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A, LOOK AT THE COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATE PROGRAM

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Natalie Jean Morrison
Leslie Valencia


June 2003

A LOOK AT THE COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATE PROGRAM

A Project
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June 2003

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ABSTRACT

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA's) represent children's best interests in juvenile court proceedings. In Riverside County, conflict exists among the child advocates and children's social service workers. This study measures current attitudes and perceptions of social workers and CASA volunteers in a quest to gain awareness and understanding of any problems in communication that may hinder effective working relationships. Results of this study included significant similarities, surprising suggestions, and insightful recommendations made by both CASA volunteers and social workers. The major trends in the study were that each group believes communication is an important part of their role as a child advocate. In addition, both groups have great contributions in the form of recommendations for improving communication and the overall effectiveness of the CASA program.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Laurie Smith for her continued support, guidance, and patience throughout this past school year. We greatly appreciated the constructive criticism, feedback, and suggestions she offered for the project.

We would also like to thank Riverside County Department of Public Social Services for their encouragement and support of this study. Included is our gratitude to Jim Meehan and Crystal Shackelford, Professional Intern Unit Supervisors, for their understanding and compassion throughout the internship year.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Every year more than 500,000 innocent children in the United States are forced into the puzzling and confusing jaws of the juvenile court system. These inculpable children are victims of horrific acts of violence, psychological torment, sexual abuse, general neglect, severe neglect, and abandonment at the hands of their own parents. These children are often placed in foster care and lost in the child welfare system for months to years. Some of these children continue to experience trauma in a confusing and overburdened child welfare system.

The legal system of the United States has recently begun to recognize a child's need for independent representation in civil child protection proceedings. This practice was not widespread until the passage of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) of 1974 requiring that a child representative, or guardian ad litem, be appointed in every case involving an abused or neglected child resulting in a judicial proceeding (Martinez, 1982). Despite such stated intentions, neither the Act itself, nor the implementation of regulations, provided any guidance in carrying out the child advocacy requirements.

By 1980, forty-six states and territories had implemented state laws that at least partially complied with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (Martinez, 1982). However, it appears that the language used in these statutes helped contribute to mass confusion concerning communications of the statute requirements.

Confusion can be best noticed in the wide range of interpretations concerning required child advocate provisions. Complicating matters, many states merely repeated or paraphrased the language of the federal statute without offering further specificity about who should serve in this role, who should advocate on behalf of children, or what the duties should be (Norman, 1982).

Besides poor relationships and communication on how to carry out the law, research indicates that appointing a guardian ad litem to every child was under-implemented as the result of insufficient federal funding (Condelli, 1988).

At the outset of implementation, even without statutory mandate to do so, many judges commonly appointed attorneys as guardian ad litem (Condelli, 1988). However, the search for a more cost effective method, and for more complete information than attorneys often had the time or training to provide, led to the development of other models of representation (Duquette, 1990). These alternative methods

have since taken many forms, with the use of trained citizen volunteers appearing to be the most cost effective.

Commonly referred to as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA's) or Volunteer Guardian Ad Litem (GAL's), these volunteers are individuals who have been recruited, screened, selected and trained, and are supervised and supported by the county of jurisdiction's local CASA program (Child Welfare League of America, 2002). In addition, these volunteers have been appointed by the juvenile court as sworn officers of the court to help outline the best interests of a child or children in juvenile court dependency matters (Child Welfare League of America, 2002).

These trained members of the community work on a one-to-one basis with a child who has been removed from home due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment. The volunteer provides the judge with researched background information on the child to assist the court in making a sound decision regarding the child's future.

The CASA volunteer makes a determination of whether it is in a child's best interest to stay with his/her parent(s), be placed in foster care, or be freed for adoption. In addition, the CASA volunteer makes a recommendation on placement to the judge and remains assigned to the case until it is resolved.

In preparing a recommendation, the CASA volunteer takes the time to discuss the child's matter with the child, parents, family members, social workers, school officials, health providers and others that may be knowledgeable about the child's history. The volunteer may also review records pertaining to the child (National CASA Association, 2002).

The CASA volunteer's purpose is to humanize the unfamiliar and complex legal system for a child by providing support, serving as a role model, and being the child's advocate. The goal of the CASA volunteer is to offer children trust and advocacy during difficult legal proceedings. The volunteers make attempts to explain the events that are happening, the reasons they are in court and the roles the judges, lawyers, and social workers play.

Most of the CASA programs in the United States that oversee these volunteers are members of the National Court Appointed Special Advocates Association, which provides training and technical assistance to promote growth and quality of volunteers through the programs. The American Bar Association, the National Bar Association, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice have also endorsed CASA.

CASA programs were first implemented in Washington State and have been providing services to children in California for over 20 years. In 1988, legislation amended the California Welfare and Institutions Code (§ 100 et seq.) to require the Judicial Council to establish guidelines encouraging the development of local CASA programs. There are now 39 such programs providing services in 40 of California's 58 counties.

In 1999, more than 3,500 CASA volunteers in California donated over 500,000 hours to support nearly 7,200 children.

More than 106,000 of California's children have been removed from their homes and placed in the state's care to protect them from further harm. One-fifth of the children in dependency court systems nationwide are in California. Once a child comes under the protection of the state's child welfare system, CASA has become a powerful voice for children (National CASA Association, 2002).

The CASA program for Riverside County, a county with over 4,000 children in the foster care system and over 18,000 child abuse reports in 2002, is a non-profit organization under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue code. The Riverside County CASA program is under the supervision of the local juvenile court pursuant to

California Welfare and Institutions Code sections 100, 356.5 and 356.8 (California Department of Social Services, 2000).

Problem Statement

The Citizens Agenda of the National CASA Association, passed by its board of directors in 1990, asserts that every abused or neglected child in the court system has a right to have an advocate in court to speak on his or her behalf. Nevertheless, due to the high burnout rates reported, an increased need for more volunteers, and communication problems amongst key players in the current system of CASA services, that right is not assured to every abused or neglected child needing court representation (NCA, 2002).

Statistics compiled by the California Department of Social Services document that there are over 175,000 reported cases of child abuse in California alone. Over a period of approximately twelve years, this number has skyrocketed to more than 571,000 reported cases (California Department of Social Services, 2000).

According to the National CASA Association, Americans pay an estimated \$6.1 billion a year in taxes to care for children in foster care. One child in foster care equals \$15,000 a year (NCA, 2002). In March of 1998, there were 100,273 children in foster care. Of these children, 27.1%

were placed in non-relative foster family homes, 45.9% were placed in relative foster family homes, 8.1% were placed in group homes, 62.1% were reunified with their parents, and 9.5% were adopted during the year (California Department of Social Services, 1998).

In 1993, each CASA volunteer worked an average of 88 hours a year (NCASAA, 1993). If they had been paid \$50.00 an hour, the going rate at the time usually paid to attorneys to do the job, this would have translated into \$162 million worth of advocacy for children. In the United States, a total of 38,000 CASA volunteers have advocated for about 129,000 children each year.

The National CASA Association estimates that about 25% of abused and neglected children, in the nation, have a CASA in dependency proceedings (NCA, 2002). Despite such child advocacy efforts, it appears that two common themes continue to emerge in regards to areas of concern and ambiguity within the CASA program (Mulhauser, 1990).

First, many CASA's who have responded to surveys noted that they had felt that cases took far too long to resolve and that it often appeared as though children's situations were compromised because parents did not address their problems or were permitted too many chances by the system (Mulhauser, 1990).

Second, many CASA respondents noted difficulties working with social workers stating how they seemed to view the involvement of a CASA as a burden. Volunteers reported feeling at odds with social workers and feeling like irritants (Heartz, 1997). In addition, they found social workers difficult to reach (Rae, 1996). The general consensus was that the caseloads of social workers were far too great; spending too much time on paperwork to the detriment of the children they were paid to help.

Volunteers expressed concerns about their roles within the legal arena and how more often than not, they felt disregarded and devalued by social workers. According to the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association, a high rate of burnout exists, creating a constant battle to recruit and retain CASA volunteers at the local level (Rae, 1996).

In interpreting research aimed at obtaining social workers' opinions of CASA volunteers, social workers tended to be the least receptive among key players associated with the program (Poertner & Press, 1990). Their concerns focused on the additional burden placed on their time and the additional trauma children had to deal with by having another stranger probing for answers.

Through the chilling statistics and faceless reports, it is imperative to remember that all clients in child welfare represent real lives. Specifically, children deserve to look forward to a safe and nurturing childhood and a future of happiness. Behind every substantiated report of child abuse there is a traumatized child whose emotions and trusts have been shattered and whose feelings, hopes and dreams have been broken (Lungren, 2000). These are the youth needing advocacy in the forms of attention, understanding, and assistance.

As such, the research question grew out of the observable friction between the two separate child advocate groups - CASA volunteers and social workers in Riverside County, which seemed to echo the concerns of previous studies. Could the discovery of current attitudes and perceptions of social workers and CASA volunteers aid in the understanding of any problems in communication? Could alleviating problems in communication be the key to enhancing and expanding CASA effectiveness? Finally, could increasing communication serve as an impetus in ameliorating conflicts between social workers and CASA volunteers?

At a time of increased demand for accountability in child welfare, it was of considerable importance to better understand the dynamics of the CASA program in a quest to

gain a greater awareness into any measures that might increase communication within the Department of Social Services and the CASA program. As such, the research questions were derived from five categories consisting of various questions pertaining to social worker's and CASA volunteer's current attitudes and perceptions regarding communication and the CASA program.

The first category sought information regarding whether social workers and CASA volunteers share the same goals for child welfare. The second category was looking at whether social workers and CASA volunteers share the same attitudes and perceptions regarding communication. The third category was regarding to what degree social workers and CASA volunteers agree on the contributions of their respective roles. The fourth category looked at what extent social workers and CASA volunteers believe they are adequately oriented to the CASA program. The fifth category sought information from the respondents regarding any comments, suggestions, and/or recommendations they had for improvements in communication and overall CASA effectiveness.

Purpose of the Study

Given that organizations are the instruments through which society accomplishes its social, political, and economic functions, this study, using organizational communication as an orienting theory, addressed the question of how organizations work. Focus was on the structure and dynamics of the interactions among social workers and CASA volunteers within a bureaucratic setting.

Using an Organizational Communication theoretical framework, this study intended to gain a better understanding, awareness, and insight into the attitudes and role perceptions among social workers and CASA volunteers in efforts to observe, understand, and analyze the dynamics that currently encompass the CASA program.

Nowhere in the existing literature review were studies found that focused primarily on communication, on behalf of the children served, or between social workers and CASA volunteers. According to the Department of Public Social Services for Riverside County (2002), the CASA program had yet to be empirically studied. In addition, to date, according to the Social Work Abstracts database in the Department of social work at California State University, San Bernardino, there were no research projects specifically addressing court appointed special advocates. Hence, it was

viewed and further concluded that this project would be extremely relevant, useful, and purposeful to the practice of social work.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

The study was significant to social work via its relevance to child welfare practice. All children deserve the right to a safe and permanent home, to be loved, nurtured, and cared for. If child abuse and neglect prevention, advocacy, and education can reduce crime and violence in today's ever growing society, then it is well worth it to invest time, energy, and resources into programs that could possibly provide solutions to the existing problems faced in America.

The study built upon existing empirical research by illustrating, through data analysis, ways and means by which to increase positive communication between social workers and persons related to the CASA program. The study differed from prior studies in that it examined the level of understanding and communication among social service professionals.

The findings of this research project may facilitate a strategy to resolve differences and limit conflict among social workers and CASA volunteers. This study may

contribute to stronger advocacy efforts for clients served in child welfare, and as a result, possibly enhance communication between key players involved with the CASA program.

The results of this study may also offer tools in generating greater cooperation in the workplace and an increase in collaborative efforts among social workers and CASA volunteers regarding the CASA program. As a result, this study may facilitate and potentially contribute to ways and means by which to recruit and retain more CASA volunteers.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter discusses Organizational Communication Theory and existing empirical data associated with the CASA program. Organizational Communication Theory explains how organizational contexts shape interactions and how such interactions, in turn, give rise to the organization itself, as an "emergent property" of interaction (Weick, 1996). Research regarding CASA volunteers reflects widespread support in favor of CASA's and the program at large.

Organizational Communication Theory

Given that membership in an organization, such as CPS and the CASA program, plays a powerful role in shaping individual experiences, Organizational Communication Theory was employed as the orienting theory in this study. This theory was used to better understand and grasp the current attitudes and perceptions surrounding the CASA program.

Organizational Communication contains a particular organizational culture that effects leadership, decision-making, organizational socialization and acculturation, intra and inter-organizational communication networks,

structures of formal and informal communication, supervisor-subordinate communication, organizational conflict as well as issues of power and ethics. This organizational culture takes on equivocal information from its environment, tries to make sense of the information through assimilation, and transforms this learning into a perceived form of communication (Weick, 1979).

Communication is key because of its role in the sense-making processes people use. Sense making is an attempt to reduce multiple meanings (equivocally) and handle complex informational data, used by such people as social workers and CASA volunteers in an organization. Information in organizations is handled by working through various stages such as: Enactment - defining and beginning to manage the information, Selection -narrowing down the equivocally, deciding what to deal with and what to leave alone, ignoring, or disregarding, and Retention - deciding what information, and its meaning, will be retained (Weick, 1979).

Previous Studies

At the national level, empirical research illustrates how CASA volunteers are popular and how they appear to be comparable to other forms of child representation (Poertner

& Press, 1990). The National CASA Association compiled a list of evaluations and reviews based on 16 studies qualitative in nature and 15 additional studies that included process and outcome measures of several different components of the CASA program.

Three studies on effective representation by CASA volunteers extended nationally, three studies were on CASA effectiveness in permanency planning in more than one state, and the remainder of the studies were conducted in nineteen different states and were on various program components. Among the sampled population were judges, social workers, lawyers, community professionals, CASA volunteers, children, and children's family members.

The general consensus was that respondents were in favor of CASA representation, however, respondents in several surveys believed that the role of a CASA volunteer failed to be clearly articulated, was not clearly defined, was poorly communicated, and was inconsistent across the states (NCASAA, 1993).

Concerns were shared regarding the need for more improved training and program standards. Many of the investigators reported difficulties when relying on the CASA volunteers to carry out quantitative research and obtaining adequate data from existing data sources (NCA, 2002). The

difficulties stemmed from personality conflicts, lack of professional knowledge of the CASA volunteer regarding the system, and poor communication (NCA, 2002).

A number of studies compared CASA volunteers with other forms of representation (Poertner & Press, 1990). The results varied depending on the type of comparison and outcome measures. One study by Duquette and Ramsey (1987) did find that having representation accelerates case resolution. For example, the Oregon Task Force on Juvenile Justice found that children represented by a CASA spent less time (although with no specifications as to how much less) in substitute care compared to children with no representation (Duquette & Ramsey, 1987).

An alternate study found that private attorneys tended to be the weakest and the most costly method of providing representation, whereas CASA volunteers were associated with a greater number of best interest outcomes for the child (Condelli, 1988). Despite these findings, some researchers questioned the non-attorney's ability to provide effective representation for abused and neglected children.

There is also evidence that children represented by CASA volunteers have shorter stays in out-of-home placement (Leung, 1996). Several studies demonstrate that children served by CASA volunteers receive more services than

children without such representation (Condelli, 1988; Duquette & Ramsey, 1987; MGT, 1981; NCA, 2002).

Empirical data also suggests that social workers tend to be less positive about CASA volunteers than other professionals. This may reflect a sense among social workers that they too are seeking to represent the child's best interests and that CASA's simply create extra work (Ellet, 2001). Greater skepticism, by social workers, has been voiced about CASA volunteers when they venture into the formal legal arena or assume an expert role (Ellet, 2001).

According to Judge Chester Harhut (2000), CASA volunteers should have legal representation when they appear in court. The volunteers themselves have expressed concern about court related activities as well (MGT, 1981). Many have reported feeling more like a burden to social workers and commonly "do not get along" with them (MGT, 1981).

In the first major comparative study of various models in the representation of children, which was funded by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, the performance of lawyers, law students, and lay volunteers was compared (Duquette & Ramsey, 1987). Research found that the trained lay volunteers, the law students, and the trained lawyers performed substantially alike in that they were more or less equally effective in their representation as child

advocates. Trained lawyers, however, were less cost effective and volunteers were more likely than the other groups to have met with the child for the purpose of assessing the child and the child's environment, which falls under the "best interest of the child" legality.

Upon final analysis, the researchers concluded that carefully selected, trained, and supervised volunteers can do at least as well as trained attorneys and better than untrained attorneys in representing children in protection proceedings (Duquette & Ramsey, 1987).

In a study of CASA volunteers in child abuse or neglect judicial proceedings, researchers sought to evaluate the impact of various models in serving children's best interests (Duquette & Ramsey, 1987). Researchers examined activities and responsibilities under five different models of representation: the Law School Clinic Model; the Staff Attorney Model; the Paid Private Attorney Model; the Lay Volunteer/Paid Attorney Model; and the Lay Volunteer (without attorney assistance) Model.

The effectiveness of the five models was compared in six areas of CASA involvement: legal activities, services and placement, timing of judicial action, case plan changes, case goals, and stability of representation.

This comparative analysis determined that the volunteer model excelled as an effective model of representation. While respondents of the study noted that volunteers sometimes became too emotionally involved in their cases, and social services personnel were, at least initially, resistant to working with lay volunteers, the volunteer models were highly rated and exceeded the other models on the quantitative best interest outcome measures (Duquette & Ramsey, 1987).

In support of such findings stands another study by Poertner and Press (1990), with a comparison of two existing programs providing representation for children in a metropolitan city in the Midwest. One program was a CASA program and the other a program consisting of staff attorneys within the juvenile court.

The study retrospectively compared cases opened and closed by the two programs during the period from January 1, 1984, to August 30, 1988. The cases were compared using variables defined as types of cases, court processes, and case outcomes. The results of this study confirm the results of earlier research stating how volunteers perform at least as good as specialized attorneys in representing children in court. The volunteers performed as well as

attorneys on six of eight process variables and three of four case outcome variables.

For the two process variables that differed, CASA cases had more services for children identified in court findings, and CASA children spend less time in their own home (Poertner & Press, 1990). The only difference in the case outcome variables appeared in the adoption of children, where CASA cases resulted in significantly more adoptions. More specifically, 21.7% of the CASA cases ended with the child being adopted; by contrast, 7.1% of the other program cases ended in adoption (Poertner & Press, 1990).

Evidence thus far indicates that lay volunteers enhance the quality of representation for children in a number of ways. For example, the volunteer is usually involved in one case at a time and therefore has considerable time to devote to the fact-finding and social aspects of the case, while the attorney can focus on the legal details.

Data analysis has consistently shown that once a CASA has been assigned to a case, the child has better chances of experiencing fewer placement changes. Analysis from one study found that 38% of children in CASA cases were not involved in a second change of placement, compared to 31% in control groups (Poertner & Press, 1990). About 29% of children who have a CASA representative, were returned home

from second placements, compared to 24% in the control groups (i.e., cases in which no CASA was assigned). About 15% of CASA children moved on to a third out-of-home placement, compared to over 30% of children not assigned a CASA. Once a CASA was assigned a case, the average time children spent in out-of-home care was shorter (61 days, on average) than in the control group cases (137 days, on average) (Poertner & Press, 1990).

Existing research from the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association tells how judges have been surveyed and asked to evaluate the work of the CASA volunteers (Heartz, 1997). Results indicated that most judges rated CASA volunteers positively on the quality of their written reports, verbal testimony, overall case assessments, and appropriateness of their recommendations.

In addition, 50% of the respondents reported that vital new and helpful information emerged as a result of CASA intervention (Heartz, 1997). Research has also found that (overall) CASA volunteers tend to make more recommendations to the court than social workers (NCA, 2002).

Despite the noted results, existing empirical literature, to date, has not focused primarily on communication, on behalf of the children served, between

social workers and CASA volunteers, or on the legal role of the social worker in juvenile court proceedings.

The objective guiding this study was to build upon existing empirical research to expose current attitudes and role perception among social workers and CASA volunteers in hopes of finding statistically significant data depicting ways in which to increase communication between social workers and CASA volunteers involved with the CASA program.

Summary

According to the literature review, research regarding CASA volunteers reflects widespread support in favor of the volunteers and the CASA program, including that children with CASA volunteers have fewer reports of re-abuse and are less likely to re-enter the foster care system. Evidence thus far indicates that lay volunteers do in fact enhance the quality of representation for children in a number of ways. Yet, despite this, survey respondents also believed that the role of a CASA volunteer was not clearly articulated or defined and was poorly communicated and inconsistent. Concerns were shared regarding the need for more improved training and program standards for the volunteers and respondents believed the volunteers often became too emotionally involved with their clients. Social

workers tended to be less positive of CASA volunteers, reporting greater skepticism of their abilities in the legal arena. Accordingly, difficulties stemmed from personality conflicts, lack of perceived professional knowledge by the CASA volunteer regarding the child welfare system, and poor communication between key players involved in judicial proceedings.

For this chapter, the theoretical framework of Organizational Communication was explained to illustrate how organizational contexts can shape interactions within a bureaucracy and how such interactions can give rise to a particular organizational atmosphere, such as within CPS and the CASA program.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter describes and illustrates the study design encompassing this research project. Included will be an explanation of the sample population from which data was obtained and measured. Data collection and instruments, which include independent and dependent variables, will be discussed as will the procedures used to analyze the research questions.

Study Design

The specific purpose of this research project was to explore, as well as describe and evaluate, a social phenomenon. The research method used was quantitative as well as qualitative in nature, allowing full exploration and study of this social phenomenon within its natural context.

The design chosen for this study was an exploratory research design relying heavily on purposeful conversation and purposive sampling based on a survey type questionnaire.

This type of research design was chosen because it is considered less intrusive than many other designs.

Although qualitative approaches create their own problems of inference, they come close to being

"unobtrusive." In other words, this research approach has minimal effect, compared to a full quantitative approach, on the people and events being studied. By combining the two research designs into one approach, knowledge is personally constructed and contextually bound while data is quantified and results are clearly interpreted.

By employing a quantitative design, the study's objective was to understand to what degree participant respondents adhered to a particular perspective in order to understand an objective reality. The quantitative method relied on numerical indices of observable and verifiable description measures in establishing validity and reliability of the information gathered with regards to perspectives on communication.

Yet, due to the potential limitations in the depth and breadth of information that was to be analyzed and in order to capture the personal constructs and subjectivity of social workers and CASA volunteers, a qualitative design was also implemented. By employing a qualitative design, participant's natural language and intense attention could be given to the dialect of system members (Grinnell, 2001).

Sampling

The sample from which data was obtained consisted of CASA volunteers and social workers. Regarding the selection process, social workers were chosen randomly through a representation from the five regions of Child Protective Services within Riverside County. It was our goal to collect fifteen surveys from each separate region, for a total of 75 surveys from social workers. However, due to the difference in the number of social workers per region, survey distribution was greater in number. There were a total of 306 surveys distributed to social workers, with a response rate of 125 returned surveys. Concerning the selection process with respect to CASA volunteers, one hundred perspective participants were sought out at two main CASA headquarters. Returned surveys totaled 27.

To facilitate recruitment of all participants, as well as reduce any potential strain, self-addressed inter-county route slips were attached to envelopes in which surveys could be returned.

Data Collection and Instruments

The instrument employed for data collection in this study was a self-report questionnaire that took an estimated 5 to 15 minutes to complete. One version was created for

each group, consisting of social workers and CASA volunteers. A copy of each version is provided in Appendix A.

Participants completed the self-administered survey without any direct assistance from an interviewer. Creation of this instrument followed careful consideration and review of the existing literature pertaining to the CASA program. Once generated, the survey was specifically customized for this study in a format that was designed with the intention of capturing the specificity of participants' attitudes, perceptions, understanding, and satisfaction with the CASA program (Grinnell, 2001).

Special attention was given to the implicit and explicit language used within the available literature, assisting in the formulation of the research question and mapping out the constructed survey. In addition, preliminary staffing with the Department of Social Services afforded us guidance with respect to our ultimate design.

All questions in the survey were pre-tested for clarity by randomly selecting social workers and CASA volunteers within the county to complete the questionnaire. The individuals gave feedback on any difficult or ambiguous questions along with any confusion they may have had with the instrument. Their recommendations were taken into

consideration, prior to sending the instrument out to participants, and said individuals were excluded from taking part in the final study.

The structure of the survey included independent and dependent variables that explored the relationship, perceptions, and levels of communication and satisfaction among social workers and CASA volunteers. Other variables used in the survey, acting as intervening and/or coding variables, consisted of respondent demographics and were limited to age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, education, and length of employment or volunteer work. Variables were measured by employing nominal, ordinal, and/or ratio levels of measurement.

For this study, the independent variable consisted of worker and volunteer status, in regards to the intervening variables. The dependent variable was the perception of communication, as well as overall effectiveness, by and between social workers and CASA volunteers. These perceptions of communication were based on the quality of communication, importance of communication, satisfaction of communication, and the impact of communication between social workers and CASA volunteers regarding the CASA program.

The survey contained a total of 21 questions. The first 14 questions, accompanied by a series of possible responses that participants could choose from, were quantitative in nature. An example of an ordinal survey question follows: "Based on your experience, how would you rate the quality of communication between social workers and CASA volunteers?" The possible responses to choose from were excellent, good, fair, or poor.

Following the 14 questions were two open-ended questions, qualitative in nature, which sought to gain suggestions for improving the effectiveness of the CASA program and/or the effectiveness of communication between social workers and CASA volunteers. The first question asked for recommendations or opinions regarding ways to increase effectiveness in the CASA program. The second question asked for feedback on ways in which CASA volunteers and social workers can improve to better serve the best interest of the child.

The last series of questions in the survey pertained to respondent demographics. There were five questions total, addressing gender, education, age, ethnicity, and length of employment or volunteer service. Of the five questions, there was one nominal question, two ordinal questions, one interval question, and one ratio question.

Procedures

The researchers went to the designated offices throughout the county's five regions to distribute the social worker surveys. The surveys were passed out by placing them on desks of the social workers in each region.

The researchers delivered the surveys for CASA volunteers to the CASA headquarters to be disseminated by CASA appointed officials. Chocolate candies or stickers for children were included as an incentive to filling out the survey. The surveys were attached to self-addressed envelopes for participants to return them in. The sealed surveys were addressed and submitted to the supervisor of the professional intern unit for Riverside County Child Protective Services. Both researchers collected the data on bi-weekly intervals up until the deadline given through the Spring of 2003.

Protection of Human Subjects

Included with each survey was an informed consent letter as well as a debriefing statement to protect the anonymity of participants as well as provide the respondent with information pertaining to the study and how to obtain the final results. No subject identifying data appears on any measures, instrument, or data. All material was kept

safe and secure. The informed consent letter was attached to the survey and the debriefing statement was located at the end of the survey. Please see Appendix B for a copy of the Informed Consent and Appendix C for a copy of the Debriefing Statement. Letters of support, for each researcher, were provided by the Department of Social Services approving this research to be implemented and, thus, carried out. Please see Appendix D for a copy of the letters of support. In addition, please see Appendix E for a copy of the research approval from the Institutional Review Board at California State University San Bernardino.

Data Analysis

This study was driven by a quantitative and qualitative research design interested in comparing two independent groups, social workers and CASA volunteers. An extended data analysis was performed, using tests such as Chi Square, Cross Tabulations, and Content Analysis. Please see Appendix F for the Chi Square tests. This conjoint contribution was to expose the tracking of attitudes, personal realities, and unique perceptions, regarding communication and the CASA program, in order to describe and assess cognitive representations of from both points of view (Janetzko, 1996).

The process of data analysis indicated that by integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches, a junction of various survey questions was allowed. This procedure served as a benefit to the study by grouping questions that were repetitive in nature, regarding category coding of data, thus, limiting response error and strengthening response reliability.

For this study, multiple methods were employed to ensure data collection would maintain response validity and/or reliability and resulting data would be accurately coded. Five research questions drove data analysis:

- Research question one was labeled "goals." The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statement, "CASA volunteers and social workers share the same goals regarding child welfare." For this question, content analysis was performed as well as cross tabulations.
- Research question two was labeled "communication." Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements, "Communication is important to client advocacy" and "How would you rate the quality of communication between social workers and CASA

volunteers?" These questions were tested using content analysis and cross tabulations.

- Research question three, labeled "role contribution" asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with the following statement, "CASA's make a positive impact in the life of a child." In addition, respondents were asked to rate the quality of service provided by CASA. These questions were tested using content analysis and cross tabulations.
- Research question four, labeled "orientation to role" asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with the following statements, "DPSS satisfactorily introduces the CASA program to new hires," and "It would be beneficial to get information from DPSS regarding the CASA role." These questions were tested using content analysis and cross tabulations.
- Research question five, labeled "ideas for change," asked respondents the following: "How might the CASA program be more effective?" and "What are some ways both social workers and CASA volunteers can change in efforts of better serving the child's best interest?" These questions were

tested using content analysis and cross tabulations.

Summary

This chapter described the survey instrument in detail and illustrated the study design encompassing this research project. An explanation of the sampling population from which data was obtained and measured has been provided. Data collection and instruments were described. Procedures utilized to answer the research questions and explain the data interpretation and analysis were explained.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

Included in Chapter Four is a presentation of the results relevant to the research questions. The demographic variables are first summarized, quantitative outcomes presented, and respondent's recommendations for improving are included. Lastly, the Chapter provides a brief review of the results extracted from the project.

Presentation of the Findings

Out of 406 surveys distributed, 306 to social workers and 100 to CASA volunteers, the final sample consisted of 125 social workers and 27 CASA volunteers. To provide a demographic profile of the respondents, five questions were asked addressing gender, level of education, age, ethnicity, and length of employment or volunteer service. All demographic results are displayed (see Table 1) and described below.

Table 1. Demographics of Social Workers and Court Appointed Special Advocates

Characteristic	Social Worker N=125	CASA Volunteer N=27
Male (%)	26	22
Female (%)	74	78
Age (mean)	41	55
Level of Education (%)		
Some college	2	33

College degree	24	44
Some graduate school	23	4
Post-graduate degree or more	51	19
Ethnicity (%)		
Caucasian	51	67
African-American	23	15
Latino	13	15
Asian	2	0
Pacific Islander	1	0
Native American	1	0
Other	6	3
Multi-ethnic	4	0
Employment/volunteer Length (%)		
Less than one year	17	7
One to two years	23	63
Three to four years	28	19
Five to seven years	16	7
Eight to ten years	10	0
Eleven or more years	6	4

Notes: Percentages rounded to nearest whole number.

Regarding gender (see Table 1) for social workers, most (74%) respondents were female and 26% were male. Similarly, most CASA volunteer respondents (78%) were female and 22% were male. The mean age for social workers was 41 years old and the mean age for CASA volunteers was 55 years old.

The question pertaining to level of education was broken down into four response categories: some college, college degree, some graduate school, and post-graduate degree or more. Over half of the social worker respondents (51%) had a post-graduate degree or more. Interestingly, most (44%) of the CASA volunteers had a college degree and very few CASA volunteers (4%) had some graduate school education.

In regards to respondent ethnicity, more than half (51%) of all social workers and two-thirds (67%) of all CASA

volunteers were of Caucasian decent. The mean length of employment or volunteer service was 2.99 years for social workers and 2.41 years for CASA volunteers. CASA volunteers having one to two years of volunteer service made up 63% of the CASA respondents. Social workers were more spread out, with 23% having one to two years' employment, 28% having three to four years' employment, 17% having less than one year, 16% having five to seven years, 10% with eight to ten years, and 6% having eleven years or more.

In comparison to social workers, CASA volunteers had a higher percentage (78%) of female respondents, a greater percentage (67%) of Caucasian respondents, (on average) were older with a mean age of 55 years old, and a higher percentage of respondents (63%) that were new, having one to two years as a volunteer.

Data analysis, pertaining to the research questions, proceeded by creating five categories to classify and assist in the understanding of the survey results, as well as determine whether current attitudes and perceptions among social workers and CASA volunteers was an intervening factor in the quality of communication between them. All five categories, along with their accompanying research questions are displayed (see Table 2) and described below. The results of the chi square tests are provided in Appendix F.

Table 2. Presentation of Research Questions

Category/Research Question	Social Worker N=125	CASA Volunteer N=27
Research Question One: Goals (%)		
CASA/Social workers share same goals in child welfare (%)		
Strongly agree	12 *	37
Agree	30 *	26
Neutral	37 *	19
Disagree	18 *	15
Strongly Disagree	3 *	3
Research Question Two: Communication (%)		
Communication is important to client advocacy (%)		
Strongly agree	49 *	71 *
Agree	40 *	22 *
Neutral	10 *	7 *
Strongly disagree	1 *	0 *
Quality of communication (%)		
Excellent	4 *	0 *
Good	31 *	15 *
Fair	35 *	30 *
Poor	30 *	55 *
Research Question Three: Role Contribution (%)		
Quality of service by CASA (%)		
Excellent	10 *	7
Good	45 *	22
Fair	35 *	41
Poor	10 *	30
CASA's make a positive impact in a child's life (%)		
Strongly agree	21 *	22
Agree	44 *	22
Neutral	29 *	26
Disagree	5 *	26
Strongly disagree	1 *	4
Research Question Four: Orientation to Role (%)		
DPSS satisfactory introduces CASA (%)		
Strongly agree	3 *	7
Agree	6 *	8
Neutral	20 *	35
Disagree	30 *	25
Strongly disagree	41 *	25
It would be beneficial to get information from DPSS regarding CASA role (%)		
Strongly agree	50 *	65 *
Agree	44 *	31 *
Neutral	4 *	4 *
Disagree	1 *	0 *
Strongly disagree	1 *	0 *
Research Question Five: Ideas for Change (Mention 1)		
How might the CASA program be more effective?		
More client access	0	17
End CASA program	19	33
Increase CASA training	11	16
More CASA representatives	18	0
Clearly define CASA program	11	0
Clearly define CASA role	22	0
Better the communication	19	34

Ways to better serve children (%)		
Schedule monthly meetings	2 *	0 *
Increase education	14 *	5 *
Increase legal responsibilities awareness	14 *	5 *
Clearly define CASA role	1 *	4 *
Better the communication	69 *	86 *

Note: Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.

*p < .05

The first research question, labeled "Goals," sought information relating to whether social workers and CASA volunteers share the same goals regarding child welfare. Results showed that both groups were fairly spread out in their responses with social workers showing statistically significant results (see Appendix F).

Results for the research question "Communication," were statistically significant (see Appendix F) in that almost half (49%) of social workers and over 70% of CASA volunteers strongly agreed that communication is important to client advocacy. About one-third of the social worker respondents felt the quality of communication between the two groups was good, just as one-third felt it was poor, and one-third were neutral. Remarkably, a significant amount of CASA volunteers (55%) felt the quality of communication was poor.

The "Role Contribution" research question asked respondents to rank the quality of service provided by CASA. It was interesting that social workers rated the CASA volunteers higher than the CASA volunteers rated themselves.

Forty-five percent of social workers said the quality of service provided by CASA's as "good" and 41% of CASA volunteers said it was "fair," while 30% said it was "poor."

Research question four, "Orientation to Role," asked respondents about their feelings of being adequately oriented towards the CASA program. The majority of both groups felt the County does not do a satisfactory performance in the CASA program introduction to new hires. A statistically significant finding of over 95% of both groups felt it would be beneficial to receive information from DPSS regarding the CASA role (See Appendix F).

Lastly, the research question labeled "Ideas for Change" brought about many interesting results regarding recommendations for change. In fact, respondents often had more than one recommendation or comment; therefore, a sub-category was created to allow for the coding of all responses. The recommendations, suggestions, and/or opinions in the sub-category were referred to as mention 1 and mention 2 and were included in both survey questions found in the category. Results for mention 1, "How might the CASA program be more effective?" are displayed (see Table 2) and significant findings are described below.

The results for mention 1 showed that social workers were fairly spread out with the responses they chose.

However, about one-third of CASA volunteers wanted to end the program while one-third wanted to better the communication. The results of mention 2, "How might the CASA program be more effective?" are displayed (see Figure 1) and described below.

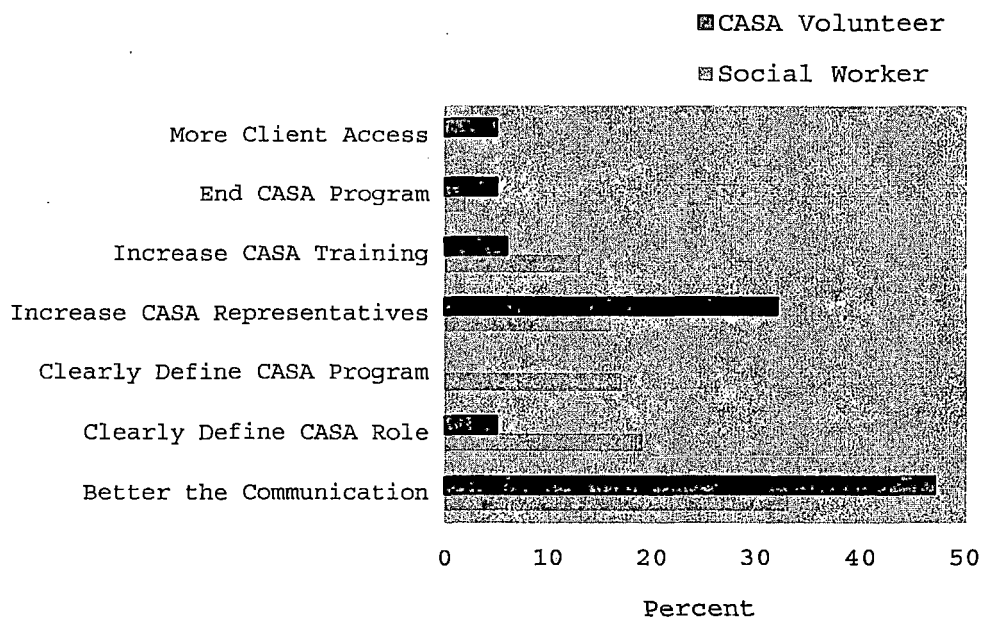


Figure 1. How Might the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program Be More Effective?

Regarding mention 2, it was clear that the favorite response amongst both groups of respondents was "better the communication."

Results for the second portion of research question five, regarding mention 1, indicated some significant findings for ways that social workers and CASA volunteers can better serve children. Results for mention 1 are

displayed (see Table 2) and clearly show that almost 70% of social workers and over 85% of CASA volunteers felt that enhancing the communication would prove to better serve children. Results for mention 2 are displayed (see Figure 2) and described below.

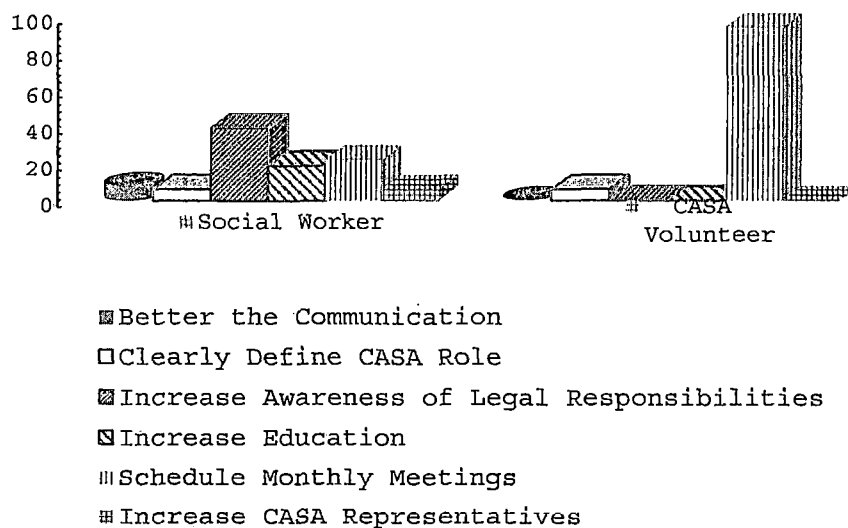


Figure 2. Ways to Better Serve Children

For mention 2, regarding ways to better serve children, an astounding 94% of CASA volunteers responded that a way to better serve children is to hold monthly meetings. Social workers, on the other hand, were spread out in their responses.

Due to the importance of the final category to the research study, a review of the respondent's opinions as well as unexpected findings follows.

1. CASA volunteers believed it took far too long to resolve poor placement recommendations were made by social workers, and children's lives were compromised.
2. CASA volunteers questioned the extent of their role within the legal arena, how much they should be involved, how they needed to have their role better defined, and how they desired more training to outline similar goals.
3. CASA volunteers reported on the need for more volunteers, and how the CASA program itself needed to be properly funded and expanded with emphasis on recruitment and retention strategies.
4. CASA volunteers noted difficulties in working with social workers, the constant feeling at odds, and the lack of respect with regards to returning telephone calls. In addition, CASA volunteers failed to see social workers as child advocates. Rather, the belief was stated that social workers were nonchalant and did not represent a child's best interest in court. Further, several CASA respondents stated that social workers just wanted a "quick fix," an easy way out instead of doing the work it takes to advocate for a child.

5. Social workers believed that the role of a CASA volunteer failed to be clearly defined and stated that they could benefit from more exposure to the CASA program - in attempts to better understand the functions of the volunteers.
6. Social workers believed that CASA volunteers could benefit from increased training and education concerning legal time-lines, policies and procedures, concepts of Concurrent planning and Risk and Safety Assessments, and the legal constraints and obligations that a social worker must follow.
7. Social workers believed that CASA volunteers sometimes became too emotionally and involved and enmeshed with children creating blurred boundaries and safety issues.
8. CASA volunteers failed to see social workers as child advocates. Rather, they stated that they believed them to be nonchalant, did not represent a child's best interest in court, and just wanted a "quick fix" or an "easy way out" instead of doing the work it takes to advocate for a child.

Unanticipated results of survey respondents included significant similarities, surprising suggestions, and

insightful recommendations made by both volunteers and social workers. Remarkably, almost all CASA volunteers suggest that volunteers and social workers should conduct joint visits with children served - in efforts to provide a stronger relationship between the child, caretaker, advocate, and social worker, and/or schedule regular contact with one another to discuss case dynamics.

Several CASA volunteers suggest having CASA volunteers speak at social workers' unit meetings to create a better partnership. Several social workers suggest having CASA volunteers, as part of their training, shadow front line Emergency Response social workers and Court Dependency Unit social workers. One suggestion was to have a CASA liaison in each office or region.

Lastly, two CASA volunteers stated that they felt children ought to be allowed access to the volunteer's homes for weekend and overnight stays.

Summary

In summary, the two groups that were analyzed were social workers and CASA volunteers from Riverside County. Each group has had their results tested using Chi Square, frequencies, and cross-tabulations. Significantly, the major trends were that each group believes communication is

an important part of their role as a child advocate. In addition, both groups have great contributions in the form of recommendations for improving communication and the overall effectiveness of the CASA program.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The findings from the study are congruent with previous studies cited and shed a great deal of light on the current attitudes and perceptions of social workers and CASA volunteers. This chapter further discusses these findings as well as various opinions and recommendations made to the CASA program, unanticipated results, limitations of the study and recommendations for social work practice, policy, and research.

Discussion

With regard to demographics, several significant findings are noted and possible extraneous variables that may have affected the dependent variables are identified.

The high percentage of female social workers and CASA volunteers is of little surprise - given the trends throughout the history of social work. The approximate 15-year difference in mean age between social workers and CASA volunteers may have influenced how two generations could see child advocacy and the dynamics of the CASA program from different points of view.

The fact that more than half of all social workers and two-thirds of all CASA volunteers were of Caucasian descent might speak to numerous possibilities guiding attitudes and role perceptions regarding CPS and the CASA program. Such possibilities could include cultural biases, religious beliefs, and respondent availability.

There also emerged a high percentage of college degree and post-graduate degree social workers to CASA volunteers - giving rise to a possible correlation between attitudes and perceptions of the CASA program and level or degree of education. Perhaps there is a varied school of thought depending on participants' educational focus or background.

In regards to research question one, we asked social workers and CASA volunteers if they shared the same goals for the clients served in child welfare. Previously, in chapter two, we presented evidence from the literature review that showed most respondents to be in favor of the CASA program's goals and representation. Yet, respondents in several surveys believed that the role of a CASA volunteer failed to be clearly articulated, not clearly defined, and poorly communicated.

The varied responses as a result of this study draw comparable evidence that there exists a true lack of understanding with respect to child welfare goals and the

roles of each child advocate. Yet, it is curious, despite the noted friction and conflict, how social workers rated CASA volunteers over 20% higher than the CASA volunteers rated themselves in regards to whether CASA's made a positive impact on the lives of children. This could be an indication that social workers, despite the reported ambiguity regarding the role of a CASA volunteer, remain convinced that advocate volunteers are an asset to the child welfare system and do influence children's lives.

In research question two, we analyzed whether social workers and CASA volunteers shared the same attitudes and perceptions regarding communication between the two groups.

A high correlation was discovered among social workers and CASA volunteer's opinions regarding attitudes and perceptions about communication towards child advocacy. An astounding 89% of social workers and 93% of CASA volunteers agreed communication "should" be important between the two groups. Both groups displayed beliefs that communication needs improvement as a way to better serve children and increase CASA effectiveness. However, in spite of such remarkable statistics, both parties ranked the quality of existing communication between each other to be very weak with only 4% of social workers rating it as excellent and no CASA volunteers rating it as excellent.

As for research question three, we asked to what degree did social workers and CASA volunteers agree on the contributions of their respective roles. It was interesting that social workers rated the CASA volunteers higher than the CASA volunteers rated themselves. Forty-five percent of social workers said the quality of service provided by CASA's was "good" and 41% of CASA volunteers said it was "fair," while 30% said it was "poor."

If you recall in chapter two, previous data suggested that social workers were less positive of CASA volunteer's contributions than other professionals. Interestingly though, it is a known fact that CASA volunteers are usually involved in one case at a time and have considerable more time to devote to the fact-finding and social aspects of a case.

In chapter two we also saw how data analysis showed that once a CASA was assigned to a case, the child had better chances of experiencing fewer placement changes. In addition, we read how results from previous studies indicated that most judges rated CASA volunteers positively on the quality of their written reports, verbal testimony, overall case assessments, and appropriateness of their recommendations.

Curiously, almost three-quarters of all CASA respondents in this study rated themselves as fair to poor on the quality of service they provide to children. Perhaps the low percentages encountered by the volunteers may speak to the high reported burnout rates encountered across CASA programs statewide. On the contrary, more than half of social workers that responded stated they believed the quality of service provided by CASA volunteers was good to excellent.

The figures from previous studies, coupled with the figures from this study prove to be confusing with regards to how social workers really feel about the service CASA volunteers provide. As such, this creates an accumulation of data that depicts much confusing among social worker respondents attitudes and perceptions.

As to research question four, we asked to what extent did social workers and CASA volunteers believe they were adequately oriented to the CASA program. Results showed that the majority of both groups felt the Department fails to do a satisfactory performance in introducing the CASA program to new hires. In addition, over 95%, of both social workers and CASA volunteers, felt it would be beneficial to receive information from DPSS regarding the CASA role.

In the literature review, we found that concerns were voiced by survey respondents regarding the need for more improved training and program standards. We read how difficulties with the CASA program stemmed from poor communication and lack of knowledge regarding the child welfare system by CASA volunteers. We read how skepticism, was voiced by social workers about CASA volunteers venturing into the formal legal arena. We read how the CASA volunteers themselves even expressed concern about court related activities as they reported feeling like a burden to social workers.

The findings from the qualitative data, research question five, are results that did in fact converge with the results from the other four categorical questions and did indeed lead to similar conclusions. Possible explanations for the correlation found among survey participants could stem from the existing observable conflict and frustration by the two advocates and their innate desires to come together and create optimal ways to comfort and protect children from re-abuse and trauma.

Limitations

The following limitations apply to the project:

This project was limited to the opinions and attitudes found within the confines of a single jurisdictional county and the CASA program within. Survey participants within the child welfare arena were limited to social workers and CASA volunteers.

To illustrate, outcomes may have been biased depending on prejudices of the program and/or an individual's past experiences working a social worker or a CASA volunteer. In addition, a sample bias may have occurred inadvertently due to potential respondent's schedules, which may have rendered limited, if any, time to set aside to complete the survey. The research did not expand on nor measure ideas, opinions, or attitudes regarding recruitment or retention of CASA volunteers. Participant respondents were not asked to comment on their level of job or volunteering satisfaction or burnout rate. The research was not intended to conduct a comparison among CASA volunteers with other forms of child representation - such as attorneys.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

The results of this study have broad implications for the field of social work practice and policy that include

relatively simple strategies and suggestions on how to provide stronger advocacy for children and families served through improved communication and collaboration between social workers and CASA volunteers.

Our recommendations for raising the level of awareness, understanding, cooperation and collaboration between social workers, CASA volunteers and those individuals and departments involved with program practice and policy consist of the following:

1. Afford CASA representatives the opportunity to speak on behalf of the CASA program during the Department's Induction training of newly hired social workers - to clearly define the role and function of a CASA.
2. Afford CASA representatives the opportunity to speak on behalf of the CASA program during social worker's regularly scheduled unit meetings - in efforts to create an enhanced partnership.
3. Afford CASA volunteers, as part of their training, the opportunity to shadow Emergency Response social workers and Court Dependency Unit social workers - to further understand the objectives of each program.

4. Increase CASA training and education by including CASA volunteers in the County's Induction training classes that pertain to legal time-lines, policies, procedures, and concepts regarding Concurrent Planning and Risk and Safety Assessments - in efforts to better understand and define goals and the roles of both child advocates within the legal arena.
5. Have social workers schedule regular contact with his/her client's CASA, be it monthly, quarterly, by e-mail, or in person - in efforts to strengthen the relationship between the child, caretaker, advocate, and social worker.

These recommendations may assist child welfare workers and court appointed volunteers in better understanding the attitudes and perceptions of each program in order to addressing the multitude of needs among children served.

In so doing, issues of power and control and conflict versus advocacy could begin to dissolve and adversarial positions due to unfamiliarity and frustrations with functions and limitations of each program would hopefully resolve - resulting in better advocacy efforts across both groups.

Given that the CASA program is historically new, we are of the opinion that further empirical research is essential and necessary. Evidence thus far indicates that lay volunteers enhance the quality of representation for children in a number of ways, yet, there is a lack of empirical evidence that examines keys to the resolution of conflict existing between social workers and CASA volunteers.

Clearly, additional large-scale evaluations of CASA programs are needed to determine if communication is the key to increasing and enhancing CASA effectiveness. Included, we believe there is also a need for the CASA program, be it at the county, state, or national level, to conduct research on their own to further explore and expand their knowledge base.

Although the literature reviews covered in this study illustrate how CASA programs are effective and desired, the majority fail to empirically examine and give reasons for the reported high rates of burnout by CASA volunteers.

Moreover, existing data has yet to articulate or address ways and means by which to increase the number of CASA volunteers or give mention to further research needed in the area.

In addition, a cross county, and cross state, comparison and contrast of the CASA program would also be empirically interesting to measure trends across jurisdictional and state lines. Further, expanding potential survey participants beyond that of CASA volunteers and social workers would afford researchers a broader scope in attempts to measure attitudes and opinions across all disciplines involved with the program.

Conclusion

This chapter confirms how organizational culture can in fact mold and shape attitudes and perceptions by looking at the roles of the two child advocates and the CASA program itself. Social workers and CASA volunteers utilized their attitudes and perceptions about each others role, job description and program and tried to make sense of information, by way of experiences with one another, in order to transform their attitudes and perceptions into their own perceived reality about the CASA program.

This study furthered knowledge in the profession of social work in that it empirically observed and analyzed how Organizational Communication could impact and shape attitudes and role perception among CASA volunteers and social workers.

According to the results of this study, alleviating problems in communication may be the key to enhancing and expanding the Court Appointed Special Advocate program. According to the statistics, increasing communication may serve as the impetus to ameliorating conflicts between CASA volunteers and social workers and increased communication could serve as a catalyst in dissolving questions regarding the roles of a social worker or CASA volunteer.

To strengthen Riverside County's Department of Public Social Services comprehensive community-based system of support, and secure the safety of child abuse victims, it is suggested that the County secure investments in programs, like the CASA program, that make honorable attempts to protect children from re-abuse and provide them with essential supportive services. We believe that the results from this research project offer recommendations and suggestions that can be immediately applied to the county's Child Protection Services division.

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE
(Social Workers)

For each question please circle the most appropriate response.

1. *Are you familiar with the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program?*

1. Yes 2. No

If you answered No, please skip to question #12.

Please Indicate How Much You Agree Or Disagree With The Following Statements:

2. *Communication between a social worker and a CASA volunteer is important in regard to client advocacy.*

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

3. *Social workers and CASA volunteers share the same goals regarding the outcomes of children served.*

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

4. *CASA volunteers alleviate case constraints placed on social workers.*

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

5. *CASA volunteers make a positive impact in a child's life.*

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

6. *Social workers and CASA volunteers have different agendas regarding child advocacy.*

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Please Circle the Answer That Best Fits Your Opinion for the Following Questions:

7. *Based on your experience, how would you rate the quality of communication between social workers and CASA volunteers?*

1. Excellent 2. Good 3. Fair 4. Poor

8. *In your experience, how would you rate the quality of service CASA volunteers provide to the children they serve?*

1. Excellent 2. Good 3. Fair 4. Poor

9. *About how often is a CASA volunteer assigned to your cases?*

1. 100% of the time 2. 75% of the time 3. 50% of the time
4. 25% of the time 5. 0% of the time 6. Don't know

10. *About how often does having a CASA volunteer lead to better outcomes for children?*

1. 100% of the time 2. 75% of the time 3. 50% of the time
4. 25% of the time 5. 0% of the time 6. Don't know

11. *Given the choice, how often would you elect to have a CASA volunteer assigned to one of your cases?*

1. 100% of the time 2. 75% of the time 3. 50% of the time
4. 25% of the time 5. 0% of the time 6. Don't know

Please Circle the Answer That Best Fits Your Opinion for the Following Questions:

12. *Riverside County DPSS does a satisfactory job in introducing the CASA program to newly hired social workers.*

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

13. *It would benefit Riverside County DPSS to have CASA representatives speak on behalf of the CASA program and its mission during the Department's Induction training classes.*

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

14. *It would be beneficial to receive information from Riverside County DPSS that clearly explains the role of a CASA volunteer in court proceedings.*

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Please take this opportunity to express any recommendations you may have regarding the CASA program by answering the questions below. If not applicable, please leave blank.

15. *In your opinion, how might the CASA program be more effective?*

16. *In what ways might CASA volunteers and social workers change the way they work together to better serve the best interests of the child?*

For statistical purposes, we have included a few demographic questions for you to answer. (Please circle the appropriate response)

17. *What is your gender?*

1. Male 2. Female

18. *What is your level of education?*

1. High school degree or less 2. Some college 3. College degree
4. Some graduate school 5. Post-graduate degree or more

19. *What year were you born?* _____

20. *What is your ethnicity?*

1. Caucasian 2. African-American 3. Latino 4. Asian
5. Pacific Islander 6. Native American 7. Other: _____ (specify)

21. *How long have you been a social worker for Riverside County Department of Public Social Services?* _____

For your convenience, we have enclosed a departmental envelope for you to return the survey via inter-county mail.

Thank you for your time and consideration, you have provided us with very important information. The questionnaire you just completed will help us gain a better understanding of any correlation between attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs among social workers and CASA volunteers.

QUESTIONNAIRE
(CASA Workers)

For each question please circle the most appropriate response.

1. *Are you familiar with the assigned responsibilities of a case carrying social worker?*

1. Yes 2. No

Please Indicate How Much You Agree Or Disagree With The Following Statements:

2. *Communication between a social worker and a CASA volunteer is important in regard to client advocacy.*

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

3. *Social workers and CASA volunteers share the same goals regarding the outcomes of children served.*

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

4. *CASA volunteers alleviate case constraints placed on social workers.*

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

5. *Social workers make a positive impact in a child's life.*

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

6. *Social workers and CASA volunteers have different agendas regarding child advocacy.*

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Please Circle the Answer That Best Fits Your Opinion for the Following Questions:

7. *Based on your experience, how would you rate the quality of communication between social workers and CASA volunteers?*

1. Excellent 2. Good 3. Fair 4. Poor

8. *In your experience, how would you rate the quality of service social workers provide to the children they serve?*

1. Excellent 2. Good 3. Fair 4. Poor

9. *About how often do you have a social worker contact you regarding one of his/her cases in which you are assigned to?*

1. 100% of the time 2. 75% of the time 3. 50% of the time
4. 25% of the time 5. 0% of the time 6. Don't know

10. *About how often does having a CASA volunteer lead to better outcomes for children?*

1. 100% of the time 2. 75% of the time 3. 50% of the time
4. 25% of the time 5. 0% of the time 6. Don't know

11. *From experience, how often do you agree with recommendations regarding case outcomes provided by a social worker on a given case?*

1. 100% of the time 2. 75% of the time 3. 50% of the time
4. 25% of the time 5. 0% of the time 6. Don't know

Please Circle the Answer That Best Fits Your Opinion for the Following Questions:

12. *Riverside County DPSS does a satisfactory job in introducing the CASA program to newly hired social workers.*

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

13. *It would benefit Riverside County DPSS to have CASA representatives speak on behalf of the CASA program and its mission during the Department's Induction training classes.*

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

14. *It would be beneficial to receive information from Riverside County DPSS that clearly explains the role of a CASA volunteer in court proceedings.*

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Please take this opportunity to express any recommendations you may have regarding the CASA program by answering the questions below. If not applicable, please leave blank.

15. *In your opinion, how might the CASA program be more effective?*

16. *In what ways might CASA volunteers and social workers change the way they work together to better serve the best interests of the child?*

For statistical purposes, we have included a few demographic questions for you to answer. (Please circle the appropriate response)

17. *What is your gender?*

1. Male 2. Female

18. *What is your level of education?*

1. High school degree or less 2. Some college 3. College degree
4. Some graduate school 5. Post-graduate degree or more

19. *What year were you born?* _____

20. *What is your ethnicity?*

1. Caucasian 2. African-American 3. Latino 4. Asian
5. Pacific Islander 6. Native American 7. Other: _____ (specify)

21. *How long have you been with the CASA program for Riverside County Department of Public Social Services?* _____

For your convenience, we have enclosed a departmental envelope for you to return the survey via inter-county mail. Thank you for your time and consideration, you have provided us with very important information. The questionnaire you just completed will help us gain a better understanding of any correlation between attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs among social workers and CASA volunteers.

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Participant:

The study in which you are invited to participate in is designed to measure opinions and beliefs regarding the Court Appointed Special Advocate program.

Natalie Morrison and Leslie Valencia are conducting this study under the supervision of Laurie Smith, Assistant Professor for the social work department. The Department of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board, California State University of San Bernardino, has approved this study. The University requires that you give your consent before participating in this study.

In this study, you will be asked to respond to several questions that encompass your perceptions and beliefs surrounding the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program. The task should take about 5 to 10 minutes to complete. All of your responses will be held in the strictest of confidence by the researchers. To ensure the anonymity of your responses, please do not write your name on this form.

You may receive the results of this study upon completion in the Spring Quarter of 2003 in the campus library.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time. In order to ensure the validity of the study, we ask that you not discuss this study with other social workers or CASA volunteers.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact Crystal Shackelford, Field Placement Supervisor for the Department of Social Services, at (909) 358-3346 or Dr. Laurie Smith at (909) 880-5000 extension 3837.

By placing a check mark in the box below, I acknowledge that I have been informed of, and that I understand the purpose of this study, and I freely consent to participate. I also acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

Place a check mark here

Today's date: / /

APPENDIX C
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

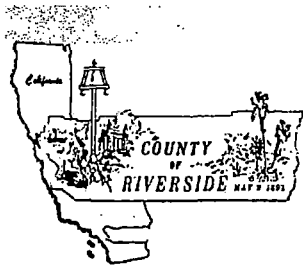
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Thank you for your participation. We are grateful for your time and effort. The questionnaire you just completed will help us understand the correlation between attitudes, perception, beliefs, and the effectiveness of the Court Appointed Special Advocate program, as well as related opinions of social service professionals.

If you are interested in the results of this study or have any questions, please contact Crystal Shackelford at (909) 358-3346. For your convenience, we have enclosed a departmental envelope for you to return the survey via inter-county mail. Thank you for your time and consideration, you have provided us with very important information.

APPENDIX D
LETTERS OF AGENCY APPROVAL

Department of Public Social Services



Dennis J. Boyle, Director

REFER REPLY TO:

- Administrative Office
4060 County Circle Drive
Riverside, CA. 92503
- Eligibility Administrative Svcs.
3950 Reynolds Road
Riverside, CA. 92503
- Staff Development Training Ctr.
22690 Cactus Ave. Ste. 100
Moreno Valley, CA. 92553
- DPSS Medi-Cal Unit
Riverside County
Regional Medical Center
26520 Cactus Avenue
Moreno Valley, CA. 92555
- 1605 Spruce Street
Riverside, CA. 92507
- 1020 Iowa Avenue
Riverside, CA. 92507
- 3021 Franklin Avenue
Riverside, CA. 92507
- Adoption Services
10281 Kidd Street
Riverside, CA. 92503
- Arlington Office
10281 Kidd Street
Riverside, CA. 92503
- 4260 Tequesquite Avenue
Riverside, CA. 92501
- 23119 Cottonwood Ave.
Building C, 2nd Floor
Moreno Valley, CA. 92553
- 1151 North A Street
Perris, CA. 92571
- 2055 N. Perris Blvd. Ste. B
Perris, CA. 92571
- 575 Chaney Street
Elsnore, CA. 92530
- 1075 N. State Street
Hemet, CA. 92543
- 4326A Business Park Drive
Building B Suite B-1
Temscola, CA. 92590
- 505 S. Buena Vista
Corona, CA. 91720
- 3178 Hamner Avenue
Norco, CA. 91750
- 47950 Arabia Street
Indio, CA. 92201
- 68615 Perez Rd. Unit 9 A
Cathedral City, CA. 92234
- 71-777 San Jacinto Drive
Rancho Mirage, CA. 92234
- 161 West Ramsey
Banning, CA. 92220
- 1225 West Hobson Way
Blythe, CA. 92225

Cal State University San Bernardino
Department of Social Work
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, Ca. 92407-2397

Dear Sirs:

This Letter serves as notification to the Department of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino, that Natalie Jean Morrison has obtained consent from Riverside Department of Public Social Services, to conduct the research project entitled "A LOOK AT THE COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE PROGRAM".

If you have questions regarding this letter of consent, you may contact:

James F. Meekins
Supervisor Professional Intern Unit at 909 358-3466
Name/Title Phone Number

Sincerely,

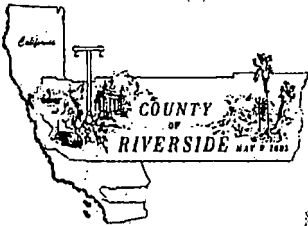
[Signature]
Signature

f.2.02
Date

DAVID DEMERS
Name (printed)

Deputy Director
Title/Position at DPSS

Department of Public Social Services



Dennis J. Boyle, Director

REFER REPLY TO:

- Administrative Office
4060 County Circle Drive
Riverside, CA. 92503
- Eligibility Administrative Svcs.
3950 Reynolds Road
Riverside, CA. 92503
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- 71-777 San Jacinto Drive
Rancho Mirage, CA. 92234
- 161 West Rainey
Banning, Ca. 92220
- 1225 West Hobson Way
Blythe, CA. 92225

Cal State University San Bernardino
Department of Social Work
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, Ca. 92407-2397

Dear Sirs:

This letter serves as notification to the Department of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino, that Leslie Valencia has obtained consent from Riverside Department of Public Social Services, to conduct the research project entitled "A LOOK AT THE COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE PROGRAM"

If you have questions regarding this letter of consent, you may contact:

James F. Meela 909-358-3466
Supervisor Professional Intern Unit
 Name/Title Phone Number

Sincerely,

[Signature]
 Signature

8-2-02
 Date

DAVID DEMERS
 Name (printed)

Deputy Director
 Title/Position at DPSS

APPENDIX E
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY,
SAN BERNARDINO
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee

Student(s) Natalie Morrison & Leslie Valencia
Proposal Title A look at the court appointed special
advocate program

Your proposal has been reviewed by the Department of Social Work
Sub-Committee of the CSUSB Institutional Review Board. The
decisions and advice of those faculty are given below.

Proposal is:

- approved
 approved pending revisions listed below
forwarded to the campus IRB for review

Revisions that must be made before proposal can be approved:

- faculty signature missing
 missing informed consent debriefing statement
 revisions needed in informed consent debriefing
 data collection instruments missing
 agency approval letter missing
 revisions in design needed (specified below)

Put debriefing on a separate page
so they can keep it. (leave mine a
copy)

[Signature]
SW 613 Instructor Signature
[Signature]
Research Coordinator Signature

12/3/02
Date
12/3/02
Date

Distribution: White-Coordinator, Yellow-Supervisor, Pink-Student, Goldenrod-613 Instructor

APPENDIX F
CHI SQUARE TESTS

CHI SQUARE TESTS

Title of r	W/CAS e: child utcome	W/CAS advocac y client betwe W/CAS	quality o munic planatio benefit	clear SA mar positive of CAS	SA mar positive of CAS	DPSS tcommen tatisfac benefit	DPSS tcommen tatisfac benefit	Second years in whys in whys in whys in whys in	Second years in whys in whys in whys in	Second years in whys in whys in whys in	Second years in whys in whys in whys in	Second years in whys in whys in whys in	Second years in whys in whys in whys in
social w Chi-Sq	1.678	56.034	20.284	52.894	57.444	77.508	1.593	1.667	82.231	6.400	18.333	0.852	
df	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	4	2	5	3	
Asymp	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.893	.000	.041	.003	.000	
CASA v Chi-Sq	8.370	17.556	6.889	14.846	4.667	6.833	8.538	2.667	44.182	.500	14.222	6.333	
df	4	2	2	2	4	4	2	4	3	2	1	3	
Asymp	.079	.000	.032	.001	.323	.145	.000	.615	.000	.779	.000	.096	

- a0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 17.4.
- b0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 22.3.
- c0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 20.3.
- d0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 24.6.
- e0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 18.0.
- f0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 24.4.
- 96 cells (100.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 4.5.
- h0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 10.4.
- i0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 5.0.
- j0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 6.0.
- k0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 5.4.
- l0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 9.0.
- m0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 8.7.
- n5 cells (100.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 4.8.
- o5 cells (100.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 1.8.
- p0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 5.5.
- q3 cells (100.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 1.3.
- r0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 6.8.

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ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES PAGE

This was a two-person project where authors collaborated throughout. However, for each phase of the project, certain authors took primary responsibility. These responsibilities were assigned in the manner listed below.

1. Data Collection:

Assigned Leader: Collaboration

Assisted By: Collaboration

2. Data Entry and Analysis:

Team Effort: Collaboration

3. Writing Report and Presentation of Findings:

a. Introduction and Literature

Team Effort: Collaboration

b. Methods:

Team Effort: Collaboration

c. Results:

Team Effort: Collaboration

d. Discussion:

Team Effort: Collaboration