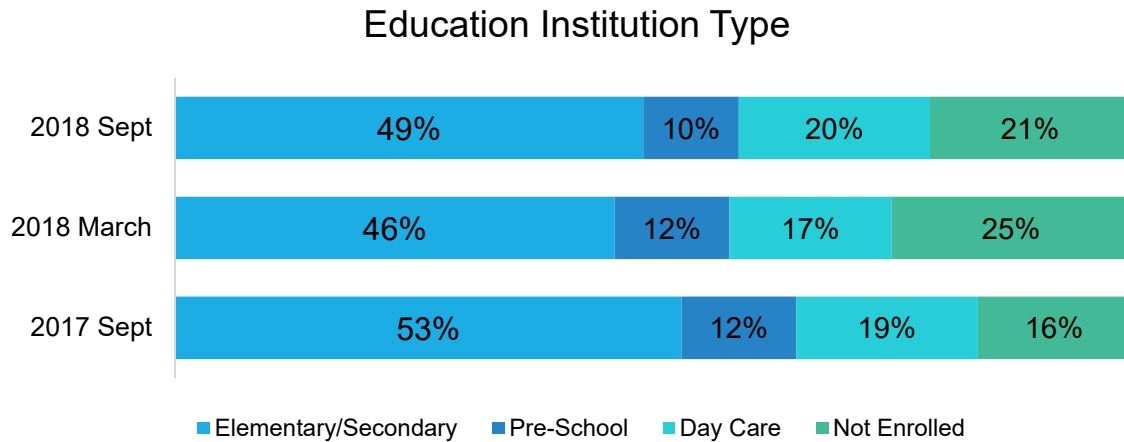
Number of Psychotropic Meds



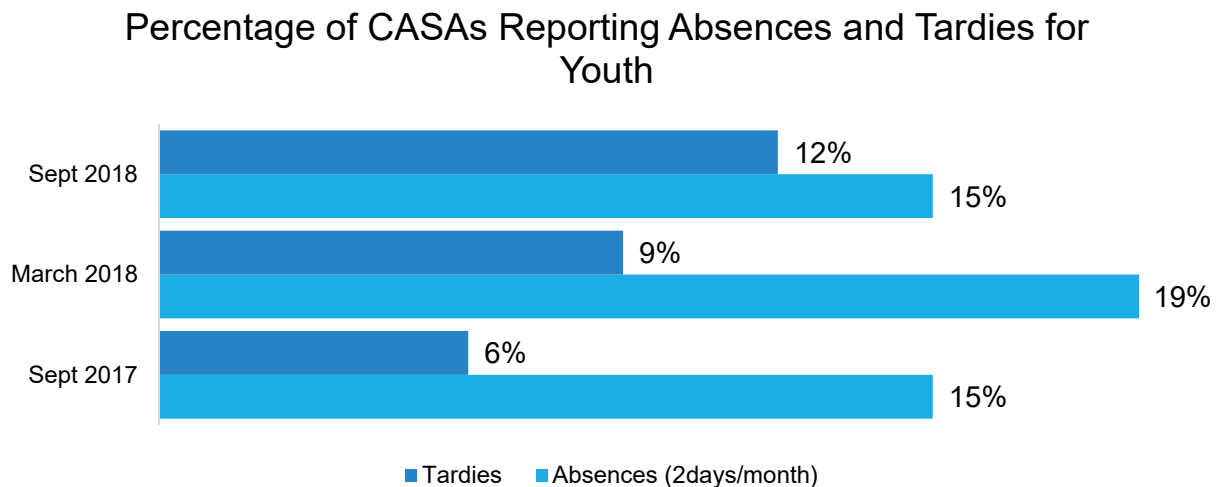
In addition, CASAs reported that only 4%, 1% and 2% of youth had runaway from placement in the last 6 months and only .8%, .5% and .2% had been adjudicated on any juvenile offenses in the past 6 months. These differences are not significant.

Education

A final set of questions asked about the child's current education.



The survey also asked about absences and being tardy from school. In each year, for 36 to 44% of youth, CASA marked this as not applicable. For the remaining sample of youth, the majority were indicated as no's. The graph below indicates the percentage of CASAs who indicated "yes" that their student had missed more than 2 days of school per month for two months or more (absences) and whether the child had been tardy for school on a recurrent basis (tardies). *There is a significant difference between time periods for tardies. With each reporting period, the percentage of students with tardies has increased from a low of 6% in Sept 2017 and a high of 12% in Sept of 2018.*



The survey also asked about school specific information, including whether the child had a reliable way to get to school, whether the child was on track to be promoted to the next grade level, whether they had current IEP/504 plans, and whether the youth participated in extracurricular activities. The table below illustrates variations in time. These percentages represent the of applicable youth, how many did the CASA indicate a Yes response.

Does the child / Is the child	Sept 2017	March 2018	Sept 2018
Have a reliable way to get to and from school?	99%	98%	100%
On track to be promoted to the next grade?	93%	93%	94%
Have a current IEP/504 Plan?	43%	38%	40%
Participate in extra curricular activities?	47%	52%	51%

Conclusions

The data collected for this report illustrate three point-in-time snapshots of the youth that CASA serve in Washington State. As indicated with the findings, there were very few differences between the three reporting periods. This illustrates fairly consistent practice and youth outcomes across the state. The four statistically significant differences between time periods were:

- **Presence for Court.** *The March 2018 sample were significantly more likely to have been present for court than other time periods.*
- **Appointed for Past 6 months.** *The Sept 2017 sample were significantly more likely to have been the CASA for the past 6 months.*
- **Sibling Visits.** *There was a statistically significant difference in child visits with siblings across time periods, with the highest percentage of “no’s” occurring in 2017 and the lowest in September of 2018 (5%).*
- **Tardies.** *There is a significant difference between time periods for tardies. With each reporting period, the percentage of students with tardies has increased from a low of 6% in Sept 2017 and a high of 12% in Sept of 2018.*

These differences could be simple variations in the samples of cases that were reported in the survey. Clearly the age difference varied slightly for the samples. On the hand, these should be used as a discussion point to determine if there were variations in practice that may have resulted in increased/decreased numbers in the direction of interest.

Of final note, the majority of practices or outcomes identified in this report are positive (e.g., 99% of youth have a reliable way to get to school). It is important to note that this report cannot draw a causal inference between CASA behavior and these outcomes. However, it is also important to note where improvements in child outcomes can be made. In particular, if there are factors that should be 100%, what can be done to move the needle toward improvement. Among these outcomes for consideration are:

- **Parent visitation.** Approximately 40% of cases indicate the youth are not visited their mother or father. As visitation is a significant predictor of reunification, further exploration of why this is the case is needed, including a discussion of what CASAs role is in this.

- **Current IEP/504 Plan.** Less than half (38-43%) of youth who are applicable to have an IEP, do not have one according to the survey. As educational outcomes are often poorer for foster youth, it is important to identify why this might be the case and what can be done to improve these numbers.
- **Extracurricular activities.** CASAs report only about half of students (47-52%) that are age applicable participate in extracurricular activities. These activities can help provide normalcy for the child and may serve as a resilient factor for youth. More discussion should occur about why this number is so low.