

Talking Points for CASA Programs on Disproportionality, Disparities & Commitment to Racial Justice

- In everything that we do, [CASA program] strives to stand for the best interests of the children we serve. Children of color – especially Black children – are overrepresented in the child welfare system, both in Texas and nationwide, and face an increased risk of negative outcomes. Black families are [no more likely to abuse or neglect children than other families](#).
- The impact of systemic racism on many families leads to injustices faced throughout daily life, and these create the disproportionality and disparity in outcomes that we, and the greater child welfare system, must be aware of and work to remedy.
- [CASA program] recognizes that disparities exist in all aspects of society, including the child welfare system.
- There are a little over 51,000 children in the [Texas child welfare system](#). Of these:
 - About 30% of these children are white,
 - nearly 42% are Hispanic, and
 - 21% are Black.
- Though Black children make up 12% of the Texas child population, they make up 21% of children in the Texas child welfare system.
- Based on [FY 2018 DFPS statistics](#):
 - African American children are 1.7 times more likely to be reported to CPS than Anglo children,
 - African American families are 1.9 times more likely to be investigated, and
 - African American children are 1.9 times more likely to be removed.
- At [CASA program], we serve children and families of all cultures, abilities, identities and backgrounds. We are committed to our goal of advocating for the best interest of all children in the foster care system, and providing each child with the highest quality volunteer advocacy possible.
- [CASA program] recognizes that quality advocacy for children and families includes proactively understanding their unique cultural identities, practices and everyday activities.
- Race, ethnicity and language are valuable aspects of identity and should be honored and celebrated.
- [CASA program] advocates for children, and our advocacy influences what kind of adults this generation of children will become. It is unacceptable to ignore racial inequity and systems that continue to oppress the Black community and other communities of color.
- Those of us who are white must look within to examine our own attitudes and behaviors about race, think deeply about what biases we may be harboring, and reflect on how we can challenge these, as well as use our resources to boost the fight against long-standing racial injustice. This work is for each of us to do as individuals, and for CASA programs to do internally, in order to best serve all children and families.

Sample Statement on Recruiting Volunteers of Color

At [CASA program], we serve children and families of all cultures, abilities, identities and backgrounds. We are committed to our goal of advocating for the best interest of all children in the foster care system, and providing each child with the highest quality volunteer advocacy possible.

To meet this goal, we strive to recruit CASA volunteers of diverse backgrounds so that our volunteers can reflect the diversity of the children in the child welfare system in our community.

Children and families of color are disproportionately represented in the child welfare system, both in Texas and nationwide. While we work hard to ensure all of our volunteers are trained, prepared and equipped to work with any child, we also know how important it can be for a young person to see someone who looks like them and talks like them, and can speak with them directly about their experiences.

In order for CASA volunteers to advocate for a child's best interest, they need to have a strong, trusting, positive relationship with the child. Children of color are more likely to form a deeper relationship with CASA volunteers who have been through similar life experiences and are comfortable having conversations with them about issues unique to their racial and ethnic identity.

Additional Resources

[Texas CASA's Renewed Commitment to Racial Justice - June 2020 \(Excerpts below\)](#)

"We recognize the need for all of the systems that affect children and families – our child welfare system, education system, healthcare system, criminal justice system, and others – to uplift justice and become actively anti-racist. Systemic racism's impact on many families leads to injustices faced throughout daily life, and these create the disproportionality in outcomes that we must work to redress in the child welfare landscape. The unbearable pressures on vulnerable families must be swiftly and decisively transformed as part of the core work of child-serving agencies."

"This process requires deep introspection and willingness to understand the histories of inequality that have helped shape our systems. It also requires imagination and a fierce will to transform them."

"We join in solidarity with the people most harmed by injustice, and pledge to listen to their voices and leadership as we strive to become better advocates for all children and families. We will seek better ways to serve communities of color, to ensure that resources are equitably available and that the violence they are targeted by comes to an end."

[National CASA/GAL Association's June 2020 Statement \(Excerpts below\)](#)

"National CASA/GAL Association stands in solidarity against any kind of injustice, violence or brutality that inflicts undue harm on or disadvantages another human being. Racism is reprehensible and has no place in our society. In fact, inequality, inequity, and disproportionality exists across all facets of our society, including our work with children who have experienced abuse or neglect."

"As an organization, we believe it's important that we align with our mission, vision and values, inclusively understand and promote the well-being of our network and build cultural competence among staff and volunteers. By doing this, we are working to ensure equitable outcomes for all children, regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation."

Texas CASA Pre-Service Volunteer Training Curriculum

- [Ch. 5: Substance Use, Diversity & Disproportionality](#)
- [Ch. 6: Domestic Violence, Bias & Cultural Competence](#)