

2018 |



# Washington CASA

Advocacy Report September 2018

Report Authored by: Alicia Summers, PhD

Director, Data Savvy Consulting, LLC

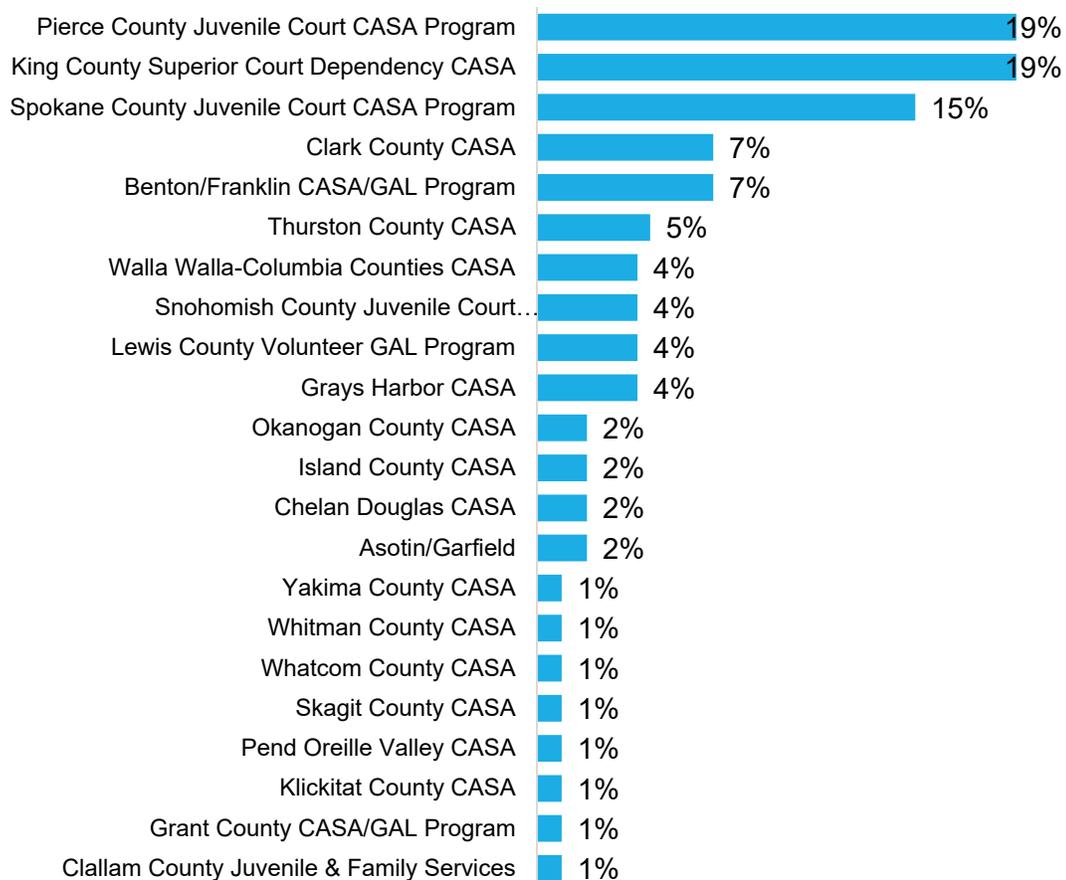


# Washington CASA Advocacy Report (2018)

## Introduction

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers were asked to enter data on their current cases into an online CASA Survey. The survey asked a series of questions about children the CASA represent, including visitation, well-being, placement, and education related information. CASA completed the survey in March of 2018. A total of 390 entries, representing 390 unique children involved in the foster care system, were made by CASA across the state of Washington. Twenty-two counties were represented in the survey, with the highest percentage (27%) from King County.

### CASA Volunteer Jurisdiction

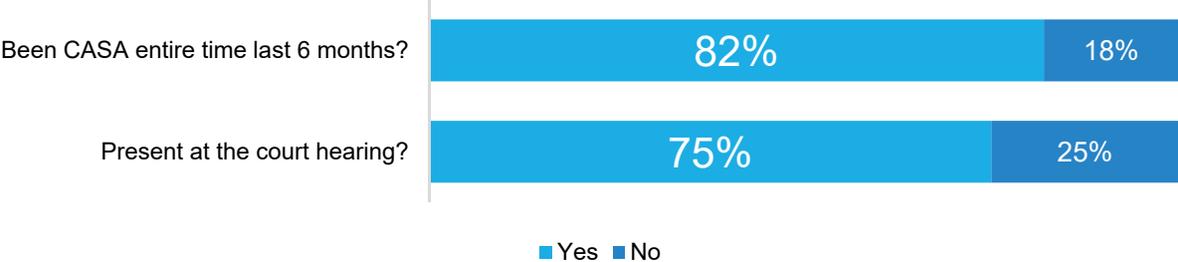


The survey asked CASA volunteers to identify the child's most recent review hearing and reflect on the child's status

# Findings

One hundred and ninety-nine CASA workers completed the survey. The CASAs were appointed a median of 46 days after the case opened (range of 718 days prior to case opening, to more than 5 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. The majority 83% indicated that they had been the CASA for the entirety of the last 6 months. Eighty-three percent (83%) indicated that they were present at the most recent court hearing.

## CASA Assignment and Presence



**80%** of CASAs reported that the child had not reunified with their parents in the last six months.

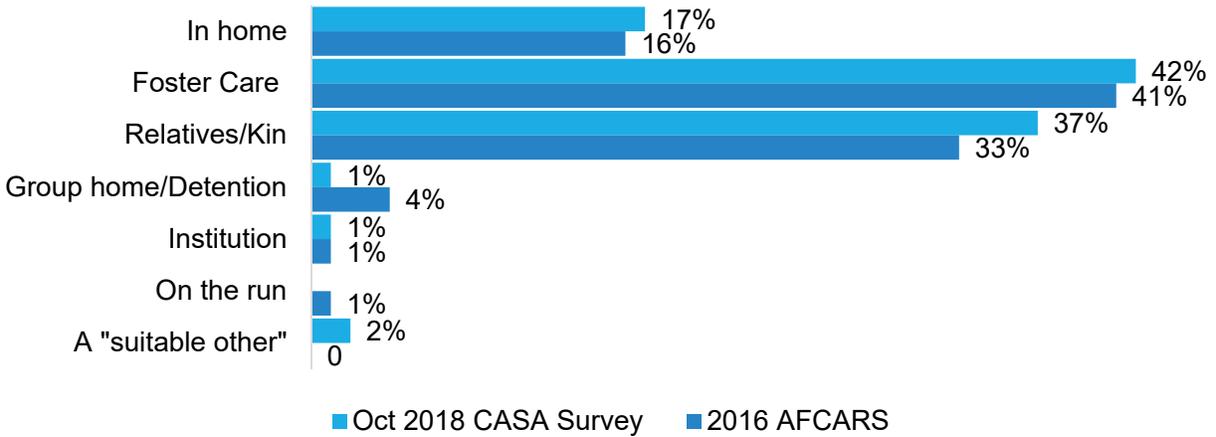
**95%** reported no additional findings of re-abuse or neglect in the past 6 months.

The median number of CASA visits in the last six months was **6**, with **72%** of CASSA reporting 6 or fewer visits and **38%** reported more than 6 visits.

# Placement & Visitation

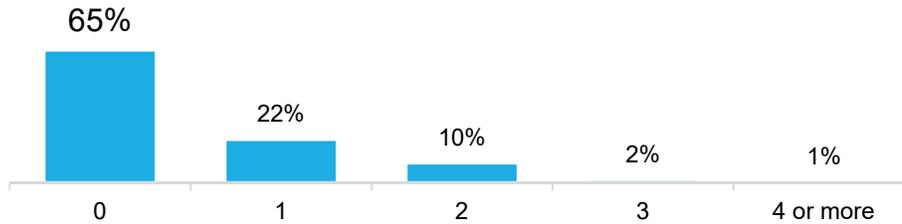
A series of questions asked about child’s placement and visitation with the mother, father, and siblings on the case. The data collected was compared to statewide data from the 2016 Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). The CASA Survey data is consistent with the national data trends for placement type. As illustrated in the graph below, the most common placement type is Foster Care with a non-relative.

### Placement of Youth



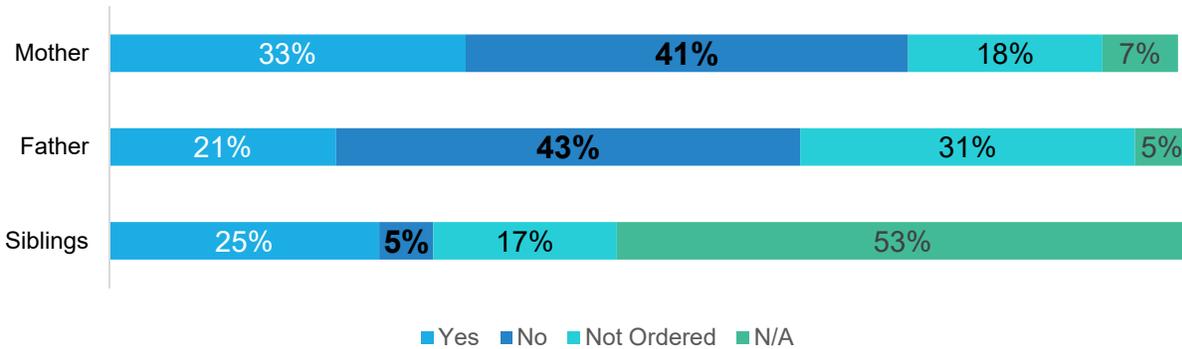
The survey also asked about the number of placement moves in the last 6 months. The majority of children (68%) had not moved placement.

### Placement moves in Last 6 Months



The survey also asked if the child has maintained consistent visits with parents and siblings in the last six months. As noted in the graphs for visits with mothers and fathers, the most common response was No (41% & 43 % respectively for fathers and mothers). These data indicate that *when visitation is applicable, less only about one third (33%) of children are maintaining consistent visits with their father.* For mothers, this number is a little higher. Of those ordered visitation and not placed at home, mothers visit consistently about 45% of the time. Sibling visits were most common, with youth visiting sibling when ordered 75% of the time. The data also indicate that father visits are more likely **not** to be ordered (31%) than sibling (17%) or mother visits (18%).

## Maintained Consistent Visits with Parents & Siblings in Last 6 Months



## 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 (78%) and to the doctor (95%) in the last 6 months.

In addition to general wellbeing the survey asked about mental health. The majority of youth (60%) were not ordered to go to mental health counseling by the court. Of those who were ordered, the vast majority were being provided services. When the court ordered counseling, 11% were not in counseling while the remainder were.

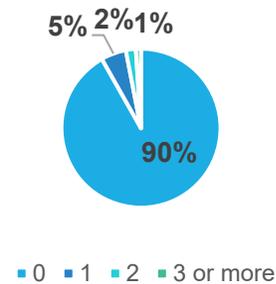
### If court ordered Counseling/Mental Health Services, is it being provided?



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.

In addition, CASAs reported that only 2% of youth had runaway from placement in the last 6 months and only .2% had been adjudicated on any juvenile offenses in the past 6 months.

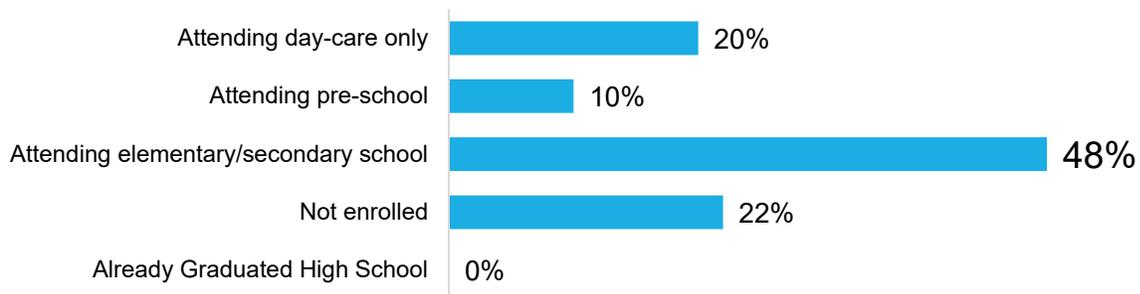
Number of Psychotropic Medications for Children



## Education

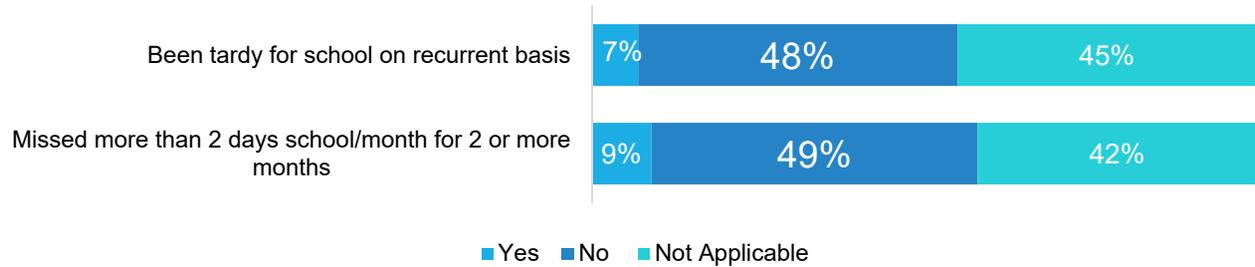
A final set of questions asked about the child's current education. 46% of youth were reported to be attending elementary/secondary school at the time of the survey.

Child's Current Education Setting



The survey also asked about absences and being tardy from school. As noted in the graph below, only a small portion of youth had been tardy for school on a recurrent basis or missed more than 2 days of school/month for more than two months.

## Education: Has the Child....



The survey also asked about school specific information. Of those in school, 99% of the CASA indicated that the child(ren) they work with had a reliable way to get to school.

Of the school-aged children, CASA reported that 94% of the youth they served were on track to be promoted to the next grade level or to graduate.

When asked about current IEP/504 plans, CASA reported that 37% of youth were not applicable for this. Of those applicable, only 40% have a current IEP/504 plan.

Finally, the survey asked about youth's participation in extracurricular activities. CASA reported that 51 % participate in extracurricular activities.

## Conclusions

The data collected for this report illustrate a point in time snapshot of the youth that CASA serve in Washington State. The data can and should be used as a discussion point to explore outcomes for children served by CASA. It is important to note that the data collected and the findings in this report cannot show any causal relationship to having a CASA. That is, you cannot say that CASA caused outcomes in the youth. Rather, this data provides some descriptive measures of what the youth who are served by CASA look like, in terms of their placement, general well-being, and education. The survey is a good starting point to begin collecting data on children in care and allow CASA an opportunity to reflect both on their practice and the youth that they serve. As discussions of the findings evolve, it is important to consider what other useful information could be gained from a reflective survey such as this and how the data may be used to look for trends in current practice.