

Infant & Toddler Project

The Infant & Toddler Project resulted from a pilot project that started in 2005 under the direction of Judge Ronald Pope and the Zero-To-Three Program out of Washington, D.C. One of only three programs involved in the pilot, Child Advocates of Fort Bend was part of the planning. When funding for that pilot program ended in 2011, Child Advocates of Fort Bend's CASA program extended its services to address the specific needs of the infant and toddler population.

Infant & Toddler Project is a collaborative effort of partners including the 328th, 505th and 387th District Courts, the Coastal Bend Children's Court, Children's Protective Services (CPS), the County Attorney's office, Child Advocates of Fort Bend's Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Program, substance abuse programs, Early Childhood Intervention (ECI), mental health providers, local attorneys, Fort Bend Behavioral Health Services which include Parent/Child Assessments, Parent Child visit coaching and Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI).



OUR GOAL:

To better meet the needs of parents and young children while their case is involved in the courts.

Program Components:

Program Goals:

- Educate parents about the importance of early relationships and development of their child
- Ensure that the children receive appropriate developmental screenings
- Increase visits with parents and their children while they are away from home
- Connect families to services in their community that will help them work through their court issues, and lead to reunification/relative conservatorship/or adoption.
- Guide habitual patterns for a healthy lifestyle, including nutrition, exercise and hygiene.

We have found that some parents don't realize that they are interacting inappropriately with their children. As a result, we encourage Advocates to interact with the family during visitations and model appropriate behaviors for them. We provide Advocates with assessment tools to help them observe and measure the parents' knowledge of child development and "visitation bags" to show parents examples of what they should bring to visits with their children. Advocates are encouraged to look for strengths in the visitations that they can use to help the parents improve their visits and interaction with their children.

Advocates go before the court monthly to provide written and verbal recommendations to the Judge about what they feel is in the best interest of these children.

